

To Prospective Piano Purchasers:

In 2005, I decided to fulfill one of my long-held dreams. Returning to an endeavor I had abandoned over thirty years ago, I decided to continue my piano studies.

How does one go about finding a quality piano today? First, I looked on the internet for information. Then, I tried Consumers Reports. Finally, I just resorted to the yellow pages.

Knowing this was going to be an expensive purchase, I began shopping for a piano with apprehension. I was more than astonished to find I could afford a grand piano within my budget range. This was just too good to be true.

I could not believe that a grand was affordable. Yet, I could picture that baby grand setting in my living room with its shiny tilted ebony lid. It was not just a piano but a beautiful piece of furniture. How could I go wrong? I had not heard of the Hardman Peck brand, but it was a GRAND PIANO.

At first my new piano sounded good, although I had trouble getting it to stay in tune. Told that new pianos need frequent tuning, I found this to be both true and expensive. But the problems didn't end there. As the months passed, I could also detect that my piano was beginning to lose much of its resonance.

In an attempt to alleviate problems that arose, I purchased a room air conditioner to better control humidity during the summer. I purchased two humidifiers to add humidity in the winter. I had an expensive Damp Chaser climate control system installed on the piano. Work was performed to alleviate the problem of the damper pedal making an unusual thumping noise. Further work was performed trimming back pads and felt. It was suggested that perhaps replacement of much of the felt and pads *might* assist in attaining quality.

I began to feel that no matter how many changes were performed, or how much work completed, I was not going to be able to have the piano attain a quality of sound to my satisfaction or alleviate noises that should not have been present.

I found that during the early part of the 20th century a Hardman Peck piano was considered a quality piano. I have since learned there is no Hardman Peck factory in the United States today. The company whose logo appears stenciled above the keyboard does not presently exist in its original form. These pianos are produced en mass on an assembly line in China with the logos added.

I'm counting on my new Yamaha grand to meet my standards. Yes, it is beautiful to play on a grand piano, but it's been a disillusioning and expensive experience learning that there are pianos and then there are quality pianos. All grands do look beautiful, but they are not created equal.



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