



## FACTS TO CONSIDER when buying a used piano

*If you don't know pianos, know your piano person!*

Buying a used piano privately can be dangerous and costly. What appears to be a real bargain may prove to be a real liability. Unless you are a piano expert, your best assurance is to rely on the judgement of the most experienced dealer in your area with a proven record of integrity and fair dealing. It is unwise to pick up an old piano privately "to get started with." A poor piano discourages, rather than encourages, the student. At best, the purchase of an older piano is a questionable investment.

Here are just a few of the many danger areas encountered when a non-expert piano buyer buys a piano privately:

1. **Plate** - may be cracked or broken, which cripples the piano musically and renders it useless.
2. **Strings** - bass strings may be "tired and tubby," totally devoid of tone. Restringing cost: \$500-\$800.
3. **Soundboard** - may be cracked, or worse yet, may have lost crown to become tonally deficient. Replacement cost: \$1,500-\$3,000.
4. **Ribs** - may be broken or pulled away from soundboard.
5. **Bridges** - may have lost proper bearing, be broken, split or cracked, necessitating a major expense.
6. **Tuning pins** - may be loose, may have been previously "doped," may require oversized pins, may require new pinblock.
7. **Pinblock** - may be split and is very costly to repair. Since this is concealed, experienced judgement is required. Replacement cost: \$600-\$1,200.
8. **Actions** - may be literally worn out, rendering the piano useless. If rebushing is required, this is very costly. A complete regulation and voicing requires much time by an expert and is expensive (up to \$5,000) when properly done.
9. **Hammers** - may be worn out or improperly filed so as to require replacement - another costly repair (about \$1,000).
10. **Trapwork** - the internal leverage controls of the expression pedals may need complete overhauling.
11. **Refinishing** - many people learn to their sorrow that refinishing a piano is not a home do-it-yourself project; that it requires much hard work and knowhow best left to a skilled craftsman. Good refinishing work is expensive (\$2,500-\$5,000).

Price illustrations are for grand pianos, and are taken from *The Piano Technicians Pricing Guide*.

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