

Kawai



Kawai's Shigeru SK-EX grand (above) and K-300 upright (opposite)

Kawai is an innovator in the field of piano design with a reputation for excellence and reliability. Based in Hammamatsu, Japan, they produce a vast array of pianos, keyboards and synthesisers that fill every niche and price point of the global music industry.

Company founder Koichi Kawai (1886-1955) began his career as an apprentice of Torakusu Yamaha. Kawai was a precocious engineering talent who caught the attention of Yamaha by building himself a wooden bike at the age of 11. Three years later, he is said to have constructed the first complete piano action ever made in Japan.

Kawai served as Yamaha's construction manager until 1927, when he founded a research lab dedicated to piano design and experimentation. By 1935, the company was turning out 75 uprights and 10 grand pianos per month.

This prodigious success was interrupted by the Second World War, which saw the company shift to producing military supplies. Instrument manufacturing was prohibited by government decree in 1944 and did not resume until 1948.

Koichi passed away in 1995 and was succeeded by his visionary son Shigeru (1922-2006). Under Shigeru's leadership, the company grew exponentially to become the industrial powerhouse we know today.

The 1960s saw the creation of a network of Kawai music schools as well as the company's own institutes for training teachers and technicians. Kawai America was founded in 1963, followed by divisions in other key centres around the world. By 1973, Kawai's output had reached 5,000 pianos per month.

Kawai's longstanding commitment to innovation began with Koichi, who was awarded 27 patents during his lifetime. Shigeru oversaw an acceleration in research

and development that led to the launch of the company's ground-breaking ABS polymer action in 1971. Compared with traditional piano actions made from wood, this new material was shown to be stronger and more climate resistant. Kawai's latest generation of Millennium III actions are made from ABS-Carbon, which is even lighter and stronger.

Kawai entered the software and computer sales business in 1982 and four years later launched their first digital pianos. They are now an industry leader with their extensive range of award-winning premium digital instruments. Kawai's flagship CA Series of has recently been joined by a new Digital Grand, unveiled in 2020.

Digital technology has also been used to enhance Kawai's acoustic pianos with the AnyTime silent system and AURES transducer, while hybrid NOVUS instruments combine real piano actions with high-resolution sound and premium amplification hardware.