

Shigeru's son Hirotaka (born 1947) assumed control of the company in 1989 and has gone on to open new factories in the US and Malaysia. He also led the development of a new series of world-class concert grands, branded 'Shigeru Kawai', which were unveiled in 2000. These were followed in 2013 by the GX Series, featuring reinforced hammer shanks designed to improve tone and consistency.

Kawai pianos have a strong presence at conservatoires and concert halls around the world. Key institutions that own Kawai pianos include the Paris Conservatoire, Berlin's Hochschule für Musik Hanns Eisler, the Escuela Superior Reina Sofia in Madrid, Baltimore's Peabody Institute and all four London conservatoires. Shigeru Kawai instruments are also increasingly being played by top artists such as Mikhail Pletnev, Ivan Lilić, Can Çakmur, Lara Melda and Warren Mailley-Smith. Alexandre Kantorow chose a Kawai Shigeru SK-EX for his solo recital performances at the 2019 Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow.

CURRENT INSTRUMENTS

Acoustic pianos

The sound of Kawai pianos is clear, mellow and expressive. Jeremy Nicholas describes their instruments as having a 'rounded European tone' (*The Great Piano Makers*).

Kawai's flagship Shigeru Kawai series comprises five models ranging in size from 188cm to 278cm. These limited-edition grand pianos are handcrafted using the finest materials, from spruce soundboards and boxwood bridge caps to hand-wound bass strings and hardwood rims. All Shigeru Kawai instruments are fitted with Millennium III Action plus Kawai's dual-pivot damper system, which allows smooth half-pedal control.

Kawai's GX and GL Series grand pianos were unveiled in 2013 and 2015 respectively. Both feature Millennium III Action with 'phenolic stabilisers' to enhance hammer strike precision. The GX rim follows a similar design to the Shigeru range, comprising alternating layers of maple and mahogany, while the GL rim is made from a single variety of hardwood.

In their upright range, Kawai produces six K Series pianos. Models upwards of the K-200 include Millennium III Action and mahogany core hammers, while the top-of-the-range K-800 also offers a sostenuto pedal.

Pricing of Kawai's grand pianos starts at £9,888 for the GL-10 up to £127,999 for

Kawai grand pianos		
Model	Length cm	Weight kgs
SK-EX	278	504
SK-7	229	400
SK-6	214	382
SK-5	200	351
SK-3	188	334
SK-2	180	324
GX-7	229	400
GX-6	214	382
GX-5	200	351
GX-3	188	334
GX-2	180	324
GX-1	166	314
GL-50	188	334
GL-30	166	312
GL-10	153	282

Kawai upright pianos		
Model	Height cm	Weight kgs
K-800 AS	134	284
K-600	134	280
K-500	130	238
K-300	122	227
K-200	114	208
K-15 E	110	196

the Shigeru Kawai SK-EX. Uprights cost from £3,555 for the entry-level K-15 E to £11,999 for the K-800 AS. Kawai's ultra-slow 'Soft Fall' fallboard comes as standard with all acoustic instruments. Some models are available in a variety of finishes at an additional cost.

AnyTimeX3 silent pianos

Four of the K Series upright models come in variants equipped with Kawai's AnyTimeX3 silent system: K-15, K-200, K-300 and K-500. Players listening to these instruments through headphones are immersed in the sound of the Shigeru Kawai SK-EX full concert grand, reproduced by blending multi-channel, 88-key sampling with the latest resonance modelling technology. Numerous other voices are also available, including multiple piano sounds. Models upwards of the K-200 offer integrated Bluetooth MIDI and audio connectivity, plus 'USB to Device' functionality for recording and playback. Pricing starts at £5,444 for the K-15 ATX3L up to £10,555 for the K-500 ATX3.

Hybrid pianos

Kawai's acoustic hybrid range includes two AURES upright models: K-500 and K-300. These are equipped with a transducer

