

# Schimmel

**S**chimmel makes more instruments than any other European piano brand, producing roughly 3,000 pianos a year at its manufacturing sites in Germany, Poland and China. The company motto since inception has been 'the best possible instrument at a reasonable price'.

Schimmel was founded in Leipzig in 1885 by Wilhelm Schimmel (1854-1946), a cabinet maker who learnt the art of piano building at the city's celebrated Stichel factory. Wilhelm enjoyed swift success and by 1897 had constructed his own factory in Leipzig. The company's instruments were awarded gold medals at the World Exhibition in 1913 and 1914, and by the beginning of the First World War Schimmel had produced over 10,000 pianos.

Wilhelm retired in 1927, passing the mantle to his son Wilhelm Arno, who ably steered the company through the Depression of the 1930s. He relocated the factory from Leipzig to Braunschweig (Brunswick) in 1931.

Production came to a halt in 1944 when the factory was destroyed by bombing, and it took five years for Schimmel to resume making pianos. Nevertheless, by the time Wilhelm Arno passed away in 1961, the company had clocked up sales of 50,000 instruments.

Wilhelm Arno's son Nikolaus Wilhelm oversaw the development of Schimmel's premium lines, which have garnered many awards for performance and design. The Konzert ('K') range comprises five grands and three uprights, complemented by three grands and five uprights in the Classic ('C') series.

Schimmel's commitment to design innovation is exemplified by its Art Collection, which includes two iconic cases: a transparent acrylic grand originally created in 1951 for the QE2 ocean liner, and a futuristic 'Pegasus' piano conceived by Luigi Colani in 1996. Innovation also characterises the company's approach to manufacturing, where they have pioneered the use of computer-aided design to optimise quality and accuracy.

In 2002, Schimmel acquired a second factory in Kalisz, Poland, which now produces the brand's midrange 'Wilhelm Schimmel' instruments. Hannes Schimmel-Vogel,



*Schimmel's iconic K213 Glas grand (above) and K132 Konzert upright (opposite)*

representing the family's fourth generation, took over running the company in 2003.

Since 2016, Schimmel has been owned by China's Pearl River Piano Group, the world's largest piano manufacturer. Entry-level instruments branded 'Fridolin Schimmel' are made at the Pearl River factory in Guangzhou.

Schimmel celebrated its 135th anniversary in 2020 with the launch of a new silent system, dubbed 'TwinTone'. The inaugural International Schimmel Piano Competition was also planned for 2020, but will now take place in September 2021.

## CURRENT INSTRUMENTS

### Acoustic pianos

Depth of sound, tonal flexibility and long sustain are core qualities of Schimmel's pianos. Their advanced Konzert series models offer the greatest resonance and clarity, followed closely by instruments in the Classic range.

Design elements common to all Konzert and Classic instruments include tunable duplex scaling (described as 'triplex' by Schimmel), a 'dynamic bar' that enhances tonal colour by dividing the soundboard into different zones, and lightweight bridges to help lengthen sustain.