

STEINWAY & SONS

Steinway's Model D concert grand (below) and V-132 upright (opposite, below right)



Steinway & Sons

Steinway & Sons is perhaps the world's best-known piano brand. Most great concert halls own at least one Steinway and the company boasts a roster of over 1,600 Steinway Artists from every genre. Dozens of colleges and universities now carry the distinction of being 'All-Steinway Schools', with more joining their ranks every year. According to the Steinway website, 'over 19 out of 20 professional pianists choose to perform on Steinway pianos.'

Steinway & Sons can largely be credited with the design and construction of the modern concert grand. As Jeremy Nicholas writes in *The Great Piano Makers*: 'From its small beginnings in 1853, Steinway worked on a whole list of distinctive features that, by the 1870s, had evolved into the modern concert grand, an instrument of matchless strength

and sensitivity.' The company's first Model D instrument was built in 1884 and soon became the blueprint followed by every other maker.

Company founder Heinrich Engelhard Steinweg (1797-1871) apprenticed in Germany as an organ builder before turning his attention to the piano. Having built his first instrument in his kitchen in 1836, he went on to make 400 pianos over the next decade. Famine and political unrest in Europe prompted the family's move to New York in 1850, where they anglicised their name as Steinway.

Success came swiftly in America. Heinrich (now known as Henry) founded a new business with four of his sons in 1853 and by the end of the decade was producing 500 pianos a year. Drawing on the latest advances in physics and acoustics they made numerous improvements in piano design, and by 1875 had registered 27 patents – including the

cross-stringing method now standard in grand pianos.

Henry's fourth son William was instrumental in building the Steinway brand during the latter half of the 19th century. He established the company's first Steinway Hall and promoted concert tours by prominent artists such as Anton Rubinstein and Ignaz Paderewski. William also purchased the land in Queens that became Steinway Village and still houses the main factory today. Meanwhile, in 1888, a German division of Steinway & Sons was established in Hamburg by Henry's eldest son Theodore.

Steinway's 100,000th piano rolled off the production line in 1903 and was delivered to President Theodore Roosevelt at the White House. Thirty-five years later, the 300,000th Steinway was also delivered to the White House, this time for President Franklin D