

Yamaha

Yamaha's flagship CFX concert grand (left) and TransAcoustic system (below right)



Yamaha is the world's largest manufacturer of musical instruments with a piano division that caters to every kind of pianist.

The company's extensive product range runs the gamut from concert grands that grace the stages of leading venues, conservatoires and competitions, through premium instruments for budding professionals, students and dedicated amateurs, to smaller grands, uprights and digital pianos ideal for use in homes, studios and practice rooms.

This phenomenal success story began in 1887, when the 35-year-old horologist Torakusu Yamaha (1851-1916) was invited to mend a reed organ in the Japanese city of Hamamatsu. Inspired by his handiwork

and knowing a good business opportunity when he saw one, Yamaha became Asia's first manufacturer of reed organs. His company grew quickly and in 1899 he was sponsored by the Japanese government to spend five months touring piano factories in the United States. He returned with the necessary knowhow and machinery to build Japan's first upright piano in 1900, followed by the first grand piano in 1902.

Yamaha's early pianos were garlanded with awards yet the brand remained largely unknown outside Asia until after the Second World War. By 1960, however, the quality and production volumes of Yamaha pianos had increased to a point where the brand could go global. Yamaha International Corporation

was founded that year, and in 1967 the company unveiled its CF concert grand with a performance by Wilhelm Kempff, who called it 'one of the top pianos in the world'. Sviatoslav Richter also played a CF piano at the opening of the 1969 Menton Festival, and it was Glenn Gould's instrument of choice for his classic 1981 recording of Bach's *Goldberg Variations*.

The 1980s were a time of great technological innovation for Yamaha and established the company's ongoing dominance of the digital piano market. Their YP series of digital pianos was launched in 1983, succeeded two years later by the first Clavinovas. Next came the Disklavier player piano (1986), which by 1995 also featured a 'mute rail' that paved the way to today's SILENT series pianos.