



# YAMAHA



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One of my favorite piano manufacturers is, without a doubt, the Yamaha Corporation. Based on my experience with pianos made by Yamaha, they are, usually sturdy, well-built, reliable pianos that sound great and play well. They have not always been this way, but there is a good reason they jumped to the top over the decades: Yamaha never stops trying to improve their instruments.

The Yamaha Corporation, then called Nippon Gakki Co., Ltd., started as a dream of Japanese-made pianos by one man, Torakusu Yamaha. He made the first Japanese upright piano in 1900 when western classical music was still new to Japan. In 1902 he made the first Japanese grand piano; in 1903 he won grand prize at the Domestic Industrial Trade Fair in Osaka and in 1904 he was awarded Honorary Grand Prize for his piano at the St. Louis World's Fair. At this point, Yamaha was focused on manufacturing pianos for the Japanese

market.

Yamaha craftsmen were frequently traveling out of Japan to observe and study cutting edge manufacturing techniques and piano design of the Europeans by the 1920s. In 1926, Ale Schlegel, a seasoned and knowledgeable piano technician from Germany, was invited to the Yamaha facilities in Hamamatsu, Japan to discuss piano making. This meeting was a major success and injected Yamaha into the world of quality pianos, even to the point of receiving recognition from Arthur Rubinstein!



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The Yamaha FC concert grand piano at nine feet long was released in 1950 and soon became highly regarded by pianists and technicians alike. After such a great success, Yamaha began building many new facilities and updating their methods by adding a computer-controlled wood drying room and a grand piano assembly line in Hamamatsu, Yamaha's main headquarters.

In 1965, Yamaha created a new company in the USA called the Yamaha International Corporation. Its purpose was to import and distribute Yamaha products to America. For the next twenty years, Yamaha's reputation as one of the greatest piano manufacturers in the world grew quickly. The concert grands were recognized by artists such as Wilhelm Kempff, Sviatoslav Richter, and Glen Gould and adopted as the official piano at many European music festivals.

Along with updates and improvements to the CF concert grand throughout the 1980s, Yamaha released their Disklavier technology which continues to be today, a beautiful marriage of the acoustic piano and an electronic self-playing system. It not only allowed for playing prerecorded music through the piano, but was also able to record a human player's work for playback.

Yamaha continues to use technology and innovation to constantly improve their pianos even to this day. I believe this is the paramount reason for their success instead of leaning back and resting on their laurels like some other piano manufacturers.

\*all photos from [USA.yamaha.com](http://USA.yamaha.com)

## Some Yamaha artists:

Elton John  
Alicia Keys  
Paul McCartney  
John Legend  
Sarah McLachlan  
Jamie Cullum  
Sheryl Crow  
Chick Corea  
Sarah Bareilles