



The Free Yamaha Grand Piano Scam

The woman and the moving company promptly disappear and can no longer be reached. You're out close to \$1,000 with no free piano. You got scammed.

You have probably noticed that various scams have become increasingly prevalent. I receive multiple emails, texts, and phone calls every week demanding I pay for goods and services I never requested, I pay to reactivate accounts with companies I don't have accounts with, or I must participate in the infamous "Nigerian Prince" scam. You're lucky if you don't have this headache. But beware of the free Yamaha grand piano scam that has been making the rounds. It preys specifically on people looking to get a good deal on a free grand piano. It seems almost too good to be true, and that is your red flag.

I have seen a few different iterations of this scam, but the general idea goes like this: you receive an email from a random person, usually a woman's name, that says that her husband passed away recently and left behind a beautiful Yamaha baby grand piano. She wants to give this piano away to a "passionate music lover". The problem is, the piano is in a different state at a moving company's warehouse. The woman is no longer in that state and does not have access to the piano. You are tasked with simply calling the movers and paying for them to move the piano from their warehouse to your house. Seems easy enough, right? Unfortunately, once you pay the movers, the journey ends and your fancy, new free piano never shows up. The woman and the moving company promptly disappear and can no longer be reached. You're out close to \$1,000 with no free piano. You got scammed.



I have heard the story with some mild variation from many other technicians. I have even heard a story about a church that went through with the scam and lost congregation money to it. Some techs that own their own moving companies have offered to pick up and transport the piano themselves, but the scammers disappear pretty quickly when they know they will not make a profit. It soon becomes obvious that the piano never existed. Apparently, at one point, the scam was much more elaborate involving a fake website for the moving company and pictures of the piano, but this must have taken too much effort. The ones I have seen are quite rudimentary and often use the same wording in the body email as the other versions.

Some techs that own their own moving companies have offered to pick up and transport the piano themselves, but the scammers disappear pretty quickly when they know they will not make a profit.

If we have discussed free pianos before, you probably know that I am not an advocate unless you know what you are getting yourself into. At the very least, you should always go visit and play a piano before deciding to accept it into your life. This scam Yamaha grand is not available to try, and often, the fake movers will deny an inspection of the piano by a local technician citing some bogus reason. Alarm bells should be going off in your head and gut telling you something does not seem right about the situation. Always meet the person face to face giving away a piano to ask pertinent questions such as when it was last tuned, how old it is, and how much it was played. Body language and vocal inflection can tell you a lot about what a person is really thinking.

Be careful out there. Often times the best deal for a piano is at a piano store and not Facebook marketplace.