

# The Right Instrument = Successful Start!

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Top 10 things to think about when selecting an instrument to practice on

- 1. Are you taking PIANO lessons or KEYBOARD lessons?** If you are taking *piano* lessons, getting an electronic keyboard doesn't make sense. Keyboards have 61 or 76 keys, they have a plastic non-weighted touch, they typically don't come with a pedal. Consider Digital: a high quality digital piano will have 88 keys like a piano has.
- 2. Why 88 keys?** Most students will have music in the first few lessons where they experiment the full 88 key range of a piano. Even if you are only playing in the middle of the piano, your peripheral vision will see all 88 keys. If you practice on less, then go to your teachers piano, it can be confusing and disorienting to the student.
- 3. Weighted touch?** It is extremely important to have a fully-weighted-hammer- action to teach proper technique from lesson NUMBER ONE. Good (*and bad*) habits are formed from day one.
- 4. Touch Sensitive (Touch Responsive)?** If you choose electronic, the question to ask here is "How many levels of sensitivity?" A keyboard may be *touch sensitive*, but only on a scale of 1 to 7, while an acoustic piano has a touch sensitivity of 1 to infinity. A Roland HP-series digital piano has a touch sensitive scale of 1 to 128, which a human can not detect a limit of.
- 5. What about a used piano?** Always hire a tuner to evaluate a used piano. He looks past the cosmetics, deep into the inner-workings of the piano. A small fee for a professional opinion could save you thousands. Generally speaking, a used piano under \$2500 is rarely going to get you a very good piano. A good used piano will only be a few years old. If older than 25 years, it needs to have been refurbished or rebuilt.
- 6. What about a hand-me-down piano or a piano advertised "Beautiful" or "Antique" or "Free"?** A piano might look beautiful on the outside but might need hundreds or thousands of dollars spent on the inside to make it a decent piano. Good intentioned family members probably have no idea how much work the piano they are trying to pass down to you really needs. Always pay a tuner to assess the condition.
- 7. What is the maintenance?** An acoustic piano should be tuned at least twice a year and needs voicing & regulation about every five years. It has over 12,000 parts which include, for example, leather straps and felt that wear out and deteriorate over time. Most acoustic pianos need to be rebuilt every 25 to 35 years. Even the best piano in the world, Steinway, says this. A piano is a fine precision instrument that needs to be properly cared for. If you do not intend to maintain a piano, then you should consider a digital piano since it never needs tuning and is maintenance free.
- 8. Is silent practicing important?** It may be if you have younger children with naps, early bed-times, or if mom or dad had a stressful day. Some children are self-conscious about practicing. A digital piano with headphones allows practice any time.
- 9. What is a Roland Music Tutor?** Since a typical piano lesson occurs once weekly, the Music Tutor is an essential between-lesson "practice partner." It interactively helps students play correct notes and rhythms, allows them to adjust tempo, and focus on "mess-up spots." The Tutor instills correct practice techniques thereby helping students learn more efficiently. It works with **any** acoustic or digital piano.
- 10. Want an easy solution?** Rent a high quality Roland Digital Piano for as low as \$39/month with 100% of the first 6 months applying toward the purchase of any piano (new or used) we sell. Take the pressure off purchasing a piano until you see how your child does with piano lessons.