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Yamaha has a sales poster with the headline *Buying a Piano is a Group Effort*. I could not agree more with this statement. Sure, it is possible to find a piano on one's own, but is it really the best piano for the situation? No amount of online research is a satisfactory substitute for experience, especially professional experience. Of course, we all have free will and can choose not to do what professionals recommend, but it may be valuable to listen to what they have to say as they will likely have interesting opinions that cannot be found elsewhere. In terms of buying a piano, there are some opinions from the village worth investigating.

Many people turn to their piano teacher for advice on buying an instrument. Piano teachers have many years of experience playing different pianos in different locations. They have studied piano literature and the history surrounding the various pieces. Depending on the student's playing ability, the teacher can assess if a piano will be appropriate for her in terms of the piano's current playability. Teachers have developed an opinion of a sound they are looking for and a certain feel of the keyboard.

But who do the teachers turn to when they need help? Usually a pianist of any sort has one or more piano technicians they rely on for advice about their instrument. Piano technicians are the only ones who know specific details about the deep inner workings of the instrument. They are the ones with the experience needed to effectively repair and tune a piano. They can quickly assess the condition of the parts and the balanced functionality of the mechanics involved. Your piano may work, but only a technician can tell you if it works well.



Due to the massive production of pianos over the past century, piano technicians usually find themselves working on older pianos. The mechanism has not changed much over that time, but other things have. Good piano salesmen are the most up to date on the newest piano designs and features. They will likely be able to guide you to the piano that best fits your situation. They take into account level of playing, room size, budget, tonal preference and the feel of the keyboard. They have the newest information specific to each brand and what makes them different or the same. They want to help make your piano experience excellent.

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Others in the village besides the professionals can have equally important advice. Asking family members' opinions on a piano is especially essential. Who will be playing the piano? Does everyone agree on color, size, tone and feel? Would it be more worth while to get a new piano because everyone in the house will use it, or is only one person going to be playing it so a lightly used piano will be fine? Discussing a piano purchasing budget is definitely a family activity.

Branching out to extended family and friends, what kind of piano did they decide on? Why? Do they wish they had done something differently? They may not be an expert on pianos, but they have lived with one and played it. What sorts of things did they notice about their pianos?

Examine all opinions closely because they are based on experience. Everyone's experience is different and they can only tell you things grounded in what has happened to them, even the professionals. But remember, an educated professional is adding the experience of his colleagues to the mix as well as his own experiences.

In any case, having lots of information from many sources to sort through is almost always better than trying to make a decision based on hearsay, or worse, nothing.