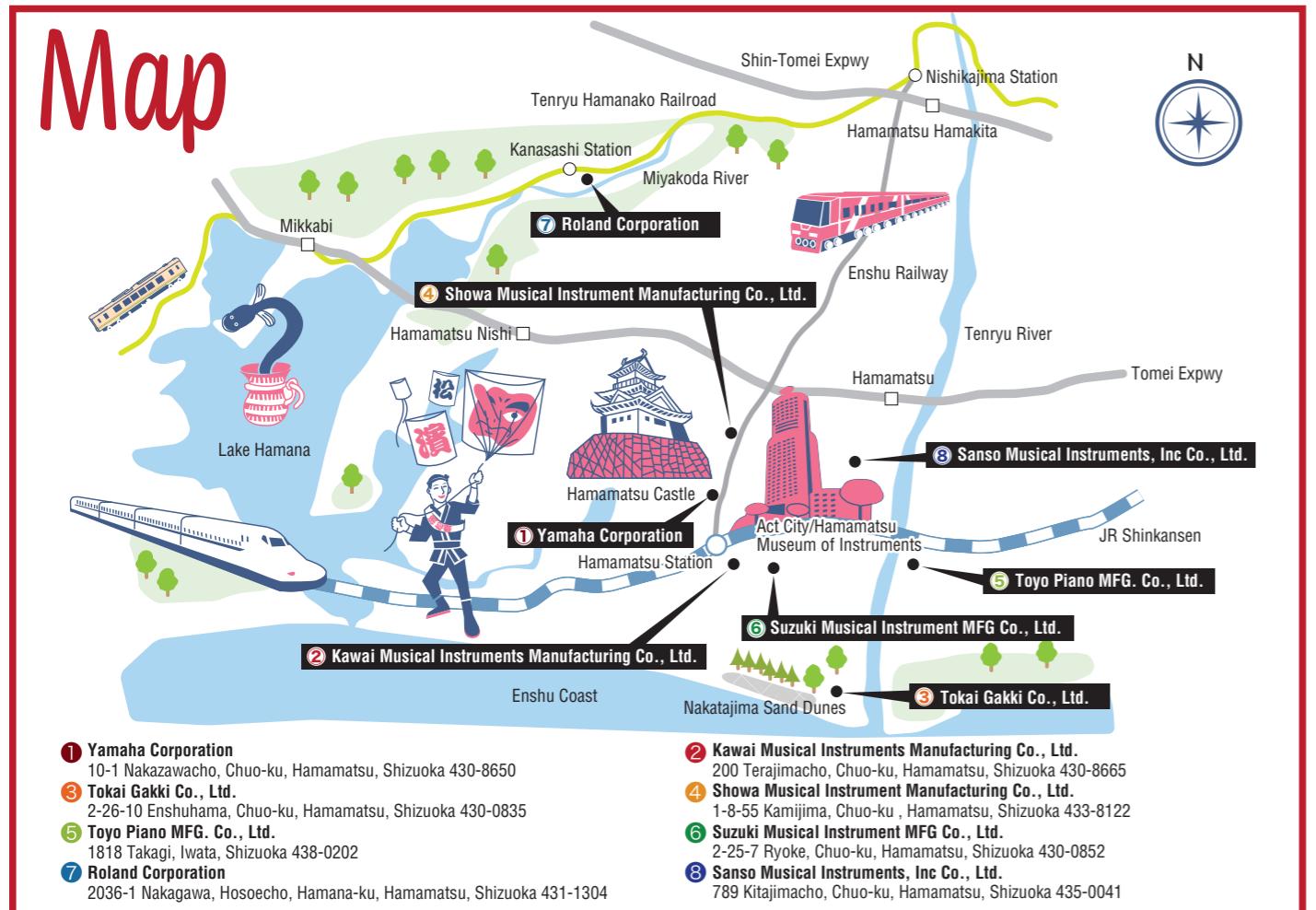


Map



Celebrated International Music Competitions and Music Festivals in Hamamatsu

Hamamatsu International Piano Competition

Affiliated with the World Federation of International Music Competitions, this international music competition has been held in Hamamatsu since 1991, established in part to celebrate the eightieth anniversary of Hamamatsu becoming a municipality. It is held in Act City Hamamatsu once every three years. Helping to cultivate the growth of young pianists, this is an event that puts Hamamatsu on the map as a City of Music.

Mt. Fuji International Opera Competition of Shizuoka

Affiliated with the World Federation of International Music Competitions, this international music competition organized by Shizuoka Prefecture has been held in Hamamatsu since 1996. It began as a memorial to the Japanese opera singer Tamaki Miura 50 years after she passed away. It is now held in Act City once every three years.

Hamamatsu Jazz Week

Originally developed as a way to promote Hamamatsu's musical manufacturing as a town full of music that makes music, this unique event is a joint effort between the private and public sectors for the sake of jazz, a genre that is loved by all generations. It has been held in various locales around the city every autumn since 1992.

Hamamatsu Wind Orchestra Competition/All-Japan High School Wind Band Conference, National Junior High School Friendship Concert

These events were created in 1989 to bring together both students and their instructors. They are held all at one time, from the fourth Friday to Sunday every March in Act City Hamamatsu. The day before the All-Japan High School Wind Band Conference, the students hold an outdoor concert in the Kitara square outside the north entrance of JR Hamamatsu station.

Yaramaika Music Festival in Hamamatsu

Commonly known as YaraFes, this event is put on by the citizens of Hamamatsu to celebrate this City of Music. Held the second Saturday and Sunday of every October, performers from all over Japan and the world gather, and all genres, instruments, ages, nationalities, and skill sets are on display in both indoor and outdoor venues in the central Hamamatsu area. It's a festival for everyone to enjoy!



Courtesy of the YaraFes Planning Committee

The Rise of Musical Instrument Manufacturing in Hamamatsu and Our Eight Founding Members

Hamamatsu, A City With Musical Roots



Shizuoka
Musical Instruments Manufacturers
Association



Shizuoka
Musical Instruments Manufacturers
Association

How Did Hamamatsu Become the City of Musical Instruments?

Shining Hamamatsu Act Tower is home to the Hamamatsu International Piano Competition, held once every three years, talented locals sing and perform outside of the station, and Hamamatsu Museum of Instruments with globally celebrated exhibits. Hamamatsu, which has grown as a "City of Music" where people enjoy music in various ways, continues to move forward with the aim of becoming a "Capital of Music" where people gather and musical culture flourishes in many different ways.

Hamamatsu's musical production commenced at the beginning of the Meiji Era (circa 1885), when one legendary man found brilliant success in organ production and strove to enrich his apprentices' education, which resulted in the creation of a number of musical instrument manufacturers and retailers.

While Hamamatsu is the City of Music, we persistently strive to become the Capital of Music, a place where many types of music continue to flourish. The eight members of the Shizuoka Musical Instruments Manufacturers Association carry on the tradition of pouring their hearts into the making of musical instruments. In this brochure, we will share with you the heartwarming origins of Hamamatsu's musical manufacturers.



The Shizuoka Musical Instruments Manufacturers Association

The Shizuoka Musical Instruments Manufacturers Association was established in 1951 by Nippon Gakki Co.,Ltd. (currently Yamaha Corporation), Kawai Musical Instruments Manufacturing Co.,Ltd., Tokai Gakki Co.,Ltd., Showa Musical Instrument Manufacturing Co.,Ltd. and 14 other companies with the purpose of building friendly relations between its members and improving the development of musical instrument manufacturing.

This association has previously worked towards exemption from and eradication of excise tax, advocacy of the use of the JIS standards mark in the music industry, observation of the music market both in Japan and overseas, and the display of musical products at industrial and music fairs. In recent years, they have deepened their connections to Hamamatsu and continued on with their goal of making this city the Capitol of Music, engaging in a variety of joint efforts to promote the musical instrument industry, including online events.

Members

- Yamaha Corporation
- Kawai Musical Instruments Manufacturing Co.,Ltd.
- Tokai Gakki Co.,Ltd.
- Showa Musical Instrument Manufacturing Co.,Ltd.
- Toyo Piano MFG. Co.,Ltd.
- Suzuki Musical Instrument MFG Co.,Ltd.
- Roland Corporation
- Sanso Musical Instruments, Inc Co.,Ltd.

(In order of establishment)



Official YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/@shizuseikyo>

Act Tower, with a shape reminiscent of a harmonica (Height 212.77m, 45 stories)

The Origins of Western Music in Japan

How Western Music Came to Japan

The Warring States Period: Father Xavier Introduces Christian Music

Western music in Japan can trace its origins back to the Warring States period. In 1549, St. Francis Xavier arrived in Kagoshima as a Christian missionary and introduced the Gregorian chants, supposedly the first time Japan was exposed to Western music. St. Francis Xavier presented the daimyo of the Suo Province, Yoshitaka Ouchi, with a telescope, a mantel clock, glasses, and a clavichord. This was the first keyboard instrument to be imported to Japan.

The Edo Era: The Oldest Remaining Piano, The Seibold



The Seibold Piano © Kumaya Museum of Art Foundation

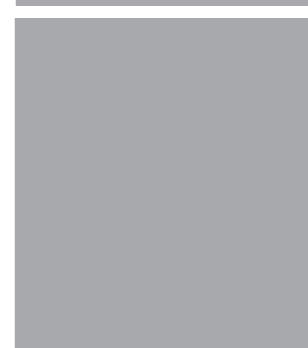
Philipp Franz Balthasar von Siebold arrived in Dejima, Nagasaki, on July 6, 1823. A German physician working as the medical officer of a Dutch trading house, he brought with him a square piano made in England, the oldest piano currently in Japan. On leaving Japan, he gave the piano to his friend, the wealthy merchant Goemon Yoshikazu Kumaya, located in the Choshu Domain (modern day Hagi city in Yamaguchi prefecture). In celebration of this piano's historic arrival, July 6 is Piano Day in Japan.

Bakumatsu: Perry and the Dawn of Western Music

Commodore Perry and his fleet of four black ships traveled to the coast of Uraga from America in 1853. He returned the following year and landed in Yokohama on March 8th, accompanied by their naval band. That day marked the first time Western music had been heard in Yokohama. As the nation opened its doors to foreigners, the shogunate and their vassals were impressed with the agility of the troops as they followed directions provided by the bugles and fifes, which led to a revision of the military system, including a newly established Western-style army, with one of the initial steps being the creation of a drum and fife band utilizing bamboo flutes and snare drums. This marks the true beginnings of Western music in Japan.



The arrival of Commodore Perry and his troops
Courtesy of the Yokohama Archives of History Collection



The instruments used by Perry's troops from "The Commemoration of the Arrival of the American Fleet"
Courtesy of the Yokohama Archives of History

* Some content may be hidden on the web version due to copyright restrictions.

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Early History of Hamamatsu Musical Instrument Production

The Roots of The City of Music

Ieyasu Tokugawa and the Roots of Hamamatsu Manufacturing



Life-size model of Ieyasu Tokugawa
From the Tokugawa Museum Collection
Courtesy of the Hamamatsu City History Museum

Let's take a closer look at how Hamamatsu got its start as a manufacturer of musical instruments. How did this city become a focal point for manufacturing? To find out, we have to go all the way back to Ieyasu Tokugawa. In 1570, as he prepared to invade Takeda Shingen's territory, he built Hamamatsu Castle in the southeast tip of the Mikatabara Plateau. Then, as the town surrounding the castle began to take shape, a variety of skilled craftsmen arrived from many places. The names of some areas of Hamamatsu still bear this technological legacy, as in Daiku-machi (Carpenter Town) and Kaji-machi (Blacksmith Town). From the Edo era on, these craftsmen imparted the manufacturing skills that later provided laborers with the skills needed to make Hamamatsu the City of Music.

A Location and Climate Perfect for Instrument Making

Located between Tokyo and Osaka, Hamamatsu is logically superior and is blessed with a diverse mix of people. As a result, a variety of skilled artisans gathered here, as did information and supplies, making it an ideal location for manufacturing. Additionally, the mild climate is not only beneficial for its inhabitants, but also for instrument making. In a time when temperature and humidity control was not possible like it is today, Hamamatsu's climate made it ideal for the storage and production of the wood used in organs and pianos.



Hamamatsu Festival
Kite Battle
Courtesy of the Hamamatsu Festival Pavilion

A Spirit of Endeavor

An additional point in Hamamatsu's favor is its spirit of endeavor. In the local Enshu dialect, "Yaramaika!" means "Let's try it!". This positive attitude pervades, creating and nurturing entrepreneurs willing to put forth effort in everything they do. Furthermore, Hamamatsu is located right in the center of the Tokaido eastern seaboard route, and the flow of traffic passing through means it welcomes outsiders and allows for a diverse population, creating a diversity of companies. It was here that corporations such as Yamaha, Kawai, Honda, Suzuki expanded to reach around the globe.

The Infancy of Musical Instrument Manufacturing

Evolving From Just One Organ

Demand for Domestically Produced Organs & Pianos in the Meiji Era

The Meiji government announced its new education system in 1872. Musical education was one feature of the new classes, including singing in elementary school and playing instruments in junior high school. However, there were no Western music teachers or teaching materials available in Japan at that time, which led the government to establish what would become Japan's first Western music research center, the Tokyo Music Research Center (currently Tokyo University of the Arts). Shuji Isawa, a member of the Ministry of Education, became the first to head this research center, with the aim of developing musical education. While making educational materials and educating teachers, he recommended the use of organs and pianos. However, at the time these were expensive items imported by ship, meaning it would be difficult to put them in schools across the nation. This created a need for reasonably-priced, domestically-produced keyboard instruments.



"Butterflies" from the Kindergarten Songbook, 1887
Courtesy of the Yokohama History Museum Collection

Torakusu Yamaha Comes to Hamamatsu

Enter Torakusu Yamaha. Born in Kishu (modern-day Wakayama Prefecture) to a samurai family, he dreamed of starting his own business at the beginning of the Meiji Era. After studying clock manufacturing and medical equipment repair and sales, he began working as a traveling repairman for an Osakan medical equipment store, Kawachi-ya, and trekked to hospitals all over Japan. This brought him to the Hamamatsu Hospital, where he met the director, Housaku Fukushima, and was contracted to be Kawachi-ya's resident equipment repairman for the hospital in 1881. Torakusu was 30 at the time.



The Young Torakusu Yamaha

Japanese Organs as Good as Imports

Torakusu became interested in organs after coming across an imported one in the course of his job and began researching them. Hamamatsu Jinjo Elementary School was established in Motoshiro near Hamamatsu Castle in 1886. In April 1887, singing classes commenced using a reed organ imported from America. However, the organ broke after just two and a half months, and Torakusu was dispatched to repair it with the help of Kisaburo Kawai, a craftsman who specialized in metal ornamentation and assisted Torakusu with medical equipment repairs. While this was originally thought to be the seed that led to the development of the company, later research has determined that Torakusu began organ production as early as 1885.



The Oldest Existing Yamaha Organ Courtesy of the Yamaha Corporation Collection

Torakusu and Kisaburo brought a prototype organ to the government's Tokyo Music Research Center, but as it was out of tune, it did not receive their approval. Torakusu studied musical theory and tuning at the Research Center, returned to Hamamatsu, and produced a second prototype. On presentation of this second model, Shuji Isawa, then head of the Research Center, gave it a glowing review, saying it was as good as any imported organ.



Medal of Honor with Green Ribbon presented in 1885 for initiating organ production
Courtesy of the Hironobu Yamaha Collection

Development of Hamamatsu Musical Instrument Production

Domestic and Overseas Expositions

Best in the Nation, Revolutionary Prizes from Overseas



The Yamaha grand piano purchased by the Dowager Empress Shoken in 1903

Torakusu Yamaha established Yamaha Organ Manufacturing, Ltd., in 1889, making organs with eighty employees. Organ production was expanding across the nation, and at the Third National Industrial Exhibition held in Ueno, Tokyo in 1890, there was a total of twenty-nine organs on display. The Yamaha organ was there awarded top honors, receiving a second-place Order of Merit, marking them out from the rest of the pack. The Yamaha piano displayed at the same event received a third-place Order of Merit. In 1897 Torakusu established Nippon Gakki Co., Ltd., and in 1902, they completed their first grand piano. The Yamaha grand piano and organ displayed at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair both received Honorary Grand Prizes. This was the first time Japanese instruments received awards overseas.



The second-place Order of Merit

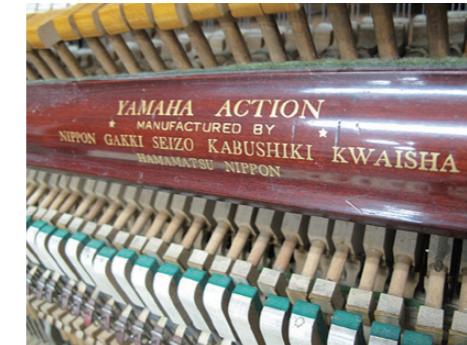


The medal received at the St. Louis World's Fair

Koichi Kawai and Japan's first Piano Action

Koichi Kawai was apprenticed to Torakusu Yamaha in 1896 at the age of eleven, and his work in the development office starting at the age of twelve would have a lasting effect on his life, with his dexterous fingers and clever mind providing a well-spring of creativity. In 1899, Torakusu delegated development of their piano action to Koichi while he was studying piano production in America, and it was completed on Torakusu's return five months later. Koichi was just thirteen at the time, showing his true potential as Koichi the Creator. Then in 1900, he was

instrumental in the creation of the soundboard at Nippon Gakki, which is the heart of the piano. Both interior and exterior components of their upright piano were created almost entirely in-house.



Yamaha's Original Action

Torakusu's Technician Training Boosts Manufacturing

In 1906, Torakusu started an educational program for students just out of elementary school in order to nurture engineers' knowledge of organ and piano assembly, tuning, voicing, and the like. Naokichi Yamaha (who would later found the Yamaha Piano Research Laboratory) and Koichi Kawai (founder of the Kawai Musical Instrument Research Laboratory), who had been carefully brought along by Torakusu, acted as teachers to these apprentices while also providing them with a traditional education in regular subjects. One of Torakusu's major achievements was the idea of not only educating these apprentices, but also accepting employees from licensed retailers on commission. This technical training enabled valuable knowledge to be passed on to later generations, ensuring the continuation of instrument manufacturing in Hamamatsu.



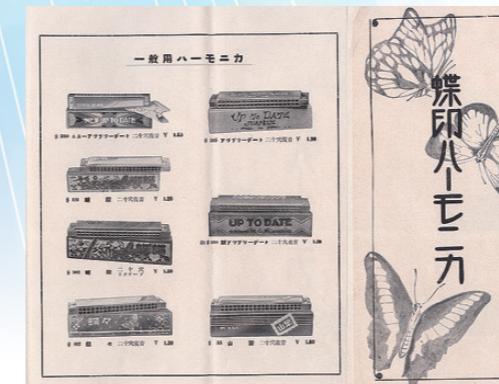
Yamaha technician certification

Hamamatsu Becomes a Major Instrument Manufacturer

From Organs and Pianos to Harmonicas and Electronics

Harmonicas Thrive from Taisho to Showa

Harmonicas enjoyed great popularity with the general public during the Taisho era and the start of the Showa era of Japan (approx. 1912-1930), especially with students, who would form harmonica bands. The Japanese market had been dominated by German makers, but in 1915, Nippon Gakki began producing Butterfly Harmonicas. The import of German harmonicas ceased due to WWI, creating a boom in Butterfly Harmonicas' popularity, not only in Japan, but also to customers overseas who had previously purchased German harmonicas, driving musical instrument production for instruments besides pianos and organs.



A Butterfly Harmonicas catalog



Koichi and colleagues



Kawai's first piano, the Showa Piano

Koichi Kawai and the Kawai Musical Instruments Research Laboratory

Torakusu Yamaha passed away in 1916 and in 1926, Nippon Gakki faced a major labor dispute. Consequently, the same year, Koichi Kawai decided to leave Nippon Gakki, where he had worked for thirty years, and started the Kawai Musical Instruments Research Laboratory in 1927 with the coworkers who had chosen to leave Nippon Gakki with him. The same year Kawai Pianos began production of the upright Showa Piano model. This small piano with 64 keys possessed all the necessary functions, and was well-received and quickly adopted by many schools. Following this success, Kawai produced a standard upright piano in 1928, the Tategata A, followed by their first grand piano, the Hiradai 1. In 1930 they began production of a small organ, popular both in Japan and overseas.

Post-War Music Education and Industrial Development

Nippon Gakki expanded into production of xylophones, marimbas, and furniture, and Kawai Musical Instruments began harmonica production in 1934. Hamamatsu changed from a city of only pianos and organs to a city of numerous musical instruments. During the war, they produced well-received propellers for the army using their advanced woodworking techniques, which helped to keep the company from going under. The post-war baby boom created an equal boom in piano production, with over 100 manufacturers and related companies present in the Hamamatsu area. Additionally, musical education continued to drive production, with the majority of harmonicas, melodicas, recorders, accordions, marimbas, organs, and electronic instruments produced in the Hamamatsu area. It's thanks to the skills imparted by Torakusu Yamaha and Koichi Kawai that musical instrument production blossomed, and that Hamamatsu has come to be known as the City of Music.

Our Eight Founding Members

Torakusu Yamaha



Founded
1887

Torakusu, Bringing Musical Instrument Production to Hamamatsu

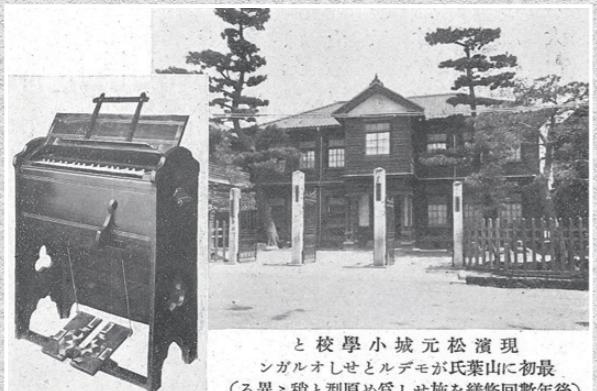
The Yamaha brand got its name from its founder, Torakusu Yamaha. He learned astronomy from his father, a Kishu Tokugawa clansman, and loved the sciences. He learned clockmaking in Osaka, where the use of clocks had spread, and it was repairs of medical equipment that brought him to a hospital in Hamamatsu.

In 1887, the organ at an elementary school in Hamamatsu suddenly stopped working. The principal told Torakusu of this issue while he was working at the hospital, and asked him to repair it. Torakusu repaired it easily, and noted the need for and potential of organ manufacturing.

He quickly made a prototype with the craftsman Kisaburo Kawai, and they took it to the government's musical education institute, the Tokyo Music Research Center, for inspection. They were told, "The shape is good, but the tuning is incorrect; therefore, we cannot use it." Torakusu studied tuning and music theory from scratch, and succeeded in creating a better organ after much trial and error. This was the first step on the path to the creation of Yamaha. He utilized educational textbook sales channels to create sales, and his products were praised at expositions both in Japan and overseas.

He established Nippon Gakki Co., Ltd. in 1897, then created the first upright piano in 1900, with their first grand piano produced two years later, while also pouring his efforts into the training of superior technicians.

Torakusu's dedication to employee training and pioneering spirit were the cornerstones of instrument development.



Hamamatsu Motohiro Elementary School and the organ Torakusu used as his model.
(Differs slightly from original appearance due to repairs.)



The Itaya-machi factory, est. 1898

History

1887 Foundation
1897 Nippon Gakki Co., Ltd. established
1987 Name Changed to Yamaha Corporation

Major Products

Musical Instruments—Production and sales of pianos, electronic instruments, wind/string/percussion instruments
Audio Equipment—Production and sales of home audio, professional audio, network devices
Other—Electronic devices, automobile interior components, factory automation equipment, golf products, resorts

Yamaha Corporation

10-1 Nakazawacho, Chuo-ku, Hamamatsu, Shizuoka 430-8650

Scan QR code for more information

Company website



Video

"Hamamatsu—The Color of Sound Concert Grand Piano"



Koichi Kawai

Founded
1927



Koichi the Genius Inventor

Koichi founded the Kawai Musical Instrument Research Laboratory with his colleagues in 1927, and was filled with a passionate conviction that they produce pianos.

He was determined to overturn the idea of the time that pianos were out of reach of regular people, and he utilized his genius in the pursuit of the belief that he could produce them at reasonable prices without sacrificing performance. This drive to create the ideal piano was the spirit behind their laboratory.

His desire to deliver pianos to the people was not motivated solely out of a desire to create good engineering, but to bring beautiful sounds to people around the world.

Nicknamed "Koichi the Creator", he patented eighteen items, including his piano action, soundboard, and harmonica reed installation devices, and registered ten utility models. He created pianos full of inventiveness, carrying on the skills from his Nippon Gakki days. In reward for his efforts, on May 7, 1953, he was the first in his industry to receive the Blue Ribbon Medal from the Emperor. He thanked not only his employees, but also visited the grave of the mentor who had been like a father to him, Torakusu Yamaha, to offer up his appreciation.

His stoic pursuit of "the soul of sound" in order to "produce the best piano in the world with my own hands" has found fruit time and again in renowned piano competitions around the world.



Circa 1929 at the main factory



The first Kawai grand piano, the Hiradai 1.

History

1927 Kawai Musical Instruments Research Laboratory established
1929 Name changed to Kawai Musical Instruments Manufacturing Company
1935 Reorganized into Kawai Musical Instruments Manufacturing General Partnership Co.
1951 Reorganized into Kawai Musical Instruments Manufacturing Co., Ltd.

Major Products

Instrument manufacturing/purchasing & sales. Operation of music classes and physical education classes.
Metal and timber component manufacturing/purchasing & sales

Kawai Musical Instruments Manufacturing Co., Ltd.

200 Terajimacho, Chuo-ku, Hamamatsu, Shizuoka 430-8665

Scan QR code for more information

Company website



Video

"Hamamatsu—The Color of Sound Concert Grand Piano"



Our Eight Founding Members

Heihichi Adachi



Founded
1947

Entrepreneurial Spirit of a Samurai, Business Sense of a Merchant

Heihichi Adachi founded the Tokai Musical Instrument Research Laboratory in 1947 to focus on piano and harmonica research and development. As he worked as the proprietor of the Adachi Instrument Store, he always had a dream of making pianos.

Adachi, born in the Meiji era, was a quintessential example of the “samurai spirit, merchant’s sense” type of person, who understood the subtleties of life and quietly worked with a unique determination. His creed was that “words of love can change the world”. His manufacturing philosophy followed his opinions; accordingly, he neither feared great enemies nor underestimated lesser ones, and was a mainstay of the industry, rich in achievements.

Later, in 1961, he developed the melodica known as the Pianica, which was a big hit in education as a teaching tool. In January 1978, Adachi finally realized his original dream and created an upright piano loosely based on the Schimmel piano from Germany, followed by a grand piano three years later. Now, his original electric guitars with an aluminum alloy body are winning over the younger generation.

A company with a seventy-five year history, Tokai’s main product line changed from pianos to guitars, and they continue to explore new product concepts to carry on the spirit of their founder, Heihichi.



A New Year's celebration picture from 1950



A harmonica from early days of production

History

1947 Tokai Musical Instrument Research Laboratory founded
1948 Tokai Gakki Co., Ltd. established

Major Products

Electric guitar production/sales, sales of musical instruments and related products

Tokai Gakki Co., Ltd.
2-26-10 Enshuhama, Chuo-ku, Hamamatsu, Shizuoka 430-0835

Scan QR code for more information

Company website



Video

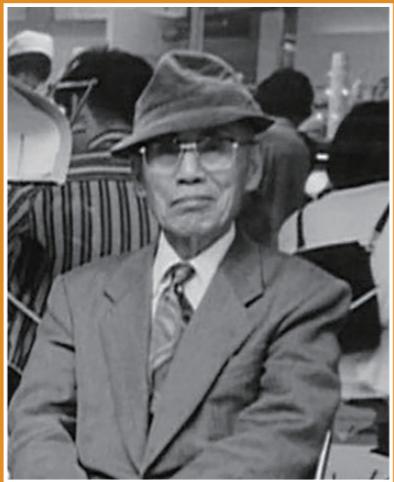
“Hamamatsu—The Color of Sound Electric Guitar”



Rikuhei Suyama

Founded
1947

The Joy of Music in Your Pocket



The Special Miyata Harmonica



An old Showa catalog

History

1947 Showa Musical Instruments Manufacturing founded

Major Products

Musical instrument production (harmonicas)

Showa Musical Instrument Manufacturing Co., Ltd.
1-8-55 Kamijima, Chuo-ku, Hamamatsu, Shizuoka 433-8122

Scan QR code for more information

Company website



Video

“Hamamatsu—The Color of Sound Mini Harmonica”



Our Eight Founding Members

Takami Ishikawa



Founded
1948

An Indomitable Engineering Spirit

The founder of Toyo Pianos, Takami Ishikawa, started working at Nippon Gakki Co., Ltd. (currently Yamaha Corporation) in 1925, where he learned the techniques of piano making from Naokichi Yamaha and Koichi Kawai. Later, he worked for five years at Kawai Musical Instruments at invitation from Koichi Kawai, who had started the Kawai Musical Instruments Research Laboratory. Then, in 1934, he founded Mitsuwa Musical Instrument Manufacturing in Shirawaki-Yozu, on the outskirts of Hamamatsu. A passionate engineer, he made up his mind that the only way he could create pianos that reflected his own philosophy of piano making was to go independent.

After the factory was damaged in the war in 1945 the company was disbanded, but was reestablished as Toyo Piano Manufacturing in Kaketsuka, Iwata in 1947, and in 1948 opened a new factory in Kitajima, Hamamatsu. An engineer at heart, Ishikawa left the business end to his vice president, and poured himself into the engineering side of the business, creating the company's flagship brand, the Apollo Piano. To Ishikawa, pianos were like living things, a part of himself into which he devoted his heart and soul.

Although a number of mass-production piano makers were weeded out in the following years, Toyo Pianos continued to flourish, with their sound and quality leading them to be the designated producers of pianos for the Tokyo University of the Arts and the Musashino Academia Musicae in the 1970s.

Today, their upright pianos are a match for any grand piano, with their unique SSS (Three S) hammer action. The only shifting piano action in the world, Toyo Piano's main product remains the upright piano, which still pulses with the engineering soul that has been a part of the company since its founding, and whose uniqueness Toyo continues to dispatch around the world.



An Apollo Piano catalog



Apollo No. 300 (1948)

History

1934 Mitsuwa Musical Instrument Manufacturing founded
1947 Toyo Musical Instrument MFG, Ltd. established
1948 Toyo Piano MFG. Co., Ltd. established

Major Products

Piano manufacturing/sales, import piano repairs/sales, timber processing, painting

Toyo Piano MFG. Co., Ltd.

1818 Takagi, Iwata, Shizuoka 438-0202

Scan QR code for more information

Company website



Video

"Hamamatsu—The Color of Sound Upright Piano"

Manji Suzuki

Founded
1953

Aiming For One-Of-A-Kind Products

The Suzuki Musical Instrument website showcases a quote from its founder—“Love of harmonicas, fearless in the face of new challenges, workers with a life-long love of instrument making.” These words of Manji Suzuki, although simple, demonstrate his spirit.

Manji was born in Hamamatsu in 1923 and began making harmonicas at Kawai Musical instruments at fifteen. After he served in the Marines, he began manufacturing harmonicas independently in 1953 and established Suzuki Musical Instrument Manufacturing in 1954. At the time, harmonicas were widely used in elementary school music classes, and he focused on creating an educational model. After hearing from teachers of the difficulty of teaching using harmonicas, in 1961 he created the first domestic harmonica with a keyboard (melodica) for individual use, the Melodion. In 1967 the Ministry of Education included the melodica in its list of educational standards, and Suzuki's model was adopted by schools across the nation. Additionally, he began producing and selling the Taisho harp, a kind of stringed instrument with keys that made it easy to play. This was wildly popular and used in schools nationwide. Furthermore, they developed educational software in the 1980s, which made them ahead of their time. Suzuki began producing and selling Hammond Organs (originally an American company) in the late 1980s and thus entered the general market.

“Manji was a person who was interested in everything,” said the current CEO, Reiko Suzuki, in an interview. He always told employees, “Think of an idea yourself, and try everything.” Suzuki continues to channel his carefree, adventurous spirit to create one-of-a-kind products.



An ad for the first domestic melodica



The first Melodion, the Super 34

History

1953 Foundation
1954 Suzuki Musical Inst. MFG. Co., Ltd. established

Major Products

Musical instrument manufacturing (educational models/harmonicas/Hammond Organs/Taisho Harps)

Suzuki Musical Instrument MFG Co., Ltd.

2-25-7 Ryoke, Chuo-ku, Hamamatsu, Shizuoka 430-0852

Scan QR code for more information

Company website



Video

"Hamamatsu—The Color of Sound Chromatic Harmonica"



Our Eight Founding Members

Ikutaro Kakehashi



Founded
1972

Performed His Life's Work in Hamamatsu

Shortly after WWII in the late 1940s, Ikutaro taught himself engineering and opened a clock shop at the age of sixteen in Takachiho, Miyazaki Prefecture, where he used to listen to music as he repaired clocks.

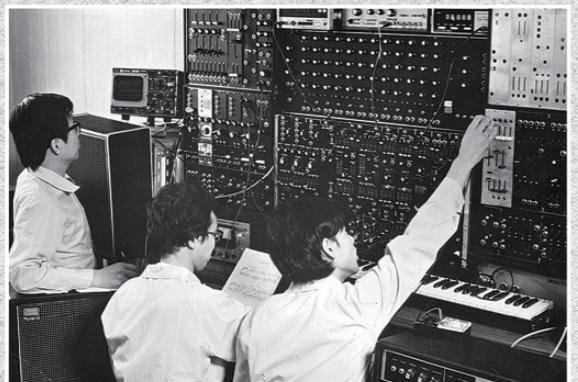
At the age of twenty he returned to his hometown of Osaka, where he opened an appliance store and started building his own electronic devices as a hobby.

One day, when asked to repair a church organ, he was impressed by the rich sounds and thought, "I want to make musical instruments!" This was the start of his life's work in music.

At the time, organs were changing from foot-pump models to electric models, and this inspired Kakehashi's lifelong dream of making electronic instruments and put him on the path to manufacturing. He established Ace Electronic Industries in 1960, and expanded production to a factory he purchased in Hamamatsu in 1968. Located between Osaka and Tokyo, Hamamatsu is conveniently located for export of goods to both Shimizu Port and Nagoya Port.

He made a fresh start with Roland Corporation in 1972 in Osaka, with an additional factory in Hamamatsu. He continued producing groundbreaking products one after another including the world's first electronic Touch Sense pianos and guitar synthesizers, and made Roland a global electronics maker. He contributed to the establishment of MIDI as a global standardization system for electronic musical instruments in 1983, and in 2013 was awarded a Technical Grammy in recognition of his contributions.

Roland moved its headquarters to Hamamatsu in 2005, a city where Kakehashi could realize his life's work. He once told a reporter, "Hamamatsu has an open and enterprising spirit, and it was the right choice."



The product development team circa 1976



The first Roland Synthesizer

History

1954 Opened Kakehashi Musen appliance store
1960 Ace Electronic Industries, Inc. established
1972 Roland Corporation established

Major Products

Manufacturing and sales/import and export of electronic musical instruments, electronic devices, and software

Roland Corporation

2036-1 Nakagawa, Hosoecho, Hamana-ku, Hamamatsu, Shizuoka 431-1304

Scan QR code for more information

Company website



Video

"Hamamatsu—The Color of Sound Digital Piano"



Tsuguo Suzuki

Founded
1985



The Three Creations Principle of a Classical Instrument Maker

Sanso Musical Instruments, Inc. became independent of Tokai Musical Instruments in 1985 to focus exclusively on harpsichord and banjo production and its name was changed to Sanso Industrial Arts. They began production of pipe organs the following year. Tsuguo Suzuki's Three Creations principle—creating people, creating things, creating dreams—was particularly focused on the concept of creating craftsmen through instrument production, believing that at heart "the essence of production is passing skills on to the next generation." This is still a key belief of Sanso today.

The harpsichord was the genesis of keyboard instruments. Sanso's harpsichords are reproductions of antique models based on classic blueprints obtained from overseas. All blueprints are drawn by hand with pencil, with designs based on materials chosen with care, and all processes are done by hand, from creation of the harpsichord's total of over 1,000 parts to final assembly. Production of their Taisho harp began in 1987. Sanso wanted to elevate the musical craftsmanship of this instrument that can easily bring music to the masses, and aimed to create a superior model.

Sanso also began producing lyres in 2013. Sanso has been creating musical gems with the heart of a master craftsman since its inception, a fine example of the Hamamatsu manufacturing spirit.



The original factory



double harpsichord produced by Jean-Henri Hemsch in 1756, which served as a model for production.

History

1985 Sanso Industrial Arts founded
2008 Name changed to Sanso Musical Instrument Manufacturing

Major Products

Production and sales of classical instruments such as harpsichords, lyres, and the Taisho harp

Sanso Musical Instruments, Inc Co., Ltd.

789 Kitajimacho, Chuo-ku, Hamamatsu, Shizuoka 435-0041

Scan QR code for more information

Company website



Video

"Hamamatsu—The Color of Sound Harpsichord"

