



GERMAN PIANO MAKER *Schimmel* has recently revised the specifications, brands, and sizes of instruments they offer. The most notable change has been to their top-line *Konzert* series of grand pianos. Readers familiar with *Schimmel*'s earlier models will recall their *Trilogy* concept, in which three sizes of grand piano models shared the same action design (e.g., K169/189/213 and K230/256/280). The new models (K175/195/219/230/256/280) comprise reengineerings to accommodate a concert grand action in all *Konzert* models, regardless of size. The sizes and shapes of these instruments have been changed from the earlier, smaller models to accommodate the larger actions.

Other refinements in the latest *Konzert* grands include higher-quality construction and materials in the soundboard and bridges, and more factory time devoted to refinement and finishing touches, with a particular focus on fine voicing to smooth out and enhance the tone. *Schimmel*'s *Konzert* models are built in Braunschweig, Germany, and bear the "Made in Germany" certification of the Bundesverband Klavier (BVK).

*Collora Piano*, of Dallas, Texas, was gracious in providing our reviewer access to the first of these new *Schimmels* in the U.S., less than two days after their arrival, at the Texas Music Teachers Association's annual conference. We asked our reviewer, Professor Kiyoshi Tamagawa, to spend most of his time with the three smallest grands, to learn how these early-production instruments sounded and felt with the latest refinements.

—Editor

Having studied and performed mainly in the United States, I have regarded Steinways, both American and German, as the gold standard for high-end pianos, with fond memories of individual Bösendorfers, Grotrians, and Faziolis I've encountered on my travels. Prior to trying them for this review, I had not previously played a *Schimmel* piano or heard reports about them from colleagues, so I was approaching them free of any preconceptions.

The first instrument I tried was the 6' 5" K195. My first impression was of a tone that was clear and transparent, but not harsh or shrill.

Clarity of counterpoint in the Preludes and Fugues from Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier* and the first movement of Beethoven's "Waldstein" sonata sounded great on this instrument. This piano seemed ideally suited to most Baroque and Classical music (assuming you like Baroque music on the modern piano). Using the *una corda* pedal softened the sound without dulling it. The touch was distinctive: there was a fair amount of key dip (the length of the key's travel from top to bottom), and precise finger technique was required to produce the exact sound desired, though the action itself was light and responsive. In this respect, the feel of the instrument reminded me of a Hamburg Steinway.

I next tried Schimmel's smallest Konzert model, the 5' 9" K175, and found the tone noticeably brighter than that of the larger K195, though not to any objectionable degree. The overall sound possessed the same transparent quality I had found attractive in the K195. Touch response was similar to the larger instrument, though the key dip felt slightly greater. The upper treble had a lovely silvery quality, though the strength of the K175's powerful bass register might overbalance it in loud, massive textures unless care is taken by the player in the voicing of melody and accompaniment. Some might prefer a thicker, darker tone in the fuller chordal textures of Brahms, for example; again, I felt that Bach, Mozart, and Beethoven brought out the virtues of this instrument most vividly—I loved how the opening of Mozart's Sonata in B-flat, K.333, sounded on the K175.

The 7' 2" K219 shares the wide-tailed design of the other Konzert-series instruments (it's larger than the Steinway B, for example). Again, I was impressed with the responsiveness and evenness of this Schimmel's Renner action—runs, trills, and repeated notes sounded gratifyingly clear. The overall sound of the K219 was closer to the K195, and not quite as bright as that of the smaller K175. Even in the dry acoustic of the exhibition hall in which I was playing, the volume this piano could produce was impressive—the climactic passage in Liszt's second *Légende*, *St. François de Paule marchant sur les flots*, sounded rich and massive, the tone never becoming harsh or clangorous. Conversely, there was less "ping" and transparency in the upper treble compared with the smaller Schimmel models. The action, once again, was not heavy or stiff, but nevertheless challenging; although there was considerable distance to the key dip, the let-off (i.e., the resistance one feels from the key immediately before hitting bottom), seemed less pronounced than one might expect. This may necessitate some adjustment for those used to the less responsive, more cushiony actions of other large grands, and for an advanced pianist will be simply a matter of personal

## SCHIMMEL KONZERT SERIES GRANDS

Prices for models in polished ebony

Model	Size	MSRP	SMP*
K 280	9' 2"	\$149,750	\$120,800
K 256	8' 4"	\$134,750	\$108,800
K 230	7' 7"	\$124,750	\$100,800
K 219	7' 2"	\$99,750	\$80,800
K 195	6' 5"	\$92,250	\$74,800
K 175	5' 9"	\$84,750	\$68,800

\*Suggested Maximum Price. Most sales take place at a modest discount to this price.

[Note that models, prices, and specifications may have changed since this article was first published. See [www.pianobuyer.com](http://www.pianobuyer.com) for current information.]

preference rather than an advantage or drawback. I was most impressed with this lovely instrument's power and tone quality, and enjoyed my first experience playing all these brand new models from Schimmel. 🎹

Pianist **Kiyoshi Tamagawa** is a Professor of Music at Southwestern University, in Georgetown, Texas. He has performed throughout North America, as well as in Asia and the U.K. He collaborated with the late violinist Eugene Fodor for nine years and recorded a CD with him. Dr. Tamagawa can be reached at [tamagawk@southwestern.edu](mailto:tamagawk@southwestern.edu).