



Choosing the Right Digital Piano for Your Team

By Dani Teagarden

Whether you're looking for a simple instrument that just plays and sounds like a real acoustic piano, or you're seeking a powerful centerpiece for all your worship team's ambitions, there's a digital piano that's right for your church! To help you zero in on the perfect keyboard for your needs, let's take a look at the different kinds of digital pianos available, as well as the important factors you'll want to consider when making your decision.

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Main Features to Consider

As you take a look at the keyboards featured on the next few pages, these five factors will help you start narrowing down your decision:

1. Action

Do you want keys that are weighted to feel and play just like an acoustic piano's? Or, do you want keys that glide beneath your fingers so that you can easily play synth and organ parts?

2. Sounds

Do you primarily need an authentic acoustic piano sound, or would you like to have other sounds such as strings, synths, electric pianos, organs, and more?

3. Arranging/Recording Capabilities

Will you be composing songs with your keyboard? If so, you may want to have a built-in sequencer, onboard drum sounds, and a direct-to-computer connection.

4. Size and Portability

Choosing a 76-key keyboard instead of a full-size 88-key instrument can be a great way to cut down on weight while maintaining a first-class playing experience.

5. Appearance

How important is it that your church's keyboard resemble an acoustic piano? Do you want an integrated stand, or would you prefer to use a more portable stage-style keyboard stand?

When Less Is More

Many church pianists we work with often feel overwhelmed by the number of choices out there — and even more so by the number of knobs, buttons, and controls on digital pianos. “All I need,” they tell us, “is a digital piano that plays like an acoustic piano and has a fantastic natural piano sound.”

If this sounds like you, you'll want to select what's called a stage piano — and ideally one with a full set of 88 weighted keys (also called weighted action). These digital pianos actually mimic the response of a grand piano's keybed, where the lowest keys require more force to strike, and the upper keys feel light and airy beneath your fingertips. To nail the sound of an acoustic piano, today's top keyboard manufacturers have gone to great lengths to record some of the finest grand pianos in the world, putting these sounds right inside the instruments. Not only can you play through a classic Steinway, but on many you can also push a single button to play through a timeless Bosendorfer, a Yamaha C7, or a character-filled upright.

If you're replacing an acoustic piano, one consideration to make is how important aesthetics are to your church. If you have more traditional services or are seeking a really natural look up on the platform, then you may want to choose a more authentic-looking stage piano. We have options available with wooden cabinets, in a variety of finishes, so you can choose an instrument that matches the decor of your church. You can see a selection of these on page 95.

Take a look at the instruments we've highlighted here, including Roland's RD-700GX, the affordable M-Audio ProKeys 88, and the piano-like Yamaha Arius YDP140. You'll also want to find out more about the Kurzweil SP2X. These are on pages 91–95.

Workstations: Powerful Tools for the Worship Leader

While streamlined, piano-like instruments are ideal for a number of worship leaders and church pianists, many other houses of worship rely on keyboards for much more than just piano sounds. In fact, if you're a piano-centric worship leader, you may very well be able to perform and produce your entire service with a single powerful instrument called a keyboard workstation. More than just keyboards

Q What Do MIDI and USB Connections Do?

A If a keyboard has a MIDI and/or a USB connection, then it's capable of easily communicating with a computer. That way, you can take advantage of the many benefits of music notation and recording software. For example, you can easily record ideas into your favorite notation program (pgs. 100–101) and then create lead sheets for the entire worship team. You'll also be able to play and record software virtual instruments, so your keyboard can double as an important studio tool.

with hundreds, sometimes thousands, of instrument sounds, these instruments regularly feature multitrack sequencers, so you can layer all the different instrument parts into a full orchestration. It's very similar to working with audio editing and production software, only you're not tethered to a computer — and you can easily play these backing tracks right from your keyboard during services. And even if you do have a more complete worship band, you can use a workstation to add a few choice backing instruments to fill out your sound — perhaps a second trumpet part, a string section, or even an extra kick drum sound for more power. Find out more about keyboard workstations on pages 88–91.

A Balance of Features for Modern Worship

If you don't need the all-out power of a workstation, but you'd still like a handful of cutting-edge capabilities — maybe built-in drum patterns for rehearsals and a lighter sequencer for a quick songwriting sketch pad — there are a number of options that fall somewhere in between the two categories we've already mentioned. Instead of choosing an 88-key option, which has the same number of keys as a full piano, you can select a 76-key (or smaller) version. These instruments trade a slightly reduced range (many keyboardists never use the highest and lowest keys anyway) for lighter weight and a more portable form factor. You can still get fully weighted keys on a 76-key piano, or you can choose a semi-weighted version that works well if you perform a blend of classic and modern instrument sounds, rather than strictly piano.

Increasing in popularity are keyboards that feature a built-in microphone input. These are perfect for the performing worship leader and great for scaled-down youth services. The vocal microphone goes right through the keyboard's output, so you'll need to amplify only one signal. Better yet, there are professional vocal effects built in, so you can refine the vocal sound without purchasing an extra piece of gear.

Don't Forget About Realistic Organ Sounds

The organ is still an exceptionally popular instrument during worship services. And while most of the keyboards we carry feature a built-in organ sound, you can still get that organ-playing experience — complete with drawbars — by choosing a dedicated instrument for the task. Be sure to look at page 96 for our selection of stage organs. You'll want to pair yours with a Leslie 3300 amplifier (page 98) for the complete rotary speaker effect.

Have more questions? Our Sales Engineers are here to help you choose the best keyboard for your church's goals. In fact, what you see in Worship Sound Pro is just a selection of the many keyboards we have available. Give us a call today at (800) 222-4700.

Muse Research Adds new worship sounds to any MIDI-equipped keyboard!
RECEPTOR Spirit

\$1,999⁹⁹



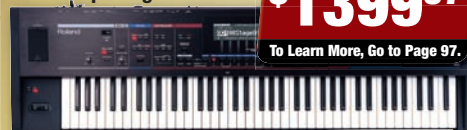
Customer-favorite Keyboard Picks

>> Roland JUNO-STAGE

Ideal for Contemporary
Worship Songs

\$1,399⁹⁷

To Learn More, Go to Page 97.



>> Kurzweil SP2X

Amazing Feel and
Piano Sounds

\$1,333⁹⁷

To Learn More, Go to Page 94.



>> Korg M3-88

Performance Ready
with Powerful Features

\$2,699⁹⁷

To Learn More, Go to Page 90.



>> M-Audio ProKeys 88

Breaking Through the
Price/Performance Barrier

\$599⁹⁷

To Learn More, Go to Page 94.



>> Yamaha S90 XS

Perfect Blend of Ease of
Use and Deep Features

\$2,399⁹⁹

To Learn More, Go to Page 88.



>> Arius YDP140

The Look and Feel
of an Acoustic
Upright Piano

\$1,049⁹⁹

To Learn More, Go to Page 95.

