

# Les Flanagan talks about old pianos

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Did you hear the story of the youngster who wanted to play tennis? Her father gave her an old racquet with two strings in it and told her to prove to him that she could learn. If after six months she could play well he would invest in a new racquet. Sounds silly doesn't it, but that sort of thing is happening every week with the purchase of pianos. A child shows his or her natural instinct to play music and you the parents then set out to make it as hard as possible for that talent to develop. Eventually the child loses interest and you say "There you are, we were right, the child has no interest in music, it was only a passing fad".

How do you manage to achieve this astounding conclusion? Well first of all you decide that the child will probably lose interest and you set out to back up your decision by looking for the cheapest piano you can find that plays. The piano you choose is naturally out of tune and has a doubtful tone, so immediately you child will never appreciate good tone and probably grow up to sing off key. But no matter, think of the money you saved!

If all that isn't enough the keys are hard to press down so young Sally will have to thump hard to get any response at all. Once again you give no thought to the fact that your child should be taught to appreciate lightness, touch and feeling for music. After all, you reason, young Sally doesn't have to appreciate and enjoy what she is playing, just as long as she practices for a few hours or so each day until she is bored to tears and asks to go out and play with other children. When that happens the good news is that you can always sell it to some other poor unsuspecting family who will start the process all over again.

When it comes to your child's future you should give them a fair go by investing in an instrument that is at the top of your budget, not the bottom. Then if the child loses interest, and nowadays that isn't likely, you know you gave them the best opportunity you could.

It seems a sad comment on today's standards when we select the best dishwasher we can for the kitchen of our home, but purchase the cheapest piano for the love of our hearts.



Typical old piano to avoid.