

## Broadwood 507 Grand Piano



Built by the firm of Broadwood and Sons, London England, this represents a style and sound of pianos familiar to players and composers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Indeed the Broadwood firm provided pianos to many composers, notable among them Beethoven and Chopin, the latter touring almost exclusively with Broadwood pianos.

This example of their work is a 6' grand finished in a tortoise-shell burl walnut, with ebony and rosewood trim. It is straight strung, meaning the strings sit parallel, not crossing over in the bass section. The action is the typical English action of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the precursor to the Erard and modern actions, as opposed to the Viennese action used by German and Austrian builders of the time. The English grand action provides a very direct and powerful connection from player to string and was favoured by Chopin for that reason. This Broadwood model has 82 keys, from low C to a high A.

Other distinctive features of this piano are the “lyre-shaped” pedal works, hence the reason they are now referred to as the pedal lyre, and the slim shape resembling a harpsichord more than the modern grand piano shape. The legs have a tapered shaft of hexagonal section, and has a carved capital fascia of acanthus leaves.

The Broadwood firm was one of great significance in the history of the piano. Founded in 1732 by the German immigrant harpsichord builder Burckhardt Tschudi in 1732, he employed the young scot John Broadwood who so impressed the owner that he soon was named a partner. John married Tschudi’s daughter shortly thereafter and thus renamed the company. Tschudi’s instruments were held in high esteem throughout Europe, and the Tschudi house was host to touring musicians, including Mozart and Hadyn who enjoyed extended visits. John Broadwood continued this relationship with musicians, hosting Chopin in his later years and providing studio and touring pianos. At one time Broadwood was one of the top 50 firms in London, employing thousands of workers in constructing every part for their pianos.

This instrument is available for those wishing to experience playing a piano of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is not rebuilt, merely “cleaned-up”, with most original parts intact. In time this piano will be rebuilt using historically accurate materials.

