

BEHIND THE SCENES

A spotlight on people and their pianos

Set close to the Chilterns, Richard Lawson Pianos' new showroom is sure to impress. Proud owner **Richard Lawson** takes us on a private tour

Shop Front

NAME OF RETAILER

Richard Lawson Pianos

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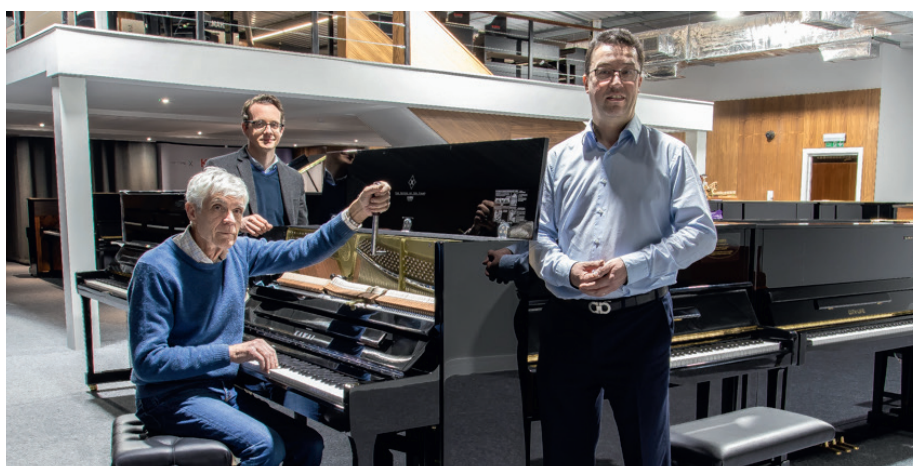
Background

After a long background in music education that started in the mid 80s and included working with ABRSM, Richard Lawson's interest began to expand into the supply of fine pianos. Around the turn of the millennium, he founded Richard Lawson Pianos; the aim was to gradually grow the business in order to stock a large range of new and used pianos for all types of players – from beginner to professional.

The first thing that strikes our customers when they first enter our showroom is how truly vast it is! We've recently moved into larger premises than ever before – in Amersham, Buckinghamshire, close to the stunning Chiltern Hills – and it was custom-built for us, covering around 10,000 square feet over three floors. This makes us one of the very largest independent specialist piano retailers in the country, in fact, and we're fortunate to be able to display over 200 upright, grand and digital pianos at any one time.

This vast range covers new and refurbished instruments by all the major brands such as Steinway, Yamaha, Kawai, Shigeru Kawai, Bösendorfer, Blüthner and Petrof. It would be a cliché to say that we have something for everyone... but it's true in our case! Our customers therefore range from families buying their first ever piano, to keen amateurs and semi-professionals upgrading their existing instruments, all the way up to international concert and pop artists.

We are open by appointment 8am to 10pm, which means we can cater for just about any time. So we have lots of customers visit us who might not be able to otherwise, due to the



Richard Lawson in the foreground with sales manager Colin and technician Rick (seated)

time constraints brought about by their job, for instance. And because it's by appointment, we're able to offer a dedicated one-to-one service which ensures that the customer is receiving our full attention, and therefore getting the very most out of their visit. We have our fair share of well-known musicians making appointments with us, too, and they appreciate the discrete and attentive service that we're pleased to provide.

Having been involved in the piano trade for over 40 years now, at Richard Lawson Pianos we've amassed a wealth of experience and expertise in that time. Our chief technician, for instance, was trained at Steinway & Sons in London and Hamburg, and has been working in his field for five decades. Each of our pianos are set up to the highest possible standard, meaning that they will retain their great sound quality and responsive action for as long as possible. We're also happy to accommodate a wide variety of requests, from lightening the action of a concert grand to making the bass section of an upright more mellow and warm sounding.

Our sales staff are conservatoire-trained pianists who have an in-depth understanding of the requirements of musicians of every level. Over and above our status as a retailer of beautiful instruments, we also value ourselves on giving honest, helpful and informed advice to all of our customers, thus ensuring each of them finds precisely the right piano for them.

The Covid situation has been both disconcerting and disruptive. But our pianos have still been enormously popular, nevertheless! As a quintessential indoor pursuit, many people in lockdown are either starting the piano as a new hobby, or are rediscovering it after sometimes many decades of not having touched one. We've really had to adapt to the 'New Normal' by, for instance, giving virtual showroom tours via Zoom, and creating a selection of videos of various models for our customers to pick one remotely. We've invested in professional-quality audio and visual equipment for this purpose. This ensures that the customer is never disappointed when receiving the piano they've bought, as it sounds just as good in the video as it does in their home.

Another important facet to our company is music education. We have a dedicated on-site teaching space for lessons, and have been an exam centre for ABRSM. There have been many occasions where applicants' parents have decided to buy an acoustic piano with us when they realise it might be time to upgrade their tired old one at home for their child progressing through the grades! We have a dedicated education sales department; one of the results of this is that we have become the proud and exclusive supplier of acoustic and digital pianos for many schools and local authorities in London, Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire, and beyond. ■

Richard Lawson spoke with Erica Worth.