

Why can't I sell my piano?

Weekly Times Column

By Warren Joel

During a recent visit to the Mornington Peninsula in Victoria I was asked to look at a lovely old piano. My client was aghast at the value of the family heirloom.

We sat down to discuss the bad news and to talk through why the piano was worth so little today.

First of all, for all you piano players reading this column, I know you take enormous pride and joy in your treasured instrument, but the reality is pianos are falling in value. Whenever I am valuing an object, be it a piano or a piece of china, the first question I ask myself is who is going to buy it? Now let's look at the piano and work out who may want to buy it.

The first buyer will be Mum or Dad buying it for their piano-playing children who have just taken up the instrument. A few years ago I found myself in this situation and purchased a lovely old walnut cased piano, only to be told by the piano teacher at school it was like learning to drive in a T model ford. The second buyer could be the more mature person who played piano as a younger person and now wants to return to their passion. Now they don't want the old clunker. They are looking for the modern piano with its good movement, nice tone and that fits in the corner.

The last of my buyers is the professional pianist and they are certainly not after, or interested in, grandmas treasured piano. It is worth remembering that unlike most antiques the older a piano gets the lower the value. My advice with your piano - leave it in the corner because it may cost you more to move than what you will get back.

Next week: Light Fittings.

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Warren is a third generation auctioneer and valuer specialising in Art, Antiques and Collectables, accredited by the Commonwealth in 2002 different areas of collectables.

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