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Lessons

Testimonials

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Saturday, June 7, 2014

## REVIEW - Roland HPI50e Digital Piano - With Educational Interactive Piano Lessons - Recommended - for Beginners or Advanced piano players -

By [Tim Praskins](#)



**UPDATED REVIEW - June 5, 2015 - New Roland HPI-50e Educational Interactive Digital Piano with built-in lessons - RECOMMENDED** - As a long time piano teacher, the one major factor which can hinder students from progressing in their piano lessons (and playing piano in general) is the amount of time spent practicing at home. Without constant, regular practice, most piano students are just "spinning their wheels" and getting no traction when it comes to moving forward in their playing ability. But how does a parent and/or teacher get a student to practice regularly at home and hopefully enjoy it too? If you do play, how can you make it

more enjoyable? This has always been the issue, and some people/students will succeed in this area of practice and playing and some will not. This is true in all things so the more you do something, the better you will likely get..but it sure helps to *like* what you are doing and the new Roland Hpi50e may be the piano which gets you there:).



The Roland HPI50e is selling for approx \$4700-\$5000US store selling price (based on my experience knowing what the average discount prices are at US Roland piano stores) and is the newest interactive educational digital piano produced by the Roland piano company and replaces the former HPI50. This 2015 model is upgraded over the previous model primarily in its ability to play and sound more like a real acoustic piano. Although the previous model was quite good,

the piano sound and key action upgrades in this model is substantial. The new HPI50e is also designed to do a number of other things including motivating students to practice more often and more effectively through its built-in interactive **DigiScore** technology. The HPI50e is not available for purchase on the Internet in the US, but only direct at selected Roland piano stores across the country. The Roland company, which was founded in Japan in 1972, has produced high quality reliable digital pianos for many years and is recognized as a leader around the world for digital piano & keyboard technology for professionals and beginners. I have personally owned and played Roland pro keyboards and digital pianos and consider them one of the best brands out there.



The new HPI50e is available in an attractive simulated dark rosewood finish wood furniture cabinet assembled in the US (believe it or not, Roland owns a US factory) with a sturdy matching bench. What makes this piano unique in the digital piano industry is a number of things including a very large, easy to read built-in LCD computer monitor built inside the music rack (the only one of its kind from the major manufacturers), a vast array of intuitive piano instructional and practice software and songs accessed by a user friendly control panel just below the monitor, a full color menu of music

lessons, 100's of popular play-along songs, auto digital sheet music page turner for sight reading music, younger & older kids fun interactive music theory lessons displayed in the large monitor, ensemble music styles for learning chord progressions and interaction, instant auto lesson correction telling the student what they did right or wrong displayed in the LCD monitor, and many other interactive learning and piano playing features.

The new Roland HPI50e has hundreds of built-in songs for a wide variety of traditional & popular

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### About Me: Tim Praskins - Expert Piano Adviser and Teacher



Tim Praskins  
Teacher  
Musician  
Consultant  
Blogger  
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music along with actual interactive lessons, which definitely help you learn to play and are quite motivational because they allow you to sound good and have fun (and that's always a good thing). The user can also add their favorite General MIDI format songs from a USB flash drive and the HPI50e will instantly display the sheet music from that song. There are literally thousands of these General MIDI format songs for purchase on the internet from all your favorite artists and music styles, and some of these songs can be downloaded for

free. Many of the songs will playback the original parts of that song in a GM (General MIDI) multi-instrument playback mode and you can interact with it by playing live piano along with the song while you set the tempo at any speed you desire. It's like playing piano with a band or orchestra and seeing the sheet music right in front of you! So whether you are a basic absolute beginner or are an advanced player, the Roland Hpi50e is super fun and helps you learn music at the same time. For more info on General MIDI, please read my review of General MIDI here: [General MIDI Review](#)



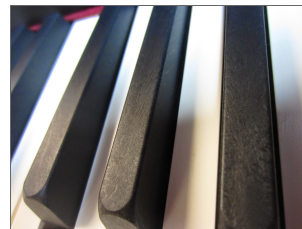
The Roland company has been producing the HPI series for many years and has had the HPI6, HPI7, HPI6F, HPI7F, and others, and after personally playing this model extensively, I am very impressed with it. For the first time ever in any major brand of digital piano that I know of, Roland now has 3 electronic key sensors per key along with an additional key

scanning processor dedicated to processing key velocity information. This new **4-part electronics system** is



in all of the new Roland DP, HP, & LX models and makes a huge difference in overall touch sensitivity, dynamic range, and organic piano tone subtiles and is especially noticeable if you are a more advanced player. This new key sensor system is a big deal because you can get more powerful expression whether you are playing more softly or with great power pressing on the keys. The new extended tonality and volume range is pretty amazing and yet the soft to loud changes are smooth and even unlike other digital piano brands that I have played, and you'll definitely notice this. The key weight and static touch weight (amount of finger pressure required to press keys when keys are at resting position) is also more natural like an acoustic piano should be as well as balanced from bass

through treble range and from black keys to white keys.



HPI50e synthetic ebony & ivory keys

The HPI50e also incorporates a grand piano simulation movement using a "let-off/escapement function." This key movement simulates the key action feel of a grand piano as opposed to an upright piano. When you press the keys down slowly on a real grand piano, you can feel a slight hesitation or notch about half way down when the key action is moving and this is called the escapement or let-off effect. Generally speaking, upright acoustic pianos do not have this feature but grand pianos do. Is this let-off/escapement feature a necessity for playing a piano?...not really...but it's nice to have because it does offer even better playing control

especially when playing soft, slow music. The white piano key tops are coated in a synthetic ivory material which (tries to) duplicates the feel of the older acoustic pianos which had real ivory keys and has a slight textured feeling to them. This synthetic ivory was on the previous models too. But on these new models Roland has added new synthetic **ebony** for the black keys which completes the total realism of playing a real organic piano keyboard on all keys. This synthetic substance on both black & white keys has a slight texture and helps absorb sweat from the fingers and offers a smoother playing experience. It also looks a bit classier than the all shiny white and black keys and I personally like this "feel" very much.



The HPI50e acoustic piano sound is recorded directly in stereo from a Steinway acoustic concert grand piano. Roland has attempted to reproduce a much more "natural & beautiful" acoustic stereo piano sound in this model which they call **SuperNATURAL Piano** along with their 128-note polyphony piano memory chip (how many notes can be played and sustained at one time). After playing this piano many times I found that the 128-note polyphony memory in this model is more than enough for even the most complex piano pieces because of Roland's advanced polyphony voice allocation, even when you are layering and playing two sounds at one time. It's a fancy way of saying you won't run out of notes even when playing complex MIDI song files while playing live over

the top of it. There are certainly other brands of good digital pianos with great sounding piano tones. But Roland is the only major brand who is using a Steinway concert grand piano sample with the 4-

Kawai CE220 - Casio PX860 - Yamaha YDP162 - Kawai KDP90 - Casio PX780 - Yamaha CLP430 - Yamaha CLP525 - Kawai MP7 - Roland RP401R & F130R - Kawai ES7 - Samick Ebony 3 Hybrid Ebony Upright - "Alive Inside!" - A **Must See** report about music & dementia and how it affects the brain - Used Digital Pianos (should you buy one?) - **COMPARISON REVIEW of new name brand digital pianos priced between \$3000-\$7500** - Kawai CP1 Digital Grand, CP2, and CP3 - Review - (Virtual Orchestra & Ensemble Band Pianos) - 6 Digital Piano Shopping Secrets Revealed!

### DIGITAL GRAND PIANO PRIVATE SALE

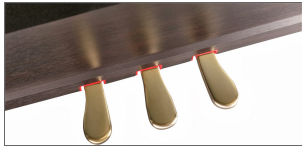


Contact me for info on an unadvertised PRIVATE SALE (US only) on a new 4' Samick SG450 Ebony Digital Baby Grand Piano at a low direct discount price to the public while they last! This piano has an upgraded Italian key action & piano sound along with lots of cool features. Click on the picture for a full review

### I Recommend this! - eMedia interactive Piano Lessons for Kids & Adults

\* A great way for people to teach themselves piano at home using their laptop computer connected with your digital piano. Click on picture below and if you decide to make a purchase, you will get **big discount** direct from eMedia and that discount price is displayed through this link only! I want to see everyone learn to play & enjoy piano!

sensor key response and this is unique in giving the player a piano tone not found in any other top name digital pianos in this price range.



With regard to the piano pedals, they operate very smoothly and feel realistic to press down while incorporating the three traditional pedal functions (damper/sustain, sostenuto, and soft) of regular acoustic pianos. They do work better than other digital pianos I have played and also simulate a good note sustaining experience using a damper **continuous detection** pedaling feature. This function gives the player

incremental note sustain amounts rather than just on & off or basic half pedal. It is definitely a much more realistic acoustic piano playing experience than other brands as well as physically feeling like the pedal is changing resistance when being pressed down. Roland calls this feature **Progressive Damper Action**. Having quality piano pedals & accurate piano pedal operation is very important, especially to more advanced players. Roland does not skimp on this area of piano playing like some other digital piano manufacturers do. Even the height of the pedals (an important aspect of pedal playing) is accurate as compared to concert grand pianos like the Steinway acoustic grand pianos. Every aspect of pedal playing can make a big difference in technique and performance and these are not features and functions that should be overlooked.

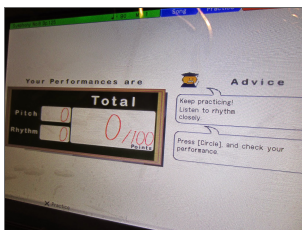
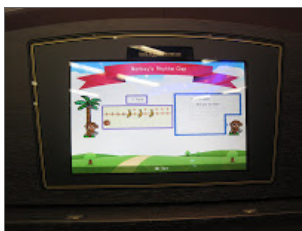


Another new feature I found intriguing was the "3D effect" through stereo headphones. It's supposed to give you the impression the piano sound is all around you coming from different directions as opposed to directly into your ears. Roland calls it "an immersive sound experience" which gives you the feeling you're not actually wearing headphones at all...and that's really the point of this feature. I tried it out and found that overall, it had a more natural effect than listening through stereo headphones without this feature. It actually did sound like I wasn't wearing headphones...although I was:). This is new technology in digital pianos and it's a nice feature to have especially if you be using headphones often. This headphone sound effect only works when the **ambience** button on the piano control panel is selected and it can be turned on or off. Also, it's important to have/own good sounding stereo headphones for private playing because you want to capture all the nuances and quality of the new enhanced

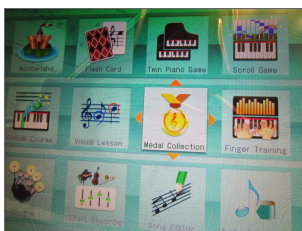
Roland piano sound dynamics and tonal qualities. I can give you some recommendations if you don't already have headphones.



When it comes to display screens in digital pianos, this Roland piano has the best there is right now using a very large Graphic color LCD with 1,280 x 800 dots built directly into the music rack which Roland calls **DigiScore**. The **DigiScore** display can actually improve your playing. It doesn't just display sheet music but can analyze your playing and assess how accurately (or not) you are following the music. That feedback alone could help you to improve your timing and sight-reading which I consider to be the most difficult thing for most students to learn. I do like large display monitor screens such as what's in my iPad and laptop computer and the larger they are with good resolution clarity, the better. This Roland HPi50e is beyond that of other large user display screens such as the one found on the new \$10,000 Yamaha Clavinova CVP609 which has an 8.5 inch 800 x 480 dots (resolution) WVGA TFT Color Wide LCD display screen. Although the Yamaha screen itself is a **touch** screen which is very cool, at \$10,000 approx discount price, the Yamaha CVO609 should have a nice touch screen for that price



range. However, even without a touch screen the Roland HPi50e is easy to navigate from the control panel buttons and its monitor screen can also display up to 48 measures of music at one time in 32nd note resolution (small notes that are fairly easy to see on this kind of display monitor) which is quite impressive. The notation will also follow your performance and is synced to turn the pages at the proper time...how nice is that!). The piano even has on-board piano exercises which helps make your playing and reading skills challenging and fun as well as other educational fun features for kids & adults such as a graphical (visual) metronome, onscreen keyboard, fingering number display, and the list goes on. It is especially worth noting that the monitor screen on the HPi50 is directly in front of you built into the music rack where you would normally put sheet music so the viewing position of the display monitor screen is where it needs to be, unlike all other display screens in the other major brands. The display screens in Yamaha CVP & Kawai CP pianos are down in the control



**New 2015 Roland HP504, HP506, HP508 Digital Pianos - Recommended**



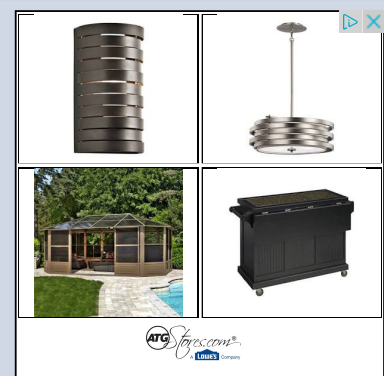
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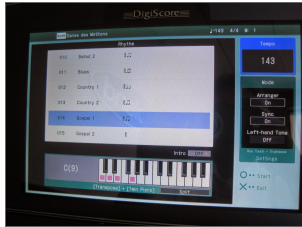
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panel which makes you have to look down at it and that angle is not good when it comes to reading music or seeing digital functions in my opinion. The Roland HPi50e does not have this issue and that's a very good thing.



The HPi50e control panel is laid out in an intuitive way with buttons above the keys. The control panel buttons are easy to push and operate and the surface is not cluttered with unnecessary controls and it has easy to use display screen navigation controls (left pic). One of the main reasons for less uncluttered buttons on the control panel is because of the large display screen which is colorful and easy to navigate (using the navigation buttons on the piano panel) with most of the controls for the extensive features in this piano in the visual software on the display screen. The display screen is

not touch sensitive like an iPad tablet so you must use the navigation buttons on the piano to move through the software features. But I found this to be easy and intuitive so not having a touch screen was not a problem for me, although I do like touch screens better but I assume that would drive up the piano cost quite a bit.



HPi50e interactive rhythm styles

Beyond the instructive fun interface and proprietary Roland educational software in the HPi50e, this piano has some other interesting & useful features including 50 interactive ensemble rhythm style arrangements for playing rhythmic chords to give you the feeling you are conducting a live band or orchestra and interacting with them which is also great for adults who do not have time to learn traditional piano playing. This also helps with understanding how arrange and conduct music which can be lots of fun for both kids & adults. There are 348 instrument sounds (just about anything you can think of) on this piano and most of those sounds (I have played

them all) are of higher quality. There is a 16-track MIDI recorder-player with the capability of playing back CD quality audio songs and even slowing them down so you can play along and learn your favorite music. This system even has a "center part cancel" feature so you can mute out the vocal or melody line and play along without hearing it. You can also write music on this piano and the notation that is created can be exported and then printed out on a wireless printer!



As far as connectivity, the HPi50e connects wirelessly to an iPad through a special Roland USB adapter so you can use a couple of unique Roland piano music educational apps in addition to the learning system software in the HPi50e. Beyond that, you can connect the iPad with proper cable connectors/adapters and use MIDI piano & music iPad apps which are extensive and useful. I use these apps in my teaching studio and they are quite motivational for students and players. As far as other connectivity on the HPi50e, there are MIDI inputs and outputs, audio ins & outs, USB flashdrive

input and USB computer output, DC input jack, and 2 stereo headphone jacks. Although the HPi50e has a fairly powerful 74 watt 4-channel internal sound system, if you really wanted to fill up the house with huge grand piano sound, you could connect the piano to a good set of powered stereo monitor speakers or even to your home stereo for extra power and sound dispersion. I have done this before and the results are amazing...your neighbors will think you just bought a 9' concert grand piano! Beyond all of this connectivity, the piano has a number of ways to use the piano sounds and recording functions so that you can come up with your own variations while editing and then saving those changes.



No matter whether you are a beginner, intermediate, or advanced player, I believe the Roland HPi50e has something for everyone to enjoy and can satisfy a lot of musical tastes from Classical, to Jazz, to Pop, and in-between. In my opinion the primary reason why a person should buy any digital piano is, first & foremost, for the best piano key action and acoustic piano sound in the price range they can afford. Coupled with that are digital features which can help make the playing experience even more enjoyable. Depending on the kind of music you like, your playing skill level, your musical tastes, and your musical goals, this new Roland piano may be the perfect choice for you. However, if you just want a piano that has realistic piano touch & tone with a minimal amount of features and you do not want or need the interactive educational system on the HPi50e, then in the Roland line of pianos, the HP508 (approx \$4500-

\$5000 store discount price) may be a better choice. I have done a review on that model here: [Roland HP508 review](#)

For the average beginner or family who wants a very nice piano in a reasonable price range they can grow with while keeping everyone motivated and interested, the new Roland HPi50e stands in a

### DIGITAL PIANO KEY ACTIONS - WHAT TO LOOK FOR - IMPORTANT INFO!



YOU NEED TO READ THIS! A good, properly weighted piano key action movement & response is the most important thing to get in a digital piano. Read my in-depth report on digital piano key actions and become more educated on what to look for! Please click on above picture to go to my report.

### Do Good Piano Teachers Recommend Digital Pianos?



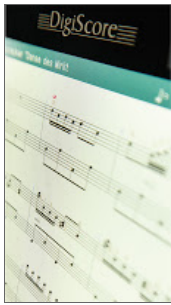
Digital pianos have become a mainstream purchase for families with children taking piano lessons along with countless thousands of recreational & seasoned piano players. Find out if good piano teachers recommend quality digital pianos over traditional acoustic pianos? Click on picture for my detailed report

### PIANO LESSONS FOR KIDS



If you are considering getting one or more of your children involved with piano lessons and learning to play music, click on the above picture to read a blogpost I did on this subject. It might help you become more confident in making a decision

### USED DIGITAL PIANOS - SHOULD YOU BUY ONE?



class all by itself as far as I am concerned. There is no other digital piano that I know of which comes close to what the HPi50e offers with regard to a unique educational package while still offering a **very** satisfying piano playing experience with realistic acoustic grand piano sound and responsive graded hammer style key action. The main downside I see with this piano is that it is offered in just one color (satin rosewood). I wish Roland had offered it in other color finishes (black, white, polished, etc) but for what it is and what it does, that's just a relatively small complaint. It looks good, sounds good, plays good, has tons of cool stuff in it, and makes you feel good, and that's what it's really all about...feeling good when you practice and when you play...and the HPi50e can do that quite well.

**If you want more info on new digital pianos and LOWER PRICES than internet discounts, please email me at [tim@azpiano.com](mailto:tim@azpiano.com) or call direct at 602-571-1864.**

\* I recommend eMedia educational software. If you decide to make a purchase after clicking on link below, I have arranged a **big discount** for you direct with eMedia for their educational software and that discount price is displayed through this link only! I want to see everyone learn to play and enjoy piano!



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**6 comments:**



**Del B** December 13, 2014 at 6:55 AM

Many thanks for this comprehensive review on the hpi50e. Is there much difference between this and the hpi 7 which sells for more ?

[Reply](#)



**Anonymous** January 20, 2015 at 9:54 PM

Thank so much for this detailed review. Since I don't have the money for this model I thought about buying the HP506, just connect my iPad to it and download the "Piano Partner" and "Air Performer". Would I get about the same functions like with the HPi 50e?

[Reply](#)



**Tim Praskins** February 5, 2015 at 5:07 AM

similar but not the same. Roland does use a proprietary software package not found on iPad apps and it offers unique educational and fun features.

[Reply](#)



**Libby** March 5, 2015 at 9:13 PM

I am a school music teacher and need a piano that will allow us to record accompaniments and adjust those recordings (fix wrong notes, change tempos, etc.). We use the



Should you purchase a used digital piano from a store, local ad, ebay, or other sources? Click on the picture to read my in-depth report on buying a used digital piano

**Digital Pianos & iPad piano education**



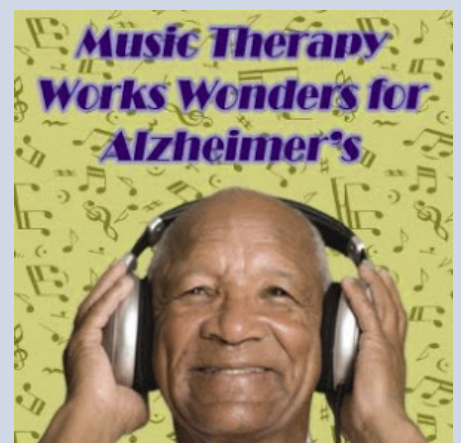
I recommend using an iPad with pianos to help learn music! It's fun and effective! Click on picture to learn more!

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Read about these 6 digital piano shopping secrets before buying any digital piano anywhere!

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accompaniments for rehearsals and concerts. Would this piano be a good choice?

[Reply](#)



**Anonymous** March 24, 2015 at 4:04 PM

how much does this model go for?

[Reply](#)



**Tim Praskins** March 24, 2015 at 4:11 PM

depends on where you live, who the local dealer is, and product availability. I stated the average US discount price on my review so that info is there. If you want more detailed price info then you may email me directly

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