

Heintzman piano buyer's checklist

Universal Piano - GTA buyer's inspection guide 2026

A 10-point inspection to run before you buy a used Heintzman

1 Locate and write down the serial number

Stamped on the cast iron plate near the tuning pins. Cross-reference to Pierce Piano Atlas for build year.

2 Confirm the build era

Pre-1986 is Canadian Heintzman. Post-1986 is offshore build with the Heintzman name on the fallboard.

3 Inspect the cast iron plate for cracks

A cracked plate kills the piano. Walk if you see one, regardless of price.

4 Scan the soundboard

With-grain hairline cracks are fine on any old piano. Cross-grain cracks or wide splits are not.

5 Check the tuning pins for slippage

Pins should resist firm pressure. Loose pins mean an imminent pin block rebuild at \$2,500 plus.

6 Look at the hammer felt

Grooved but round hammers are normal. Flattened, split, or extremely worn hammers add \$800 to \$2,500 to restoration.

7 Play every single key twice

Note dead keys, sticky keys, double strikes, uneven tone. Two to three dead notes is normal. Eight to ten is a scrap piano.

8 Listen for the tuning pitch

A Heintzman that has been tuned in the last two years will be close to A440. A badly flat piano has not been looked after.

9 Check cabinet and pedals

Veneer chips and finish wear are cosmetic. Pedals that do not return or brass lyre that wobbles is a mechanical fix.

10 Insist on a RPT inspection before cheque

A \$150 inspection on a \$5,000 piano is 3 percent insurance. Never skip this on a pre-1986 Heintzman.