

A close-up photograph of a wooden piano case, likely made of light-colored wood like maple or birch. The case features intricate carvings, including a central panel with a large, stylized 'S' and 'W' monogram. Below the monogram, the serial number '16395' is clearly visible. The case is adorned with two large, round, dark metal knobs. To the right, a portion of the piano's keyboard and action mechanism are visible, showing several black keys and the underlying mechanical components.

Grotrian - Steinweg

Piano

A close up view of item for sale

COMPANY HISTORY

Grotrian-Steinweg, known as **Grotrian** in the US, is a German manufacturer of prestige [pianos](#). The company is based in [Braunschweig](#), Germany, commonly known as Brunswick in English. Grotrian-Steinweg makes premium [grand pianos](#) and [upright pianos](#).

Grotrian-Steinweg's history dates back to 1835 when the first Steinweg piano factory was built by [Heinrich Engelhard Steinweg](#) (later known as Henry Steinway after his emigration to the US where he founded [Steinway & Sons](#)). In 1856, Friedrich Grotrian became a partner; in 1865 his son Wilhelm Grotrian and two associates bought the factory and the right to market their pianos as successors to the Steinweg brand. Ensuing generations of Grotrian family members led the company to become one of the finest piano manufacturers in Germany. Grotrian-Steinweg pianos were preferred by some famous pianists, and they received accolades at the [World's Columbian Exposition](#) in Chicago. Grotrian-Steinweg operated an orchestra and a concert hall, and established sales rooms in a half dozen major cities in Germany, and by 1920, in London as well. At its peak in the late 1920s, Grotrian-Steinweg employed 1,000 people and made 3,000 pianos per year.

Economic depression in the 1930s and war in the 1940s caused Grotrian-Steinweg to decline severely and then lose its factory completely. The family rebuilt the factory and re-established its reputation for quality work. In the 1950s, an annual piano-playing competition was founded by the company, to identify promising young piano students.

Grotrian-Steinweg sought to expand into the US in the mid-1960s. Steinway & Sons sued to prevent them from using the Steinweg name, resulting in a 1975 decision by the [United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit](#). The case set a [precedent](#) in describing "[initial interest confusion](#)": that the brand Grotrian-Steinweg could cause

piano buyers to temporarily confuse its brand with the brand Steinway & Sons. The court ordered Grotrian-Steinweg to stop selling pianos in the US under the "Steinweg" name. Afterward, the company formed a business entity named Grotrian Piano Company to sell pianos in North America.

19TH CENTURY

On 13 January 1803, Georg Friedrich Karl Grotrian, called Friedrich, was born in [Schöningen](#), Germany.^{[1][2]} He settled in [Moscow](#) to sell pianos, beginning around 1830. He joined a partnership in a small piano making firm based in [Saint Petersburg](#), and included these pianos among the various instruments he sold in his successful Moscow music shop.^[3]

In Germany, [Heinrich Engelhard Steinweg](#) (1797–1871) started making pianos in 1835 from his house in [Seesen](#) at the edge of the [Harz](#) mountains;^[4] a source of fine beech and spruce wood for the instruments. Among the pianos that Steinweg produced in his first year was a [square piano](#) designed by and built for Friedrich Grotrian.^{[5][6]} (This instrument is now in the [Braunschweig](#) museum.^[2]) H.E. Steinweg entered three of his pianos in a state fair in 1839, two of them square pianos, but his [grand piano](#) brought wide notice.^[8] In 1850, H.E. Steinweg took most of his large family to New York City, leaving the piano factory to his eldest son [C.F. Theodor Steinweg](#) (1825–1889) who stayed behind to run it under his own name. Meanwhile, in New York City, the Steinweg family Americanized their surname to Steinway and in 1853 they founded the piano manufacturer [Steinway & Sons](#).^[9]

Soon after taking ownership of his father's old factory, C.F. Theodor Steinweg moved it to [Wolfenbüttel](#) near Braunschweig. Here he met Friedrich Grotrian who was traveling for business.^[2] In 1854, Friedrich Grotrian received the Müller-Mühlenbein pharmacy as an inheritance from an uncle, so he moved back to Germany to manage it. He joined C.F. Theodor Steinweg's piano company as a partner in 1856.^{[3][10]}

In 1857, C.F. Theodor Steinweg and Grotrian moved the piano factory to Braunschweig, setting up shop in a former mayor's mansion at 48 Bohlweg Street in the inner, medieval part of the city.^[11] The company employed about 25 people at this time. Friedrich Grotrian died on 11 December 1860, leaving his share of the company to his son Wilhelm (1843–1917).^[2] In 1865, C.F. Theodor Steinweg was needed by his family in New York to help manage Steinway & Sons after his brothers Henry and Charles died. Wilhelm Grotrian joined with two of the piano workmen—Adolph Helfferich and H.D.W. Schulz—to buy out C.F. Theodor Steinweg's share of the building. The new partnership paid for the right to use the trademark "C.F. Th. Steinweg Nachf.", meaning, "Successor to C.F. Theodor Steinweg." (*Nachf.* is an abbreviation for *Nachfolger*—German for *successor*.) The company name became "Grotrian, Helfferich, Schulz, Th. Steinweg Nachf."^[10] Wilhelm Grotrian raised two sons in the 1870s: Wilhelm "Willi" Grotrian Jr (1868–1931) and Kurt Grotrian (1870–1929).^[2]

In New York City, C.F. Theodor Steinweg (H.E. Steinweg's son) changed his name to C.F. Theodore Steinway, and served as the leader and chief technician of Steinway & Sons for fifteen years. He did not like living in the US, so he kept his home in Braunschweig and traveled back and forth as needed. In 1880 he stopped traveling overseas and started a new Steinway & Sons piano factory in [Hamburg](#), competing with his father's old firm, now called Grotrian-Steinweg, in making pianos for European customers. After establishing the business, Steinway retired to Braunschweig for his last years. He died in 1889, leaving his collection of pianos to the city's museum. The Hamburg factory proved successful in competing against Grotrian-Steinweg—both companies were known for producing premium pianos.^[12]

In the 1880s, Willi Grotrian studied piano making with [Wm. Knabe & Co.](#) in [Baltimore, Maryland](#), and with [Pleyel, Wolff et Cie](#) in Paris, France.^[11] Kurt Grotrian also studied with piano makers in other countries. Their father Wilhelm Grotrian Sr took Willi with him to Chicago in 1893; there, at the [World's Columbian Exposition](#), Grotrian-Steinweg won an award for fine quality.^[11] Pianists [Eugen d'Albert](#), [Ignacy Jan Paderewski](#) and [Clara Schumann](#) expressed a preference for Grotrian-Steinweg

pianos.^[11] Grotrian-Steinweg was counted among the top German piano manufacturers along with [Bechstein](#), [Blüthner](#), [Feurich](#), Ibach, Lipp and the Hamburg division of Steinway.^[13] In 1895, Wilhelm Grotrian Sr made his two sons partners in the business.^[2] He told them, "Lads, build good pianos and the rest will take care of itself."^[14] Willi Grotrian methodically set about to improve the systems and standards the Grotrian-Steinweg company used to produce pianos.^[15] The Grotrian-Steinweg brand was well known for being of the highest quality: the company was named purveyor to some 30 "Kaisers, Kings and royal houses".^[16] The owners Franz Wilhelm Grotrian, Willi Grotrian and Kurt Grotrian were awarded an imperial and [royal warrant of appointment](#) to the court of [Austria-Hungary](#).^[17]

20TH CENTURY

In Braunschweig, Grotrian-Steinweg grew to a workforce of 550 by 1913, producing about 1,600 pianos annually.^[2] The Grotrian-Steinweg Orchestra was active in [Leipzig](#) under the baton of young conductor [Hermann Scherchen](#). Grotrian-dedicated salesrooms were operating in Leipzig, [Hanover](#), [Königsberg](#), [Düsseldorf](#) and Berlin.

During [World War I](#), Kurt Grotrian left the factory to serve in the German Army. He was soon wounded and taken [prisoner of war](#). The elder Wilhelm Grotrian died in 1917.^[2] Willi Grotrian, his son, led the company but it was greatly reduced in manpower and orders for pianos. After the war, the company resumed as before, expanding sales in 1920 by establishing a London shop under the brand name Grotrian-Steinweg. The workforce increased to 1,000.^[2] In 1924, Grotrian-Steinweg built an unusual piano for [microtonal music](#) composer [Ivan Wyschnegradsky](#). The piano had three [manuals](#), and strings tuned a [quarter tone](#) apart.^[18] By 1927, Grotrian-Steinweg was making about 3,000 pianos annually. This number dropped

significantly in the 1930s during the [Great Depression](#); fewer than 500 pianos were made in 1931, and the workforce was reduced to less than 200.^{[3][19]}

Kurt Grotrian had become seriously ill in the late 1920s, and in 1928 he made his two sons Erwin (1899–1990) and Helmut (1900–1977) shareholders. In 1929, Kurt Grotrian died of complications from his old war wound.^[1] Willi Grotrian died in 1931.

In [World War II](#), the Grotrian-Steinweg factory (like many others in Germany) was ordered to switch to fabricating parts for aircraft. The factory was destroyed in 1944 by the [bombing of Braunschweig](#), as was the founder's mansion in the center of town.^[1] Afterward, Erwin and Helmut rebuilt the factory.^[14] By 1948, production had resumed; composer and pianist [Wilhelm Kempff](#) went on record as an admirer of the "sonority and exquisite execution" of the post-war work.^[1]

In 1954, Grotrian-Steinweg initiated a piano-playing competition known as *Grotrian-Steinweg Klavierspielwettbewerb*, featuring young pianists from music schools. The competition took place in the Braunschweig location of the Hertie department store, with audience applause used as the gauge to determine the winner. In 1968, Grotrian-Steinweg entered into talks with the German National Music Council and the [Hannover University of Music](#) to increase the scale of the competition. It increased in odd years to encompass a national and international scope. Pianists such as [Ragna Schirmer](#) and [Lars Vogt](#) gained notice as winners of the competition.^[20]

TRADEMARK CONFLICT

The first [trademark](#) friction between the two piano manufacturers occurred in 1895 when Steinway & Sons sued to stop Grotrian-Steinweg from using the name "Steinweg" on its pianos. Steinway lost the case, but in January 1919, Willi and Kurt Grotrian decided to change the family surname to Grotrian-Steinweg to protect the trademark of the family business, in the hope of preventing further lawsuits.^{[4][15][21]} In 1925, the company established a sales presence in the US as a [Delaware](#)

[corporation](#) called Grotrian-Steinweg Company.^[22] Over the next three years, Grotrian-Steinweg sold only 15 pianos in the US, in addition to a few sold by an independent dealer in New York City.^[22] Upon discovering the sales in 1928, Steinway & Sons complained to the distributor and to Grotrian-Steinweg, but in 1929 Grotrian-Steinweg sent 47 pianos to the US. A family representative of Steinway went to Germany to discuss the problem directly with the Grotrian-Steinweg family. Arriving at a private agreement, the two family leaders smoked a "peace cigar"^[22] and Grotrian-Steinweg subsequently stopped using the names "Steinweg" and "Grotrian-Steinweg" in the US.^[22] In 1930 the Delaware corporation was dissolved, and in the next three years exports from Grotrian-Steinweg to the US decreased then halted completely. In 1950, Grotrian-Steinweg relinquished its old 1926 trademark application, which had never been published.^[22]

In 1961, Knut Grotrian-Steinweg (b. 1935) joined the company. In 1966, the company formed a contract with [Wurlitzer](#) to sell Grotrian-Steinweg pianos in the US, and the Steinway company brought suit in New York.^[4] The case lasted nine years, winding its way through trial courts and district courts, presenting the litigants' counterclaims and appeals. In 1975, the [United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit](#) heard the arguments in *Grotrian, Helfferich, Schulz, Th. Steinweg Nachf. v. Steinway & Sons*. Grotrian-Steinweg, the plaintiff, argued that their brand was long established, predating Steinway's in Germany. Steinway & Sons, defendant, counterclaimed that their brand, well known and strongly positive in the US, was weakened by consumers' confusion as to whether the pianos were related. The court affirmed the lower court's ruling in favor of the defendant that piano buyers would be misled in their "initial interest" in the two piano brands; "a potential Steinway buyer may satisfy himself that the less expensive Grotrian-Steinweg is at least as good, if not better, than a Steinway."^{[23][24]} The court felt that Grotrian-Steinweg—a brand not very well known in the US—was unfairly given an extra measure of credibility based on the strong reputation that Steinway & Sons had built.^[24] Even though premium piano buyers were understood to be sophisticated and knowledgeable, and would not be confused at the time of purchase about which manufacturer produced which piano, the court

held that a "subliminal confusion" might be present at the initial attraction to the Grotrian-Steinweg brand.^[24] The company was forbidden to sell pianos in the US under the name "Steinweg" after 1977.^[4] Accordingly, in 1976 Grotrian-Steinweg formed a subsidiary brand for selling pianos in North America: Grotrian Piano Company GmbH.^[25]

The case was the first instance of a court defining the concept now known as "[initial interest confusion](#)".^[26] District Judge [Lloyd Francis MacMahon](#) wrote: "Misled into an initial interest, a potential Steinway buyer may satisfy himself that the less expensive Grotrian-Steinweg is at least as good, if not better, than a Steinway."^[26] MacMahon's idea about the "initial interest" confusion was confirmed by Appeals Court Judge [William H. Timbers](#), writing, "such initial confusion works an injury to Steinway."^[26]

The English-language section of Grotrian's website does not have any reference to the surname "Steinweg", unlike the French-, German- and Russian-language versions. This is likely a result of the lawsuit and a wish to minimize liability.^[26]

ABOUT THIS PIANO:

BRAND	GROTRIAN - STEINWEG
COLOR	BLACK - GOLD
YEAR OF MANUFACTURE	1901 - 1910
LAST TUNING	NOVEMBER 2024

1.- OWNERS AND ESTIMATE DATE OF MANUFACTURING:

This piano is in the hands of one of the oldest families in the central area of Chile. After a careful investigation based on the serial number of the item, it was concluded that its manufacturing date is between the years 1901 and 1910, making this piece something rare and difficult to find, given its state of conservation.

GROTRIAN STEINWEG: USE YOUR PIANO'S SERIAL NUMBER TO FIND OUT	
DATE OF MANUFACTURE	SERIAL NUMBER
1864 - 1870	510 - 1137
1871 - 1880	1138 - 4175
1881 - 1890	4176 - 7228
1891 - 1900	7229 - 12131
1901 - 1910	12132 - 24171
1911 - 1920	24172 - 38076
1921 - 1930	38077 - 61235
1931 - 1940	61236 - 85499
1941 - 1950	85500 - 107900
1951 - 1960	107901 - 125632
1961 - 1970	125633 - 144665
1971 - 1980	144666 - 164707
1981 - 1990	164708 - 181600
1990 - 1995	181601 - 190280

2.- ABOUT THIS DEAL

The seller certifies that the piano is in the same condition as shown in the set of photographs. Once the sale is completed, the buyer will be responsible for picking up the item at the place indicated by the seller. Due to the above, the seller will not be responsible for paying taxes or shipping, or for damages caused during transportation, which will be the responsibility of the buyer.

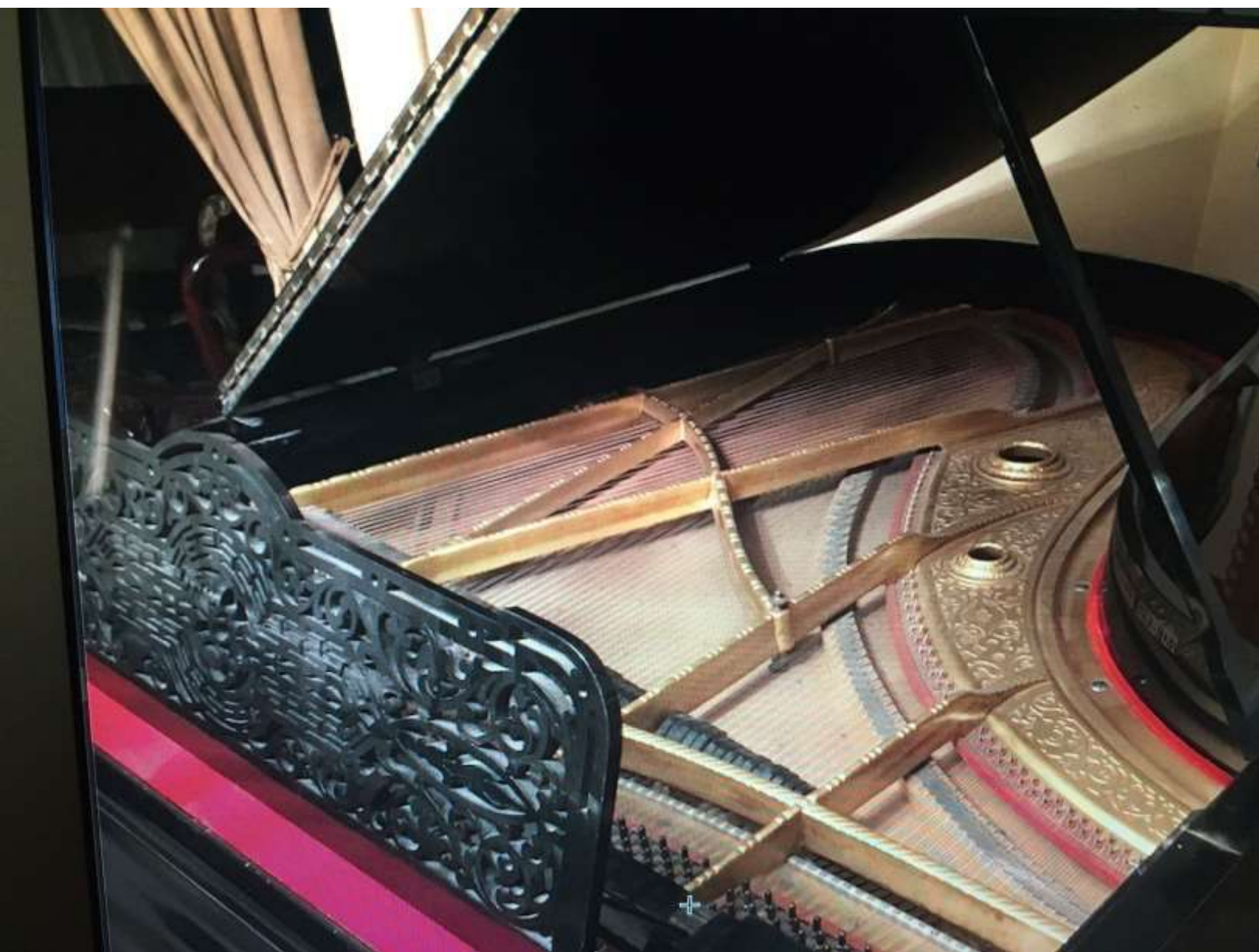
The day before delivery to the carrier sent by the buyer, the seller will send a set of photographs where a final review will be confirmed about the condition of the entire piano. **It is noted that due to transportation the piano could arrive out of tune, which is not the seller's responsibility.**

PHOTO GALLERY :

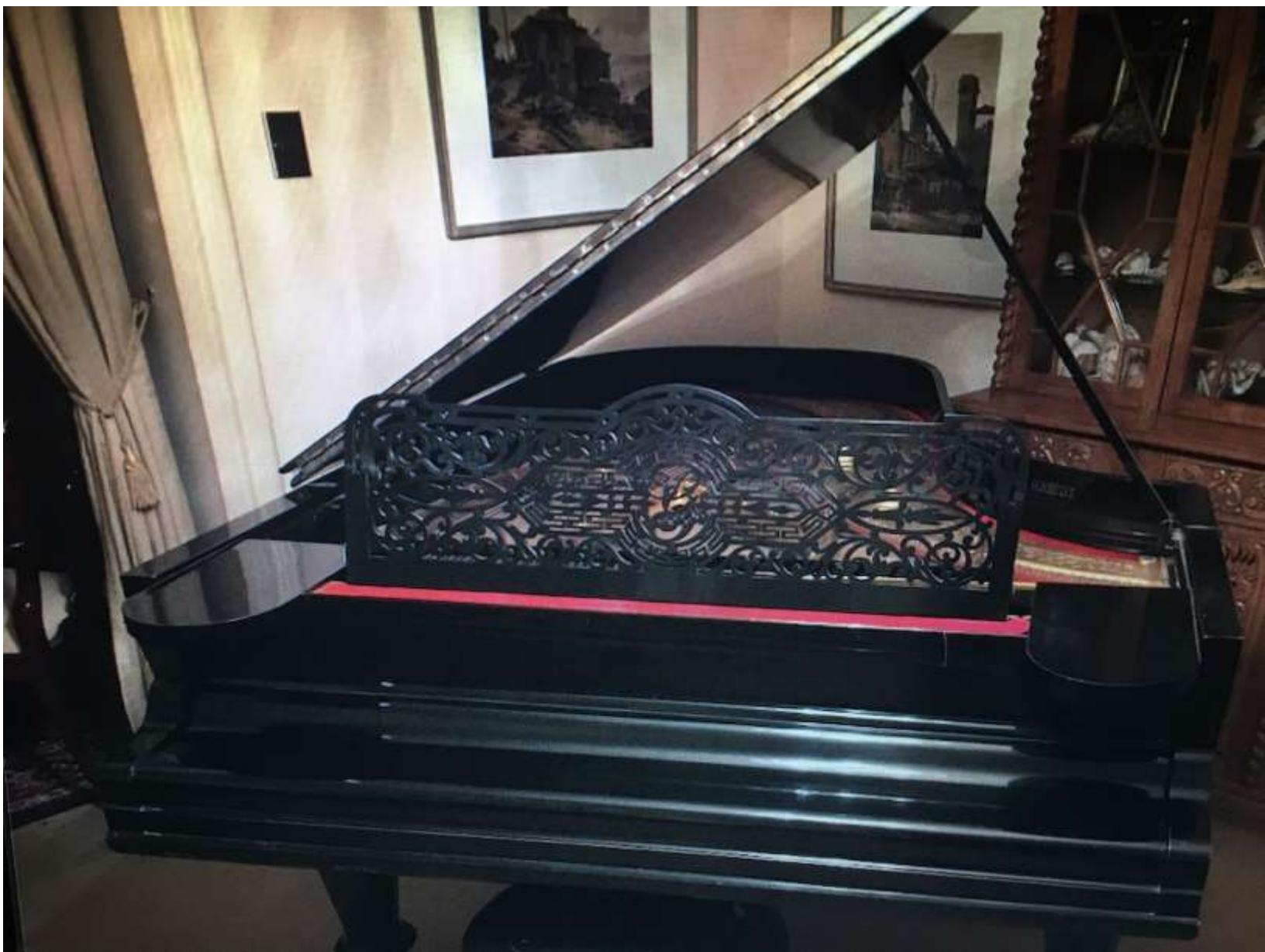
1.- INSIDE LATERAL VIEW



2.- OUTSIDE LATERAL VIEW



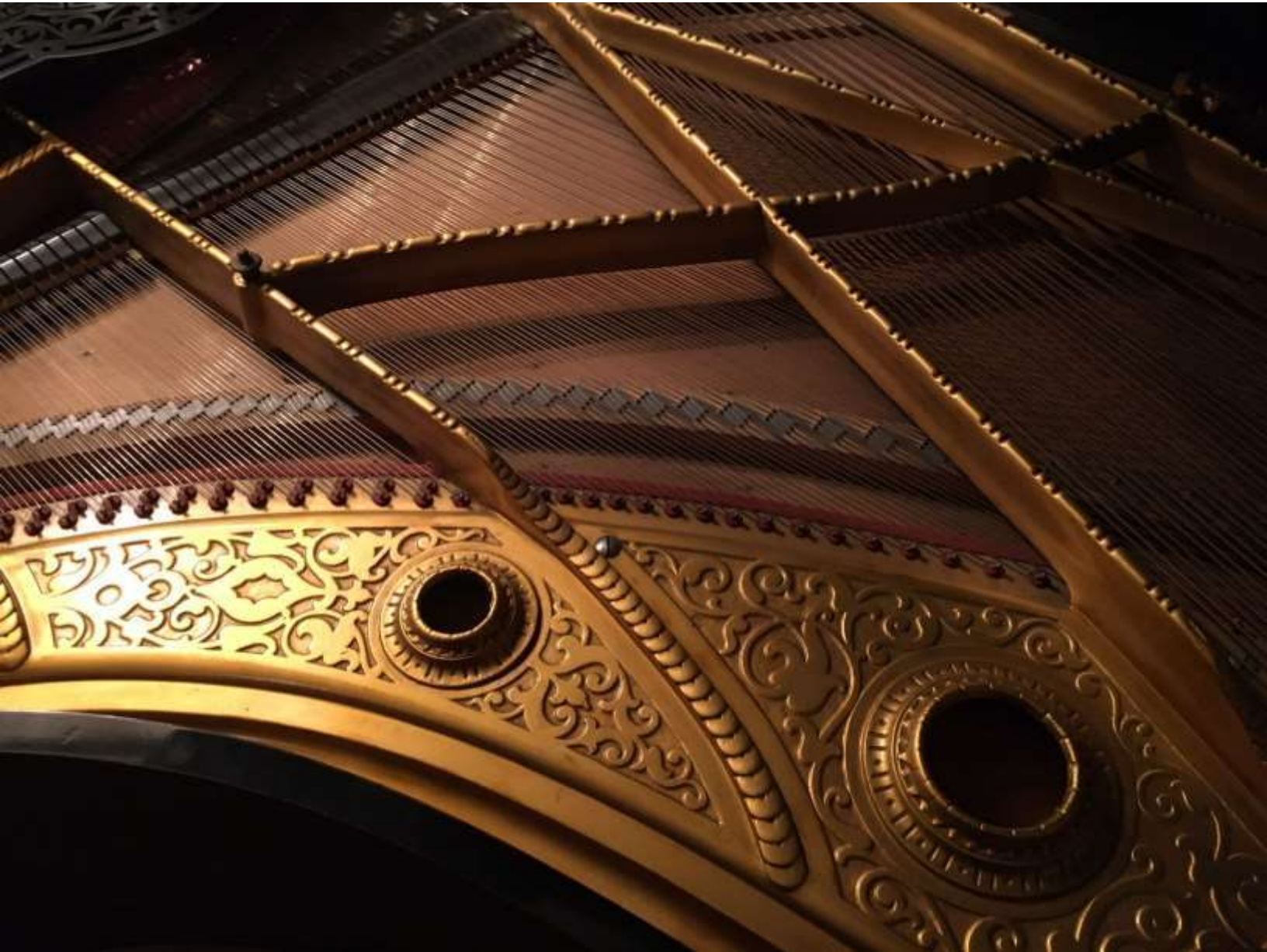
3.- GENERAL FRONT VIEW



4.- KEYBOARD CLOSE VIEW



5.- STRINGS AND DECORATION SIDE VIEW



6.- STRINGS AND DECORATION FRONT VIEW

