

# Kawai MP11SE vs Nord Grand 2 Stage Piano: Specs, Price & Sound

**Meta Description:** Compare Kawai MP11SE vs Nord Grand 2 stage pianos at Sam Ash to analyze their key action, sound quality, features, and pricing.



**Alt text:** Kawai MP11SE.

## Key Takeaways

- The Kawai MP11SE features premium Grand Feel wooden-key action with let-off simulation, providing the most authentic acoustic piano touch available.
- The Nord Grand 2 excels in versatility, offering advanced layering (2 Pianos + 2 Synths) with dedicated effects for complex, multi-textured performances.
- Although the Nord Grand 2 is roughly \$300 more expensive, it provides a lighter build and more intuitive interface for professional touring.
- Classical and jazz purists should prioritize the MP11SE's mechanical realism, while stage performers will benefit from the Nord's extensive sound library.
- [Sam Ash](#) offers both premium instruments with expert advice, flexible financing plans, and a 45-day return policy for peace of mind.

## Kawai MP11SE vs Nord Grand 2: A Premium Stage Piano Showdown

Choosing between premium stage pianos is difficult, especially when comparing heavyweights like the Kawai MP11SE and Nord Grand 2.

These instruments represent different philosophies in the professional digital piano market, with each offering distinct advantages depending on your playing style and performance needs.

The MP11SE and Nord Grand 2 target professional musicians and serious pianists, but take fundamentally different approaches to the digital piano experience.

Kawai focuses on creating the most authentic acoustic piano touch and feel possible, while Nord prioritizes sound versatility, intuitive interface design, and features for the working musician. This difference creates a comparison that goes beyond simple specifications.

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# Kawai MP11SE: Specs, Features, and Value

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**Caption:** The Kawai MP11SE retails at \$3,699 at Sam Ash (MSRP \$4,699, save \$1,000) and represents Kawai's flagship stage piano offering.

**Alt text:** Kawai MP11-SE Digital Stage Piano.

It features 88 wooden keys with the company's renowned Grand Feel action, which includes counterweights, let-off simulation, and triple sensors to capture every nuance of your playing.

## Grand Feel Wooden-Key Action

The [MP11SE](#) features Kawai's premium Grand Feel wooden-key action, representing one of the most authentic piano experiences available in any digital instrument.

Each key is crafted from long wooden pieces that extend deep into the keybed, with pivot points and counterweights positioned to mimic the balance and response of a concert grand piano.

The action stands out for its mechanical nature. Wooden keys activate real hammers with weights, providing genuine inertia. Kawai has reproduced the let-off sensation found in grand pianos, which helps advanced players control articulation in expressive passages.

## Harmonic Imaging XL Sound Technology

The MP11SE utilizes Kawai's proprietary Harmonic Imaging XL sound technology, featuring recorded samples from the company's flagship SK-EX, SK-5, and EX concert grand pianos. Each key is individually sampled at multiple velocity levels to capture the full dynamic range of these instruments.

The sound character leans toward a warm, rich tone with particularly strong lower registers that professional pianists appreciate. The MP11SE stands out for its reproduction of subtle tonal changes at different dynamic levels.

## **Virtual Technician Sound Customization**

The MP11SE offers deep parametric control over tone, resonance, and mechanical noises through its Virtual Technician feature with 22 adjustable parameters:

- Touch Curve adjustment
- Voicing control
- Damper Resonance
- String Resonance
- Undamped String Resonance
- Key-off Effect
- Fall-back Noise
- Hammer Delay
- And more...

This approach mirrors how an actual piano technician might prepare a concert instrument, allowing you to regulate the virtual piano to your exact preferences.

## **Professional Connectivity**

The MP11SE provides comprehensive connectivity for professional environments:

- 1/4" outputs and optional XLR outputs
- 1/4" inputs with Line In level fader
- MIDI In/Out/Thru
- USB connectivity
- 4-channel MIDI master controller functions

The included GFP-3 triple pedal unit supports half-pedal and progressive pedalling, required for serious classical repertoire.

## **Nord Grand 2: Technical Features and Premium Value**

[The Nord Grand 2](#) positions itself at the premium end of the market at \$3,999 at Sam Ash (MSRP \$4,999, save \$1,000).

For this investment, players receive Nord's acclaimed Piano Library, dual layering capabilities, and the intuitive interface that has made Nord a favorite among professional touring musicians.

## **Enhanced Kawai Responsive Hammer Keybed**



**Caption:** The Nord Grand 2 features an upgraded Kawai Responsive Hammer Action keyboard with a triple sensor system that accurately tracks hammer movement, resulting in an authentic piano touch.

**Alt text:** Nord Grand 2 88-Key Stage Keyboard.

This advanced mechanism offers extraordinary control across the dynamic range, allowing performers to express every nuance of their playing.

#### **Key Action Features:**

- Kawai Responsive Hammer Action with triple sensors
- Accurately tracks hammer movement throughout keystroke
- Lighter touch than wooden-key actions (better for fast passages)
- Well-balanced design ensures comfort and responsiveness
- Supports techniques like note repetition without fully releasing keys

While it lacks the wooden keys of the MP11SE, Nord's implementation strikes a balance between a realistic grand piano feel and the quicker response that performing keyboardists often prefer.

#### **Dual Piano and Synth Layers**

Here, the Nord Grand 2 stands out. The ability to layer or split two independent Piano and Synth engines—with dedicated effects for each—offers creative options the Kawai lacks.

Musicians can create complex sounds with seamless transitions, making the Nord ideal for both live performance and studio environments.

#### **Expanded Sound Design and Effects**

The Nord Grand 2 is equipped with a robust effects section that includes new Reverb, Delay, and Modulation effects—all adjustable per layer.

## Effects and Sound Design:

- New Spring, Booth, and Cathedral reverbs
- Dynamic Compression
- Advanced String Resonance
- Tru-Vibrato for authentic vibrato effects
- Enhanced sound libraries (brass, strings, analog synth)
- Extensive Grands, Uprights, and Electric Pianos from Nord Piano Library

## Nord Piano Library and Updates

Nord has a reputation for supporting instruments with regular software updates and sound library expansions. The Nord Grand 2 benefits from this ecosystem, receiving new piano samples, improved features, and interface refinements that extend the instrument's useful lifespan.

## Intuitive Performance Interface

The Nord's panel design features dedicated sections for each sound engine with physical controls for all major parameters. Performers can instantly adjust EQ, effects, and sound characteristics without navigating through menus.

### Interface Features:

- Dedicated LED faders for visual feedback
- Intuitive controls for attack, decay/release, velocity response
- Mono and Legato modes with adjustable Glide
- High-visibility design for stage conditions
- Near-instant boot time

## How Do the Specifications Compare?

| Feature                   | Kawai MP11SE           | Nord Grand 2            |
|---------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Sam Ash Price</b>      | \$3,699 (save \$1,000) | \$3,999 (save \$1,000)  |
| <b>24-Month Financing</b> | \$155/month            | \$167/month             |
| <b>Key Action</b>         | Grand Feel Wooden Keys | Kawai Responsive Hammer |
| <b>Polyphony</b>          | 256 notes              | 120 voices              |
| <b>Presets</b>            | 40                     | Extensive Nord Library  |
| <b>Weight</b>             | 74 lbs                 | Lighter build           |
| <b>Triple Pedal</b>       | GFP-3 included         | Triple Pedal 2 included |

|        |                |                            |
|--------|----------------|----------------------------|
| Layers | Sound sections | 2 Pianos + 2 Sample Synths |
|--------|----------------|----------------------------|

## Why Buy Your Premium Stage Piano from Sam Ash



**Caption:** Sam Ash has remained a family-owned business since 1924, building more than a century of trust with professional musicians.

**Alt text:** Nord Grand 2 88-Key Stage Keyboard.

Choosing between the Kawai MP11SE's mechanical precision and the Nord Grand 2's flexibility depends on your specific musical goals. The Gear Expert Team at [Sam Ash](#) is made up of active musicians who understand how these distinct key actions and sound engines function in professional settings. Their specialized knowledge ensures you select the instrument that best aligns with your technical requirements and artistic vision.

Flexible financing options at Sam Ash make owning these high-end stage pianos manageable through affordable monthly payment plans. You can also test your new keyboard in real-world environments with the security of a 45-day return policy and free shipping on most orders. Visit Sam Ash today to secure the ideal piano for your next performance or studio session.

[Shop our piano collection today!](#)

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

### **Can the Kawai MP11SE or Nord Grand 2 work as MIDI controllers for virtual instruments?**

Yes, both instruments excel as MIDI controllers. The MP11SE offers more comprehensive MIDI routing capabilities with 4-channel master controller functions, making it particularly well-suited for complex studio setups controlling multiple virtual instruments simultaneously. Its superior wooden-key action also provides more nuanced control over velocity-sensitive virtual instruments.

The Nord Grand 2 functions effectively as a MIDI controller with standard implementation and adds the advantage of more immediate control over common parameters through its front panel knobs, which can be mapped to virtual instrument parameters.

### **Do these pianos have built-in speakers?**

Neither the Kawai MP11SE nor the Nord Grand 2 includes built-in speakers—both are designed as stage pianos for use with external amplification. This design choice allows for lighter weight and focused engineering on the aspects that matter most to professional performers. Both must be connected to external monitors, amplifiers, PA systems, or used with headphones.

### **What's the average lifespan of these premium digital pianos?**

When properly maintained, both instruments can provide 15–20+ years of reliable service. The MP11SE's wooden-key action may require occasional regulation after many years of heavy use, similar to an acoustic piano.

The Nord Grand 2, with fewer moving mechanical parts, may require less mechanical maintenance but depends more on software support, which Nord has historically provided for approximately 8–10 years.

### **Which piano is better for home studio recording?**

Both excel in home studio environments with different advantages. The MP11SE's superior wooden-key action makes it ideal for recording expressive piano performances, while its comprehensive MIDI controller functions enable sophisticated DAW integration.

The Nord Grand 2 offers excellent studio functionality with its diverse sound library providing immediate access to many keyboard tones without additional virtual instruments. Its intuitive interface streamlines workflow for musicians who prefer recording without complex menus.

## Does Sam Ash offer professional setup assistance for stage pianos?

Absolutely. [At Sam Ash](#), our keyboard specialists can help you configure either instrument for your specific needs, including:

- MIDI routing and controller setup
- Sound organization for your performance requirements
- Optimal settings for different venues
- Integration with external gear

**\*Note:** *Pricing and/or product availability mentioned in this post are subject to change. Please check our [website](#) for current pricing and stock information before making a purchase.*