

## Founder Celebrates 20 Years of PSF

In 1992, Mark Mention had become increasingly concerned about the cuts being made to music programs in our schools. Mark, a Portland-area piano technician, was looking for a way to help. A client had given him a piano which he fixed up in his spare time, thinking that maybe

he could give it away to a local child. He worked with local music teachers to identify a deserving piano student, and that Christmas Eve he gave that student her first piano.

Building on that first December delivery, Mark continued to give away pianos each holiday season, but started to think

about how he could get more pianos out to kids. First, in 1994, in order to accept more pianos from more donors, he decided to set up a foundation. Next, he decided that lending pianos as "scholarships" was a better idea than just giving the pianos away, so that the foundation could provide ongoing support for music education. Over time, one scholarship became ten, and eventually a hundred. Today, PSF continues to provide piano scholarship opportunities for students across all income levels.



Scholarship Committee Chairman Paul Lambertsen, PSF President Barbara Platt and PSF Founder Mark Mention.

well as competitive awards to advanced students for the use of grand pianos. Mark observes, "There is a special joy in hearing students play—whether it's playing their first notes, playing the first piano piece they really like, or their first Beethoven Sonata—and knowing it was made possible through the kindness and compassion of our community."

In addition to awards directly to children, PSF began placing pianos in community organizations that offer music education, rehabilitation services, community musical activities or music therapy. Over the years, PSF pianos have brought the joy of music to Portland-area organizations such as Camp Angelos, Arin's house, the West Women's and Children's Shelter and the De Paul Treatment Center.

In 2008, PSF started the First Step Keyboard Program, a free after-school program in Title I schools to provide solid early music education to beginning students. Since then, thanks to First Step, over three hundred students in local elementary schools have had their lives enriched by music.

Executive Director Sandra Phadke, who has worked with PSF since 2007, is excited about starting the Foundation's next 20 years. "We have students who are amazing musicians, we have a strong Board and we have a great reputation in the community. It has been really rewarding to be involved with Piano Santa."

Executive Director Sandra Phadke and Board Member Paul Kerker at the 2014 Concert in Paris event in May. This was the second annual event to feature young musicians from both PSF and Beaverton High School. Follow PSF on Facebook for information on the 2015 event.

### "Concert in Paris" Event



Executive Director Sandra Phadke and Board Member Paul Kerker at the 2014 Concert in Paris event in May. This was the second annual event to feature young musicians from both PSF and Beaverton High School. Follow PSF on Facebook for information on the 2015 event.

### Summer Music Fun

Saturday, August 2<sup>nd</sup>

Please join us for some great music at our free Summer Music Fun Recital

(see last page for details & mark your calendar!)



Through donations and partnerships with Classic Pianos and Yamaha America, PSF's scholarship program has grown to include standard scholarships in which pianos are awarded on a non-competitive basis all year long, as

# Winter Grand Winner took Long Distance Lessons



## PSF Program Basics

PSF was created in 1994 to provide music education opportunities for children, particularly in underserved populations, in the Portland metropolitan area. The three main focuses of our programming are

- (1) **Scholarships:** placing pianos in students' homes,
- (2) **First Step and Second Step Keyboard Programs:** offering group piano lessons to elementary-aged children, and
- (3) **Placement Grants:** placing pianos with deserving community organizations.

In support of these programs, we provide in-home piano tunings and maintenance, offer educational opportunities, and sponsor student recitals throughout the year. Please see our website for information.

## PSF Board & Staff

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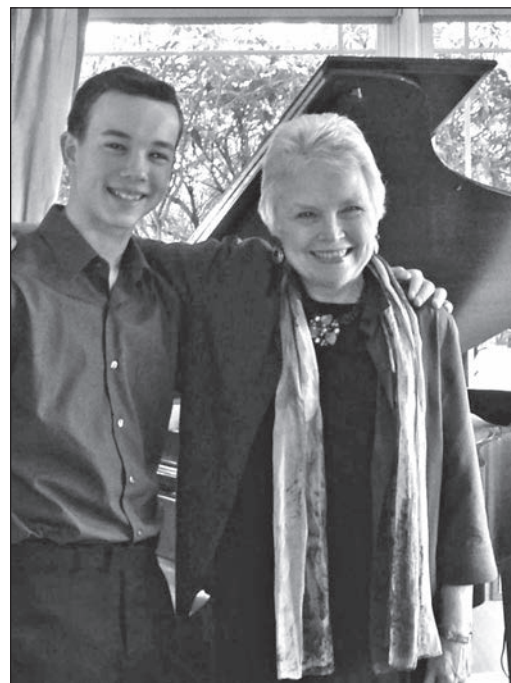
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When 2014 PSF Winter Grand Scholarship winner Connor Dalby and his family moved to Thailand in 2011, they tried to find a piano teacher that was a good fit for him. Connor was clearly talented, and passionate about music, but none of the local teachers seemed to fit just right. After wrestling with the question for awhile with no success, the family reached out to his favorite teacher back in Portland, Shirley Brendlinger, with a radical proposition. Would she consider teaching him again...this time via Skype?

At first, Mrs. Brendlinger was skeptical about piano lessons over the internet. "It's not an ideal situation, obviously," she observed. But she knew that if anyone could make it work, Connor and his family could. "It made a big difference to have the family support him," from helping him set up his iPad so that his fingering and hand position were visible to her as she watched from Portland, to making sure he was ready for each lesson with his practice report, and checking his theory and classical reading reports.

Shirley Brendlinger had started teaching Connor in 2006. She is "a great teacher, and everyone loves her," Connor says. "She's really more like a friend than a teacher." But working via Skype would require some adjustments from the normally quiet and reserved Connor as well. "I told him he would need to 'fully participate' in lessons with me if this was going to work." It took some time to get used to the format, but eventually they worked on pieces as varied as a Bach Toccata, a Haydn Sonata, and Chopin's *2nd Piano Concerto*.



2014 Winter Grand Scholarship winner Connor Dalby and his teacher Shirley Brendlinger.

Once the Dalby family moved back to Portland in 2013, Connor's musical successes picked up right where they left off. In addition to winning the Winter Grand Scholarship Competition, he recently

won a Monday Musical Club scholarship and was awarded "Distinction" in his OMTA Syllabus Level 10. Coming up, he plans to test for the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music's Grade 5 Theory, and participate in this year's OMTA Romantic Festival and the OMTA Scholarship Awards Competition.

For winning the 2014 Winter Grand Competition, Connor has received the use of a brand new Yamaha GB1 grand piano for two years, courtesy of Classic Pianos and Yamaha America. Mrs. Brendlinger is enthusiastic about what the Yamaha grand will do for his playing. "The piano has been such a gift for Connor," says Mrs. Brendlinger. "He has such a poetic heart, and an instrument like this can really help him add nuance to the music." She and Connor are also now setting their sights on his college auditions, as he hopes to pursue a career in music.

As far as teaching piano lessons remotely, Mrs. Brendlinger says "Try it! It's a very positive way to keep a link with a student."

# BRAVO Rosa Parks Receives Grand Piano!

Last summer, PSF placed a piano with BRAVO Youth Orchestras, a new non-profit, tuition-free music education program at one of Portland's priority schools. The program was launched in September at Rosa Parks Elementary (95% of the students qualify for free or reduced price lunch; 18 languages are spoken).

BRAVO sponsors disadvantaged kids with musical instruments and then teaches them how to play. It includes an in-school program of violin lessons for 150 kids in grades K-through-1 and an after-school string orchestra and chorus for 40 students in grades 2-3. BRAVO also provides regular performance opportunities in school and in the greater Portland Metro area. The orchestra will play in City Hall for Mayor Charlie Hales this month.

BRAVO Youth Orchestras is one of approximately 75 programs in the United States that are inspired by Venezuela's *El Sistema*, a national system of youth orchestras serving over 500,000 kids, 80% of whom live in poverty. Established in 1975, *El Sistema* has inspired similar music education programs in over 50 countries worldwide. BRAVO is the first *El Sistema* inspired program in Oregon, and its long-term vision is to expand to other areas in the state that have high child poverty rates.

"[We] are delighted to partner with the Piano Santa Foundation to bring daily music to students at Rosa Parks School in North Portland," said Truby. "BRAVO Teaching Artists use the piano each day to accompany the choir, to teach general musicianship and music literacy, and to

accompany the full string orchestra rehearsals.

"Accompanying the students helps maintain ensemble for our beginning students and trains them to listen for proper intonation. In addition, the piano is available for performances by our weekly Guest Artists who share music from a wide range of traditions. Without the lovely grand piano generously provided by PSF, BRAVO would have to use either an upright piano of mediocre quality or an electronic keyboard. The musical experience for our students is greatly enhanced by having a beautiful piano available for daily use. We will be delighted to



have an instrument of this quality when the well-known classical pianist Arnaldo Cohen visits us as a BRAVO Guest Artist in early May!"

PSF is thrilled to have placed a piano with an organization that shares so many of our values.

*Seth Truby accompanies the youth orchestra at BRAVO Rosa Parks conducted by Mark Woodward.*

**GRACE NOTES** Our heartfelt thanks go to the following individuals, businesses, and foundations for their support of PSF programs, as well as to the many anonymous donors who have made generous contributions. Your support makes all the difference! If your name is missing from this list (and you wish to be added), please call our office, and we will be sure to make the correction in our next edition.

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## Join us at a PSF Event in 2014!

*Please check our website  
[www.pianosanta.org](http://www.pianosanta.org)  
for up-to-date location  
information.*

### **Summer Music Fun**

Saturday, Aug. 2, 2014  
*Reception to follow.*

### **Dress Rehearsal**

Saturday, Nov. 15, 2014

### **Holiday Recital**

Saturday, Dec. 6, 2014  
*Reception to follow.*



*Students, Board Members and Volunteers at the Dress Rehearsal in November 2013.*