

## All About the Music

Evelyne Knight is truly a student of all aspects of music. Talk to her about melodic percussion, and she will tell you about how she prefers the marimba to xylophone, for example, because of the darker sounds and resonance. Ask her about timpani, and she explains why it's a relief that timpani technology has improved in recent years: "You used to have to tune timpani at each lug around the edge—there's normally 6 or 8 – for each note," she sighs. And ask her about the piano, and she'll tell you why the impressionists (particularly Ravel) are her favorite composers for the instrument: "I really like the colorful notes they add, and trying to imitate different sounds on the piano."

Evelyne started playing piano at the age of six, and has been expanding her musical horizons ever since. At the urging of her middle school music teacher, she later added percussion to her musical resume. "I love learning new instruments," Evelyne says, "And it excites me that there is always something else out there to learn." She now plays orchestral percussion for the Portland Youth Philharmonic, helps develop percussionists with the Portland Youth Wind Ensemble, played piano in a string trio over the holidays, and recently even played piano as part of the pit orchestra for her school's performance of the musical comedy *Once Upon a Mattress*.



*Evelyne and her PSF grand piano.*

In 2020, Evelyne won the PSF Grand Scholarship Competition, and with it, the use of a grand piano in her home for two years. But it would be more than a year later before she would actually get to meet any other PSF students face-to-face; for the first 16 months of her 2-year scholarship, PSF's recitals were held on YouTube and Zoom. "Even though my first few concerts were online, it was so great to see all of the ages of people in the Foundation, and how many other hard-working students there were out there."

After all, to Evelyne, music always offers something new to learn, sometimes about people, sometimes about the music itself, and sometimes about life. During the pandemic, she learned about how music could connect people in hard times. "[Playing live concerts for neighbors] was a great time," she remembers, "And the best part was remembering that we weren't alone, and there were neighbors all around us able to help us if we needed."

Currently, Evelyne's plans are to major in math in college, but – not surprisingly - she expects to stay surrounded by music. "I plan to play in an orchestra, and possibly chamber groups too so I can keep playing piano!"

### Honoring Former PSF Board President John Watson

*It is with great sadness that we recognize the recent passing of John Watson. John served as a longtime Board Member and President of the Board in the early years of the Piano Santa Foundation. His kindness touched the lives of many young pianists. **Thank you, John.***



## PROFILE: Bob Rowell

To a lot of Piano Santa families, the most familiar face in the organization is probably that of piano tuner and technician Bob Rowell. Bob started with the Foundation in the mid-90s, initially helping out with the PSF Music Library. But for more than 10 years now, Bob has served on the PSF Piano Fleet committee, and has been tuning PSF pianos.

Bob's interest in fixing pianos started at a young age. He began taking piano lessons himself when he was seven years old, practicing on a spinet piano. "It was very old, and the plastic parts in the action would break if I played it too hard," he remembers. His piano teacher (who was also a piano technician) eventually started giving Bob replacement parts so he could fix his piano himself and keep playing it. "I guess that was my first experience with piano repair (around age 12)."

Bob first heard about PSF when he was just starting out as a professional piano tuner; he happened to apprentice with PSF Founder Mark Mention. "[Mark] taught me so much about tuning and repair," remembers

Bob, who has gone on to found and operate his own piano tuning business, A-440 Tuning and Repair.

Over the years, he has amassed a lot of piano tuning stories, including once having to pull twenty pencils out of an upright piano in a school classroom! But he says he often hears variations of the same story from customers: they had taken lessons when they were younger, and regretted getting discouraged and giving up. "If I could offer any advice, it would be to encourage young students to stick with their piano studies, even when (not IF!) they get discouraged."

Bob has tuned pianos more than a hundred times for PSF, and he particularly enjoys meeting and working with PSF students and families. "It has been a privilege being involved with the Piano Santa Foundation over the years. I would say that my favorite part about tuning for the PSF students is hearing them play for me after the tunings! It's such a good feeling to hear their progress from year to year."



### 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) **Merit and Need-Based Scholarships:** placing pianos in students' homes,
- (2) **Community Placement Grants:** placing pianos with deserving community organizations,
- (3) **Music Lending Library:** providing access to over 1,750 music books.

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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### The Piano Santa Foundation

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You can support PSF with a donation of any size at  
[www.pianosanta.org](http://www.pianosanta.org)

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# PSF Resumes Live Events

For almost two years since the pandemic began, PSF had been holding all events virtually. So, when the PSF Board and staff got together in October of 2021 to start finalizing plans for an in-person Winter Recital, we could barely contain our excitement: could we actually have a live recital again?

Of course, everyone was particularly focused on safety, and we had countless conversations about COVID-19 precautions intended to keep students and the audience safe. But we all agreed that the experience of playing before a live audience wasn't something that students would get over YouTube or Zoom, and we had all been missing the energy of a live event. If we could proceed safely, we decided to move ahead.

One Board member donated COVID-19 test kits, another agreed to monitor the door to enforce the masking requirement, and a third volunteered to wipe the piano keys between student performances. Our selection of venue also reflected a desire to maintain social distancing throughout our events.

The music at the Winter Recital was fantastic, with students playing pieces by Bach, Beethoven, and



*PSF students at the 2021 Winter Recital*

Rachmaninoff, to name just a few. It was clear to everyone in attendance that the students had spent a lot of time practicing these last two years, and you could hear their efforts reflected in the quality of their performances.

Reaction to the live music experience was overwhelmingly positive from both students and audience-members, including a comment by a 16-year-old PSF student who summed it up, "In December, we finally had our first live concert in two years. I was very excited to see many familiar faces, and to be able to finally play in front of a live audience instead of a camera."



## 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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## Upcoming 2022 Events

### Fall Showcase

September 17, 2022

### Winter Recital

December 3, 2022

*Time and location details will be announced  
at a later date. Please check our website or  
follow us on Facebook for updates.*

*PSF students at the 2022 Spring Recital.*