

Musician and Martial Artist

When Keira Tan started practicing Wushu (Chinese for “martial arts”) about five years ago, she was surprised at how learning the martial arts mirrored her experiences studying piano. Both Wushu and piano require discipline and consistency, and in both, Keira found that practice is the only way to improve.

In 2022, her discipline in studying piano paid off: she applied for and won the PSF Winter Grand Scholarship, co-sponsored by Classic Pianos and Yamaha of America.

She describes winning the competition as her proudest moment in music (so far). “It felt like I took control of my own future and took advantage of the opportunities presented to me.”

“To win this scholarship, I had to practice to make my audition pieces as good as I could make them. I had to be very meticulous in correcting mistakes when I practiced.” In both music and the martial arts, Keira, now 15, points to sustained effort as the key to success: “It’s in those moments when you’re tired and feel like giving up where you are able to improve the most. It takes a lot of discipline to practice, whether I feel like it or not.”

Keira started piano at the age of 5, took up flute in the 4th grade in her school band, and then violin in the school orchestra two years later. She enjoys each instrument, with the different lessons they teach and the different experiences they offer. And while she loves rehearsing and playing in a group, performing on a solo instrument like the piano gives her something special. “When you’re on your own, there’s more pressure, but the spotlight is also completely on you. You get more freedom to express your individuality in your own music.”

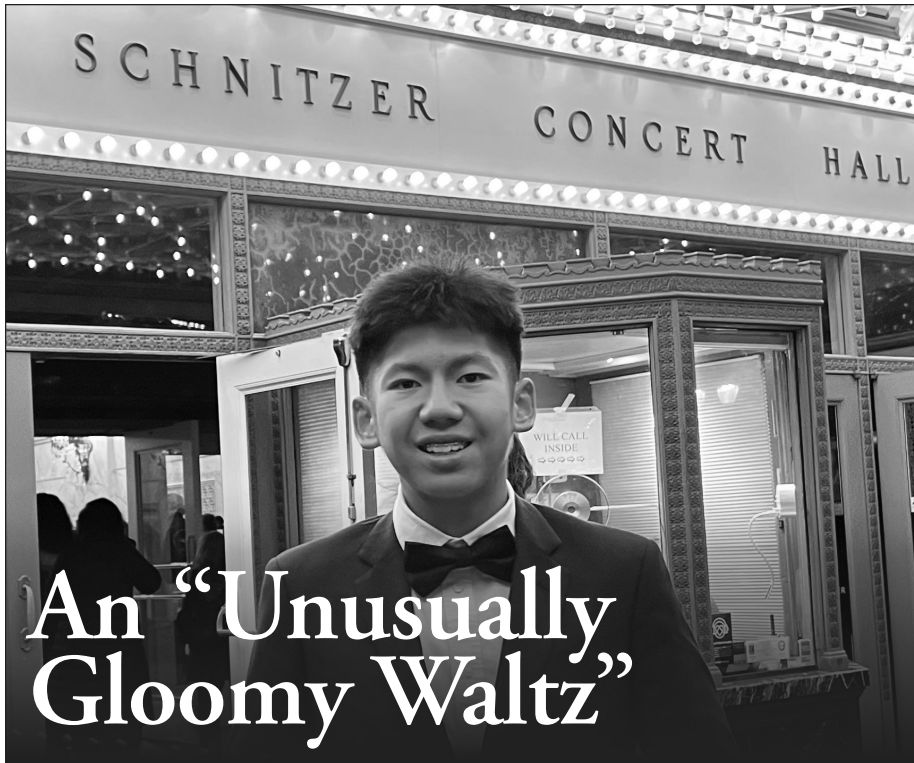
Still, her musical journey has not always been a smooth one. “There are periods of my life where I’ve hated having to practice every day or dreaded weekly lessons,” Keira admits. But even then, the piano always has been a “steady rock” in her life. “It’s become part of my identity, and without the piano, my life would feel foreign.”

Her focus and perseverance show in both her musical achievements and her success in Wushu. “You can tell that Keira appreciates a challenge,” observes PSF Board Member Ajit Phadke. “She doesn’t shy away from hard work, either musically or athletically.” Recently, in fact, Keira’s hard work in Wushu has met with similar success: her team recently went to the Phoenix Wushu Nationals and qualified for the USA Wushu Kungfu team!



The Piano Santa Foundation Welcomes New Board Members

We are excited to welcome new board members Robert Bayley, Rachel Brashear, Ben Graves, and Sam Krulewitch to the PSF family. We look forward to their help in continuing PSF’s mission of enriching life through music, and making sure any child who wants to learn piano has an instrument to play.



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.

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The Piano Santa Foundation

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PSF Student Adrian Valenzuela Debuts Original Piece at Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall

PSF student Adrian Valenzuela, 16, was one of five young composers invited to create movements for a dance suite, as part of the Metropolitan Youth Symphony's Fall 2022 concert, "From the New World," part of the MYS Downtown Concerts Series. "This was my first time working with an orchestra of any size," says Adrian. "I felt honored and privileged to be a part of this event."

An "unusually gloomy waltz" is how Adrian describes his contribution, *Waltz in C# Minor*, which was performed by the MYS Symphony Orchestra at Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall last fall. He was inspired by two particular songs he listens to, "A Man without Love" by Engelbert Humperdinck and "The Heart Part 5" by Kendrick Lamar. Adrian points to orchestration ideas from those pieces which led him to key choices in his waltz.

Although this was his first composition for a full orchestra, Adrian is no stranger to composition. He began in 2019 while in the 8th grade, as part of Fear No Music's Young Composers Project, with a composition titled "Pangarap" (a Tagalog word that means "dream").

Including that piece, Adrian has composed four different works with a variety of instrumentations, from small chamber groups to (now) orchestra.

Music has always been a huge part of Adrian's life, and so writing music has seemed like a natural extension. Coming from a musical family (both his father and brother play guitar), Adrian started playing piano at age 7, and has won the PSF Dottie Lambertsen Merit Award twice, in 2020 and again in 2022. He also participates in chamber choir, is a liturgy band member, and describes himself as "an avid listener of all kinds of music."

But composition and orchestration were definitely a challenge for him. "I stayed up many late nights (with my piano teacher on a Zoom shared screen) figuring out how to articulate and clean up each part," Adrian remembers. But hearing "my piece played through by an actual instrument, rather than the computer," he goes on, "is an experience that I definitely wish to relive."

A video of Adrian's waltz is available here: https://youtu.be/REAK_JDiovQ.

PSF students volunteering in the community



Top: PSF students, Adrian and Rachel, with Courtyard at Mt. Tabor resident (and PSF volunteer) Paul Lambertsen. Bottom: Rachel performing for the residents of Courtyard at Mt. Tabor.

Top: Agnes-Marie performing for members of the Monday Musical Club. Bottom: Agnes-Marie and Rachel after their performances.

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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enriching life through music



PSF students at 2023 Spring Recital.

Upcoming 2023 Events

Fall Showcase
September 23, 2023, 10:30am
Classic Pianos
(3003 SE Milwaukie Ave. Portland)

Winter Recital
December 2, 2023, 10:30am
Classic Pianos
(3003 SE Milwaukie Ave. Portland)

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