



FIRELANDS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

FOR THE LOVE OF MUSIC



Register photos/ANGELA WILHELM

Isaac Bohne, 6, looks at his teacher, Tatyana Tolmacheva, as they practice piano Oct. 15 at Firelands Symphony Orchestra.

Music teachers inspire next generation

By **MELISSA TOPEY**

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SANDUSKY

Music and martial arts — the clash of images came together perfectly in 6-year-old Isaac Bohne as he sat in his white Tae Kwon Do uniform at a white baby grand piano playing a piece of music called “Beach Party.” His hands glided over the keys as he read the music with a serious expression on his young face.

Two worlds meet

Tatyana Tolmacheva grew up in the Ukraine where she studied music at the Odessa State Conservatory. She came to the United States in 1994.

“I found my place in a new country among the generous people of the U.S.,” Tolmacheva said.

Tolmacheva has been teaching piano for a total of 45 years.

“I love all my students,” she said.

Tolmacheva has been teaching Isaac for three years. She beams as she watches the boy play.

Though Tolmacheva has even taught Isaac some Russian, Isaac writes his own music.

“I create my own song because I like creating the song. I like playing,” Isaac said.

He sat back down at the piano and played “Lullaby” in C Major, a song he wrote.

“I wanted to make it beautiful,” Isaac said with the profound simplicity of a child.

Tolmacheva and Isaac hugged goodbye as practice ended. Isaac would go to his martial arts class.

“I am 56 inches of boom,” Isaac said punching his fist out.

His mother, Erin Bohne, has seen Isaac blossom as a pianist. Music has helped the boy grow in confidence.

“It helped him with other course work. He is able to multi task. I think it’s because, when playing music, he is reading multiple lines,” Erin said.

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“Music is so important. We need the arts.”

Laurie Korobkin, executive director of FSO, said many studies have found a correlation between music education and academic achievement.

“It helps them in the learning process,” she said.

The school is also perfect for kids who are homeschooled because it offers an opportunity for these students to supplement their arts education and interact with others.

More than music

The Firelands Symphony

Firelands School of Music offers

Piano lessons
Violin lessons
Cello lessons
Trumpet lessons
Trombone lessons
Viola lessons
Flute lessons
Guitar lessons
Voice lessons
Art classes

Orchestra is more than performances. It also has a school of the arts that offers lessons and classes for students of all ages. Additionally, the organization provides edu-

cation outreach, which is supported by grants, to area schools.

Tolmacheva sees a spark in the eyes that music brings to the children she teaches.

She sees the sense of accomplishment of a dream in her adult students.

Tolmacheva teaches all ages from Sandusky and surrounding areas.

Programs are tailored to each age group.

A school’s work

With funding for music education being cut, Korobkin is a woman with a mission.

“With the arts cut back in schools, we feel it’s our mission to supplement music education. I

am trying to get the message out to the community of who we are and what we offer,” Korobkin said.

Much of its work is funded by donations.

For example, the baby grand piano Isaac was playing was donated by the family of **Scott Gast**, a local musician whose life was cut tragically short.

Scott believed strongly in music education, and his family honored his memory with the donation.

Music enhances the life of all its students, young or old. It adds beauty and dimension to life.

“The piano is a miracle. Touch it once and you will come back,” Tolmacheva said.