Trinity Music Professor Carolyn True to Give Inaugural Performance on New Steinway Concert Grand Piano

Recital to celebrate the acquisition of piano, made possible by estate of music alumna

SAN ANTONIO – Music professor Carolyn True will give the inaugural concert at Trinity University on a new Steinway D concert grand piano, which was recently acquired with a gift from a music alumna’s estate. True’s program will include Piano Sonata No. 4, Op. 30, by Scriabin, Piano Sonata No. 31, Op. 110 by Beethoven, 13 Ways of Looking at the Goldberg by various composers, and Sonata for Piano, Op. 26 by Barber. The concert will begin at 7:30 p.m., Tuesday, Jan. 18, in the Ruth Taylor Recital Hall. The concert is free and open to the public.

The music department was able to purchase the new concert grand piano with funds from the estate of Carol L. Connor ’68,’71. Connor received a bachelor’s and master’s in music from Trinity. Though she became a computer science professor for the Alamo Community College District after she left Trinity, she never lost her passion for music. Before she died in December 2009, Connor had bequeathed a gift to Trinity’s music department “to enhance its programs in music performance and music education.”

When the music faculty learned of the estate gift, they decided to set aside half of the money for scholarships. The other half would be to address some of the needs the department. “And one of the big issues was the replacement of pianos for the students,” said David Heller, professor and acting chair of music. “We decided to allocate as much money as possible for new Steinway pianos. Our goal is to eventually become a Steinway school.”

One of the biggest priorities was to acquire a new concert grand piano for the Ruth Taylor Recital Hall. Heller said that for almost 30 years the department had been using a Baldwin piano for department performances.
“It served us well over that period of time and it got a lot of use,” added Heller. “But the time had come when we really needed to replace the piano.”

In November, True and Heller visited the Steinway & Sons factory in Long Island, N.Y. The company set up six concert grand pianos for the Trinity professors to audition. Both True and Heller played selections on each piano before narrowing their choices to two. At that point, they took a break to tour the factory and to have lunch. In the afternoon, they went back to work playing several hours on both pianos. During the auditions, the Steinway company brought in technicians to fine tune the instruments to the specifications of True and Heller. At the end of the audition, True and Heller agreed upon their final choice.

The piano was shipped to the Steinway Piano Gallery in San Antonio, where it stayed for a week to give it time to acclimate to the local climate. The piano was then delivered to the Ruth Taylor Recital Hall in December, where three technicians set up the instrument in about 20 minutes.

In addition to the Steinway D concert grand, the music department also intends to purchase another Steinway grand and three Steinway upright pianos to put in practice rooms for students.

Heller said that students will benefit from the new instruments. “The quality of the piano affects touch and technique,” said Heller. “It affects many aspects of performance. It’s going to be an enormous shot in the arm for all keyboardists.”

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