

Helen Marketti's Music Corner

Gavin George



On Tuesday, August 12, eleven-year-old pianist, Gavin George will be playing with the Lakeside Symphony Orchestra at Hoover Auditorium.

Gavin George has a gifted talent for playing classical music on the piano. Early signs of piano playing began when he was 3 1/2 years old. Since then, Gavin has already achieved quite an extensive background. He has performed at Carnegie Hall (New York City), appeared on The Early Show, the Queen Latifah Show and played at Severance Hall (Cleveland). "It's wonderful to see your child excel at something he is interested in," said Gavin's mother, Mary. "Gavin started playing on a Baby Grand piano that my brother had brought from Colorado once my nephew was through using it. I felt that Gavin needed enrichment to keep him challenged and motivated. He was two years old when he started reading Kindergarten level books."

Mary continues, "My husband gave me a DVD of music by Andre Rieu for Christmas around the time Gavin was two years old. The DVD is two hours long and Gavin watched it repeatedly, often accompanying the video or conducting. He loved it. He used to listen to the cartoon music of Tom and Jerry and then copy the music on the piano. He started to read music by the time he was four years old and before then was

playing by ear. At first, I questioned if this was OK for him to do, this intensity. As long as he enjoys what he is doing, we support him."

Gavin is from the Columbus area. His grandparents, Mary and Harold George live in Catawba, so there is a local family connection. They are very proud of Gavin and his accomplishments.

Gavin has a younger brother, Max who is eight years old and also a very talented piano player although their styles are different. They improvise songs together and take turns to play their pieces. They both are Star Wars fans, too!

There have been three different piano instructors over the years who have worked with Gavin. He seemed to master what each had to teach him and they would refer him to another instructor. His latest instructor is Antonio Pompa-Baldi who is a Distinguished Professor of Piano at the Cleveland Institute of Music. Gavin receives extensive lessons from Professor Pompa-Baldi twice a month in Cleveland.

Gavin and his brother, Max are home schooled. The daily schedule includes piano practice, which is split up in sessions throughout the day. Gavin averages a total of three hours of practice each day.

After speaking with Gavin for a brief time, one gets the sense of a young man who is very thoughtful and articulate as he conveys his thoughts about music.

"When I play the piano, I really get into it because it evokes such strong emotions in me and makes other people happy to hear me play. It's a win-win situation," said Gavin. "It depends on what mood I am in when I listen to music. Sometimes I like listening to Tchaikovsky, Chopin or Beethoven. I like listening to all of their styles. I also like Jazz music."

Gavin is looking forward to playing with the Lakeside Symphony Orchestra on August 12 where he will have a solo performance. "I will be playing Mendelssohn's First Piano Concerto. I am looking forward to playing with the orchestra. One day when I am an adult, I really hope to become a concert pianist." Gavin George is well on his way to achieving his dreams.



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