

History and Lore of the CBTS Piano

This is the story of the Baldwin baby grand piano which now resides in the public areas of Carlsbad by the Sea Retirement Community.

Ray Linson and the Acquisition of the Piano

Ray and his wife were residents of the old Carlsbad by the Sea, where they lived in one of the cottages. He was reluctant to buy into CBTS because he knew the buildings would soon be torn down and he wasn't sure that he wanted to face the inevitable disruption that would occur.

Originally from Wisconsin, Ray moved to North Hollywood CA and taught music in the San Fernando Valley schools. He was an extremely talented pianist who also played the harpsichord. Upon his retirement, he moved to Carlsbad.

Ray was the inspiration for and the moving force behind the piano's purchase. His skills and love of music were so strong that the residents decided they must have a fine piano for him to play and for all the rest of them to enjoy hearing. So an effort began to raise money for a piano. Ray, as President of the Resident Council, spearheaded the project. He and a number of other residents contributed toward the piano fund.

When the piano arrived, it was placed in the chapel/community room that corresponded to what is the Rochambeau room now.

Unfortunately Ray could not stay at CBTS for very long to enjoy 'his' piano. His wife, a former nurse, contracted ALS. Their daughter wanted to care for her at home in Escondido. So they moved out. Eventually, after his wife's death, Ray moved to Long Beach and returned to Carlsbad only for occasional short visits.

Time of Transition during the construction of the new building

As the time came closer for the residents of the old building to relocate, Lillian Lopatt voiced concern about the fate of the piano. Plaintively she raised the issue with other residents. Somehow word got out that a young assistant of Lloyd Rochambeau had his eye on the piano; he apparently was not aware that it belonged to the residents.

Jean Brady was the vice president of the Resident Council at the time, serving under president Lucile Thomas. Jean took it upon herself to telephone Ray and ask his advice. Fortunately he was still living in Escondido.

Ray agreed to look for a place in which to store the piano during the building process. As a committed Lutheran, Ray was familiar with various churches in the area. His contacts paid off; he was able to find a Lutheran church in Escondido where the piano could be housed and cared for. Ray arranged and financed the move to the church and back again two years later when the new building was completed.

Damage and repairs to the piano

Because pianos are heavy and difficult to move, it was inevitable that scratches and dings would occur during moves between the lobby and the Rochambeau room. However one time, probably in 2003 or 2004, more serious damage occurred. The metal lock for the back leg was broken. The CBTS maintenance department made a temporary repair by stuffing cardboard around the broken lock. Subsequently if the piano needed to be moved, the maintenance department would carefully lift the back to keep weight off the damaged lock. Eventually Dawn Larsen, who was the Executive Director then, decided that safety was the primary concern and that the piano should remain in the lobby. So the traveling days of the piano ceased for several years.

In December 2007, Glenn Quillin purchased a dolly to restore mobility for the piano. The Greene Music Company sent two piano movers over to place the piano on the dolly. That required partially disassembling and reassembling the piano so that it would fit.

In May 2008, Glenn decided to follow up on the piano leg issue. He started by calling Greene Music; they were helpful but had to refer him to The Piano Place in San Diego because Greene does not make repairs. The Piano Place repairman stabilized the leg by screwing in permanent bracing. The cost was \$150 which was paid out of the budget of the Resident Council Activity Committee.

During the renovation of the lobby (October-December 2008) Glenn realized that construction dust could harm the piano, so he ordered a cover for it from The Piano Place. The cost of the cover was taken out of the Resident Council Activity Committee budget.

An ongoing concern is the natural tendency of people to set things down on empty flat surfaces like pianos. For years now, Jean Brady has been removing objects large and small. One holiday dinner shortly after the new building opened, Jean observed 2 tall stacks of dinner plates resting on the piano. She rushed over to the serving staff and told them in no uncertain terms that the piano was not a table. During Mary Beth Tompane's term as president of the Resident Council, Jean addressed the quarterly meeting and told everyone that decorations, wine glasses, and other objects could cause serious damage. Dawn Larsen heard her plea and made certain all of the staff would respect the piano.

CBTS piano enthusiasts

Betty Roberts plays the piano at 5:00 am every day. She has an occasional audience of security guards and early kitchen workers who enjoy her practice sessions. One morning she was pleasantly surprised when a tile layer who had been working all night on the lobby renovation said 'I can play the piano'. His hands were still covered with grout, so she sent him off to wash them. Without formal training, he played by ear and it was beautiful! Betty is encouraging him to go to school and perhaps change his career from tile laying to music composition.

Alex Rosen is Ruth Ogilby's grandson. He lives with his family in La Canada CA and has been visiting CBTS since he was a little kid. He started playing our piano at age eight and liked it so

much he pestered his parents for one exactly like it. Singing was another of his early interests; he belonged to the Los Angeles Children's Choir until his voice changed. Now sixteen years old, Alex tries to stop by for a visit and concert during the winter holidays. His other interests include science, and music composition. The next step for Alex is finding a college where he can study music. Perhaps it will be close by so we can continue to enjoy his piano playing.

The piano is an important part of our regular activity program. Rosemary Kubes uses it most frequently for her delightful entertainment during Friday social hours. Fred Moyer, a concert pianist comes to play it occasionally. The newest (and youngest) performers are sisters Valerie and Dominique who play piano/violin duets.

The new piano patrol

At the Resident Council meeting of October 2, 2008, Jean Brady gave an oral report on the history of the piano. She also turned over her unofficial title as protector of the piano to Glenn Quillin. To mark this occasion, she presented him with a special badge.

One of his first duties will be to come up with a place to store the cover when the piano is in use, especially if the top is raised.

Contributors

The following people have contributed to the story of the piano:

- Jean Brady (current resident),
- Orpha Boggs (former employee in the CBTS marketing department, current resident)
- Glenn Quillin (current resident)
- Lois Taron (friend of Ray's from Saint Paul's in North Hollywood, now CBTS chapel organist)
- Betty Roberts (current resident)
- Ruth Ogilby (current resident)
- Valerie Cumming (current resident)

Resources

Piano Place Inc
8480 Production Avenue
San Diego CA 92121
(858) 547-9846
www.pianocraftsmen.com

Greene Music
7480 Miramar Road #101
San Diego CA 92126
(858) 586-7000
www.greenemusic.com

Cathy Miller takes care of having the piano tuned before it is used for concerts.