

Piano instructor strikes a chord

Gabe Stone

The Clackamas Print

When walking into Yoko Miyama's spacious office in the Niemeyer Center, one's eyes don't drift to the requisite plain desk or bookshelf, but instead behold two striking pianos.

One, a grand piano in every sense of the word, suggests sounds of fluidity and enchantment.

"It's all about the grade," said Miyama, commenting on how professionals choose pianos. Miyama favors grand pianos over traditional uprights.

It is Miyama's first term at Clackamas Community College as a part-time instructor, and she has enjoyed her time here thus far.

"I like the facilities. Students are all hardworking," said Miyama.

That is high praise coming from someone with Miyama's musical background. Hailing from near Osaka, Japan, she began formal lessons at the age of four. Reflecting on her past, Miyama finds that the piano is an essential part of it.

When asked about how long she has played the piano, she answers, "As long as I can remember."

Miyama has been living in the United States for 15 years, initially in Indiana. Her resume boasts teaching assignments at the University of Illinois, University of the Pacific, and at the University of Oregon, where she taught for



Piano instructor Yoko Miyama (center) with students of her Piano for Pleasure (Music-111): (on Miyama's left) Eric Lay, Isaac Li (on Miyama's right) Frances Sanchez, and Matt Binggeli. Miyama is preparing for her doctoral thesis in Piano Performance.

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four years.

She recently gave students a taste of what she will be presenting in order to receive her Doctor of Musical Arts in Piano Performance from the University of Oregon, regaling them

with selections from works by Beethoven, Chopin and Fauré. Her final recital is similar to a doctoral dissertation.

When asked about her preparation thus far, she said with a satisfied weariness, "A lot of study. A

lot of practice."

Miyama teaches piano instruction and keyboard skills here at the college. She gives one-on-one instruction through the school as well. This term she is also teaching the popular Piano for Pleasure

class, substituting for faculty member Naomi LaViolette who is currently on maternity leave.

With her consummate work as a professional pianist, she should serve to make a walk through Niemeyer that much more love

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Charles Dickens' classic coming

Katie Wilson Adam J. Manly

The Clackamas Print

As the holiday season takes off, Clackamas Repertory Theatre prepares to dazzle audiences with their second production, "A Christmas Carol."

Running Dec. 8 through 23, David McCann's edgy adaptation takes great care to avoid departing too far from the classic Dickens tale.

"It's what the book was meant to be," said Matt Morrison, who will portray several characters in the play, including Jacob Marley. "All the narration is verbatim from the book. We're

literally quoting the book, making it applicable to the scenario."

"A Christmas Carol" is not really a sentimental story," added CRT manager Cynthia Smith-English. "It's a ghost story. Kind of scary, but at the end warm-hearted."

The play will be directed by Karlyn Love, who teaches drama at Oregon City High School. Morrison says that Love's approach to the play, while different from the standard approach of Clackamas Drama Instructor David Smith-English, works perfectly.

"[Love] is also a choreographer," said Morrison. "And with 10 people on stage at the same time, you have to be very detail-

oriented to know where people are and where they should be that it doesn't look like a train wreck."

The look of the play will be somewhat minimalist. With an extravagant set built on stage, "A Christmas Carol" will rely more on the talented ensemble cast, who weave in and out of multiple characters and narrator roles.

"It's good to work with people who have been doing this a long time," Morrison said. "If anybody was gone, the whole thing would not work."

More information on the show, including ticket prices, can be found by browsing CRT's website at www2.clackamas.edu/crt/index.asp.

Local MC Village Elliot disappoints

Jimi McDonnell

The Clackamas Print

Portland's underground rap scene has expanded over the past few years, going from almost non-existent to a quite extensive list of MCs doing what they call "their thang."

To a lot of people, "doing your thing," or "thang," means creating original music and busting ass to promote it. But to some it means taking every MC's style admirable, putting them all together and making some grade-A biter music. That's what local MC Village Elliot's promo disc sounds like. As a rapper, I am the first to

cringe at the idea of shooting down a local artist and giving him a bad review — or in the hip-hop world "no love" — but this time I feel I have no other choice but serve the community and let them know there is a fake MC among us.

A friend of mine compared Elliot to "Bubba Sparx and Necro."

Necro is a grimy New York MC and producer who is hard as hell and doesn't worry about anything he says. Elliot's delivery and voice sounds influenced by Necro.

Bubba Sparks, on the other hand, is just a fat southern sell-out rapping about bling, rings and other irrelevant things. Mix 'em together and you have

Village Elliot.

Sitting with the crew bumping to this product of Portland underground, Village Elliot promo, we all simply laughed.

Song after song, from intro to the bonus track, sucked. But hats off to Elliot, wasn't the worst.

He starts his promotion with an intro downing his name and sort of punking himself, a typical tactic found in many weak MC's today. "I'm myself, blah, blah, blah, me, blah, buy my record, blah."

So if anyone has a thirst for underground Portland rap, buying a copy of Village Elliot music will not satisfy, unless you're an idiot.