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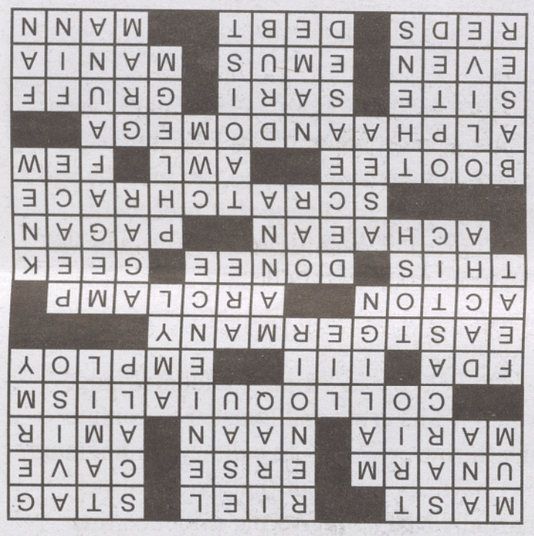
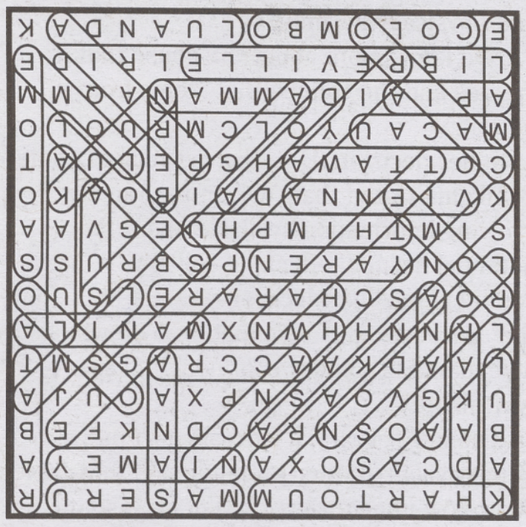
Answers to Page 15 Puzzles





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Street Roots vendor collaborates with Oregon Symphony on song for her baby

The Lullaby Project pairs new mothers with professional musicians to promote bond with infant

BY HELEN HILL
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

PHOTO BY HELEN HILL

Kate Fraser Daly, a Street Roots vendor, teamed up with Portland musician Anna Tivel to compose a lullaby for Daly's infant daughter, Aurora.

For all the uncertainty in Kate Fraser Daly's life right now, her devotion to her family has remained steadfast and strong. Her family members include her 6-month-old daughter, Aurora; her 14-year old son, Tavis; her husband of 15 years; and their Chihuahua terrier.

In February, Kate volunteered to be part of an innovative program called the Lullaby Project, sponsored by the Oregon Symphony. She learned of the project through Portland Homeless Family Solutions, the homeless shelter where she and her family have been staying since November. Portland Homeless Family Solutions is a nonprofit organization that works to help families with children attain stable, long-term housing.

"We've never been in a shelter before," Kate said. "We lost our home of 10 years last summer following a slow downward spiral. Several things happened in the last year that tore things apart. Being at the shelter is humbling, like being at summer camp. You have to associate it with something positive. My son is in middle school, and it's not been a joy ride for him, but he's a great kid."

The idea for the project was launched in 2012 at Carnegie Hall in New York City. The idea, as Carnegie Hall describes it, is to pair "pregnant women and new mothers with professional artists to write personal lullabies for their babes, supporting maternal health, aiding child development and strengthening the bond between parent and child."

Since its inception, the Lullaby Project has grown internationally. This year, there are Lullaby Projects taking place not only here in Portland, but in Baltimore, Athens, Greece, and Vancouver, B.C., to name a few. The Seattle Symphony Orchestra, London's Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and the Hiland Mountain Correctional Center in Alaska are among the organizations joining the Oregon Symphony in reaching mothers not only in homeless shelters, but also in prisons and hospitals.

Kate and the other mothers from Portland Homeless Family Solutions had their first meeting at the Unitarian church on Southwest 12th Avenue and Salmon Street. There were four symphony musicians, seven singers/songwriters and seven mothers. They were all strangers to one another in the beginning.

They started off with an introductory circle, with each mother sharing her story.

"This provoked a lot of emotions for me," Kate said. "You got to hear different moms' desires for their kiddos. Lots of love and God and support, lots of strength and hope were there in the messages that came across with the other moms in this situation (homelessness). We enjoyed just being together, finding beauty in hard places."

The mothers then listened to a sampling of musical styles, voices and instruments, including cello, violin, piano, flute, piccolo, rhythm shakers, guitars and bassoon. Then the mothers chose the musicians they felt drawn to and wanted to work with. Some paired up with a violin and piano duo, others with a flautist. Kate chose Anna Tivel, a Portland-based singer/songwriter and guitarist.

"I liked her voice. She's a folk singer; that's what I wanted, what I remember about lullabies. Her voice was soft, comforting, natural," Kate said.

Storm Large, Edna Vazquez and LaRhonda Steele were among the other singers and songwriters. Violinist Chien Tan, cellist Marilyn de Oliveira and bassoonist Evan Kuhlmann were among the participating Oregon Symphony musicians.

The mothers sat and talked with their chosen musicians.

"I wanted to get to know Anna," Kate said, "because we are doing something so intimate with my daughter. We found a corner and talked for a while that first day."

After getting to know each other, they set about writing the lullaby.

"It was like thinking of a poem," Kate said. "I wanted my song to let her know that I want her to take the world by the horns."

Kate said she and Tivel made a good team.

"It came together very well. We didn't have to try too hard," she said. "It was a blessing to be part of it."

Here is a sample from the lyrics of her song.

The world is yours, do with it what you want.
Allow yourself to be what you can be.
You are beautiful, strong and innocent
My happy little angel, Aurora Eve.

Kate is thrilled with the results. She will sing her song in a 6 p.m. performance April 26 at the Old Church, 1422 SW 11th Ave., in downtown Portland. There are no seats remaining for the free performance, but the event will be live-streamed on the Oregon Symphony's Facebook page, Facebook.com/OregonSymphony. The songs will also be available on the Carnegie Hall website, carnegiehall.org. Each song will be professionally recorded and presented to the mothers.

"I like to think I wrote a lullaby that maybe some day another mother will sing. You don't know how it will travel, where it will go. That's my hope for this song, that someone else can find meaning as I do."

Meanwhile, as her family waits for an apartment opportunity, Kate sells Street Roots at Southwest 12th Avenue and Salmon Street most days and at Scrap at 1736 SW Alder St. before 3 p.m. on weekends.