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Positivity through piano



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Local music teacher preparing students for 93rd Truro Music Festival

TRURO – For the last 93 years, local musicians have spent this time of year prepping for the Truro Music Festival. For 24 of those years, Lorraine Brocklehurst has been working with her students.

This year, the local piano teacher will have upwards of 20 students competing in the long-running festival, including Madeline and Isabella Young, who were at her Smith Avenue home on Saturday morning for their regular practice.

When asked how the sisters decided to compete as a duet in the family category, the younger Isabella shoots her big sister a sideways glance on the piano stool.

“It was all her idea,” she said before the two laugh.

“Some days it’s not so easy,” said 15-year-old Madeline, “Some days we’re not on the same page at all.”

Saturday was not one of those days, however, as the duo effortlessly breezed through “Habanera,” perhaps the most famous piece from Georges Bizet’s opera “Carmen.”

Even after all the years of teaching, Brocklehurst still finds enjoyment in entering students in new categories, such as the family duet. The Young sisters will be up against seven others, including a few mother/daughter combinations.

“It’s interesting with the family duet,” Brocklehurst said. “They have the familiarity and commonality of musicality. I think that’s what makes it so interesting.”

For Brocklehurst, the Truro Music Festival is just a part of life come the spring of the year. The competition, matched with the discipline and fun of learning music, provides a lot for children and their parents.

“(The festival) was something I grew up with,” she said. “Not only is it a nice thing for the kids to be involved with in terms of having a goal... but it’s a nice life lesson. It prepares them for so much.”

It’s also a lot of fun for the teachers, she said. Despite it being a competition, there’s no ill-will or wishing for advantages, she said.



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Isabella and Madeline Young practice their piece for the family duet category at the upcoming Truro Music Festival, with the guidance of their piano teacher, Lorraine Brocklehurst. The duet is just one of four categories each sibling will take part in at the festival, which gets underway today.

“We’re all on the same page. Even though it’s a competition we come in happy to see each other. We’ve never really felt it (as a competition). We just want the students to have that positive experience.”

For the Young siblings, part of the experience is learning to manage their time and being prepared. With three weeks before being called to the stage for their discipline, the sisters already feel ready to perform.

“It’s a lot of practice time and work,” Madeline said. “I don’t find it’s as much sitting down and forcing myself to do things anymore. It kind of comes naturally now.”

The Truro Music Festival will kick off Monday with the Musical Theatre, Jazz/Blues, Song and Dance, and Monologues and Recitations categories running at the Marigold Centre until Wednesday. Other categories will pick up at the end of the week and run through to May 8. For a full schedule, visit www.truromusicfestival.ca.

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