

## Student wins grand piano in Royal Conservatory contest

By Bill Rea

It probably doesn't take much prodding to get 10-year-old Devon Plaskett to practise piano, since she's got a very beautiful instrument on which to do it.

Devon was the winner of a Yamaha GB1K grand piano last year in honour of the 125th anniversary of the Royal Conservatory. It was delivered to the family's Caledon home in December.

Organized by Yamaha Canada Music Ltd. and the Royal Conservatory, the contest was open to any student registering for Conservatory exams between April 5, 2011 and June 11, 2012. There were more than 27,000 entries in the contest, and Devon was chosen by random draw.

"I was really excited," commented the Grade 5 student at Belfountain Public School, as she recalled the reaction to the news she received during the summer. "I didn't really believe it at first."

"I feel really special being able to play it," she added.

Her mother Catherine had a similar reaction.

"It was surreal," she said, confessing that at first she was wondering what the catch was. "I wasn't sure whether to believe it or not."

Mrs. Plaskett said Devon was entered when she signed her up for her Grade 2 exams.

"I entered her, and lo and behold," she observed.

Devon, who's been playing the piano for about four years, said she has just started working on Grade 4 pieces, and she said she doesn't really have any favourites.

"I like all my songs," she said.

Mrs. Plaskett said finding room for an instrument like that really wasn't much of a problem, since they moved into a house in the Forks of the Credit area couple of years ago. She said the home has a "lovely living room that showcases it beautifully."

She also said the piano is well used. "It's got me back to playing," she remarked.

Devon started learning the piano through Music for Young Children. She was first taught in Alton by Shirley Jemmett, and now studies under Pamela Dunbar in Caledon East.

Mrs. Plaskett also said obtaining the new piano has "been a win-win situation." They were able to donate their old instrument to the music department at Mayfield Secondary School.

"Having access to such a beautiful instrument provides a powerful incentive to continue to develop musical skill and expression," said Royal Conservatory Vice-President Academic Angela Elster. "We are grateful to long-time partner Yamaha for its generous support of this contest as well as its ongoing efforts to help The Royal Conservatory develop human potential through music and arts education."



Devon Plaskett tries out her Yamaha GB1K grand piano.