

Piano Man's gift of music



Mount Carmel-Holy Rosary School students (l. to r.) Satouma Viallo, Cierra Jones, Bianca Odle, Alicia Campbell, Brittaney Campbell and Brianna Fields with music instructor Jeffery Wang. Photo by Aaron Showalter

Donates a 60G Steinway to help

Harlem students get free lessons

BY ELIZABETH LAZAROWITZ
DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER

PIANO MAN Billy Joel hit a high note for a group of East Harlem music students, donating an autographed Steinway baby grand for auction to help raise money for their lesson program.

The \$60,000 piano will be sold on charitybuzz.com, where bidding began last week and will continue until May 6.

"I feel good because I really want to continue violin in the future," said Satouma Viallo, 12, one of about 20 students at Mount Carmel-Holy Rosary School in Manhattan.

"Whenever I feel sad or lonely, I just pick up my violin and I feel better."

The young musicians now spend three hours on Saturdays studying music through Ten O'Clock Classics, a non-profit that provides free lessons and instruments to Catholic-school children.

Joel is a board member of Ten O'Clock Classics.

Auction proceeds will add hours of classes next year that will include music theory, ear training and possibly individual lessons, said the group's founder, Ronen Segev.

Ten O'Clock's chairman, real estate developer David Pickett, said he'll put up any extra money

needed to make it happen.

Many of the Mount Carmel youngsters have their hearts set on auditioning next month for the Music Advancement Program (MAP) at the vaulted Juilliard School at Lincoln Center.

Started in 1990 and aimed at underprivileged kids, MAP typically accepts 40 to 50 new students each year. Most pay only a fraction of the \$4,500 tuition.

The Broad Foundation also pledged \$425,000 to MAP over four years, said Juilliard School President Joseph William Polisi.

"The seven-figure gifts that were not abnormal two years ago are very abnormal now," Polisi said.

Proceeds from the sale of Joel's piano should allow Ten O'Clock Classics to give Mount Carmel's budding musicians the training they need to make MAP, Segev said.

"When people see that these children who are facing many challenges are so focused and positive and determined," Segev said, "it really strikes a chord with them."

The Web link for the auction is: https://auction01.charitybuzz.com/secure/viewItemDetail.do?auction_item_id=910021&lotindex=0&show=10&order=default.

elazarowitz@nydailynews.com

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MAP, Segev said.