

# a Look at the Performers!



## Max Ayala

Max is 7, in first grade, and is completing his first year of piano study. He has been a lively, talkative, energetic ball of creativity as we have made our way through the year. He loves to read and sing the lyrics of all our music, sometimes having to be told to stop singing so he can concentrate on the notes. We have even written lyrics when there were none. Max, you have been a bright and shining star this year. Good job!



## Annia Blasi

Annia is 11, in 5th grade, and is finishing 3 years of piano study. She achieved the next level in AIM and was very successful with her solos. She has really blossomed with her music this year and shown tremendous artistry and movement around the keyboard! Her recital pieces have shown her growth with lots of movement and expression. Annia, Congratulations on a wonderful year in piano. Great job!



## Luciana Balzer

Luciana is 13, in 7th grade, and is finishing 6 years of piano study. She has really persevered through some very challenging pieces and has done amazing work. She loves exciting music and beautiful pieces, striving to express her music with sensitivity and artistry. She achieved level 6 AIM this year and performing in her first 2 piano quartet! Luciana, you have grown and musically matured this year. Congratulations!



## Graham Blasi

Graham is 11, in 5th grade, and is finishing two years of piano study. He has done a great job learning notes, rhythm, and keyboard playing. He has grown in his understanding of piano and has played many different songs this year. He even has started memorizing music! He has a great sense of humor and keeps me on my toes during his lessons! Graham, you have succeeded this year and have learned a lot. Good for you!



## Serena Balzer

Serena is 16, a sophomore, and is finishing 9 years of piano study. She enjoys upbeat jazz songs with fun pizzazz as well as deeply sentimental and expressive pieces. It has been a great year of music making for her with great achievements along the way! She completed level 8 AIM with great success! Recital season has been filled with ensembles and wonderful solos. Serena, I am so proud of all your accomplishments!



## Claire Burgess

Claire is 10, in 4th grade, and is completing her second year of piano study. We have had a great year of musical growth and completing her second AIM exam! Claire is always ready for her lesson and has reached her goals with great success this year. Her recital music has been a lot of fun for her, with her even asking for more music as the season progressed. I am proud of your perseverance this year Claire. Way to go!



## Emily Burgess

Emily is 12, in 7th grade, and is completing 4 years of piano study. She took on jazz band as a piano player and worked hard at school and in our studio this year. She completed level 5 AIM, skipping a level this year. This is the second year she has played the teacher part of a duet with Claire. Emily, you have worked hard this year, achieving many goals and successes. Congratulations!



## Sammy Dykhuis

Sammy is 17, a senior, and is finishing 12 years of piano study. After all these years together, I don't know how I will fill the hole she is leaving behind. She is a student who has a love for piano and who perseveres no matter how busy she is with the other parts of her life. She has brought a spirited and happy heart to piano weekly; we have laughed and loved music making together. Thank you Sammy for the joy you have brought me. Our time together is our treasure for life.



## Ryan Fitzgerald

Ryan is 13, in 7th grade, and is completing his first year of piano study. He has worked very hard this year and has come very far for a first year student. We have enjoyed our Wednesday nights together and had a LOT of fun at the piano. He has played some great music this year and his recital music has been a pinnacle of his success this year. Congratulations Ryan!



## Anna Fortelka

Anna is 14, in 8th grade, and is finishing 8 years of piano study. She has worked very hard this year and has been very excited about her piano accomplishments. She achieved level 5 AIM which was a very rewarding experience for her! She has continually amazed me with her enthusiasm and perseverance through the challenges. She keeps me on my toes with her pushing to play harder and harder music. Anna, thank you for your hopes and dreams, don't ever let them go!



## Ella Gsedl

Ella is 19, a freshman at COD, and has studied piano for 11 years. She has grown musically this year and has pushed herself to be even more responsible in practice. Her attention to musical details has grown this year, making her music expressive and lovely. She is a kind, dedicated piano student who brings an enthusiastic attitude towards all our goals throughout the year. Ella, thank you for a great year!



## Nina Gsedl

Nina is 16, a sophomore, and has studied piano for 8 years. She loves upbeat, jazzy songs and especially loves to play duets. Her sense of rhythm is strong and a natural strength in her. She achieved level 3 AIM this year and was very successful. She works hard at the challenges she faces which continually makes her a better musician. Nina, you worked hard this year and grew so much. Congratulations!



## Sarah Lydon

Sarah is 13, in 7th grade, and has studied piano for 8 years. She has a deep love for piano, constantly pushing to achieve harder music. She achieved level 2 AIM while playing level 3 AIM music, all while moving houses and being without a piano for a few weeks! Sarah, your dreams of the music you want to play are going to be realized!!! Thank you for reaching for the stars!



## Caleb Logan

Caleb is 13, in 8th grade, and is finishing 3 years of piano study. He enjoys playing music that brings depths of difficulty and intensity. He also likes to play music that has excitement in it. He achieved level 2 AIM this year! He is a scientist and an artist, enjoying the structure of his music while being inspired by its sounds. Caleb is unstoppable when engaged and I have enjoyed the challenge of finding those pieces that inspire him. Thanks for a great year Caleb!



## Priscilla Logan

Priscilla is 13, in 7th grade, and is finishing 3 years of piano study. She loves new music and learns music quickly and enthusiastically. She achieved AIM level 4 this year with great success! She is a quick wit and keeps me on my toes with motivating her to new levels of artistry. Priscilla, you have been a great student this year. I love running with you and all your piano accomplishments!



## Timothy Logan

Timothy is 8, in 3rd grade, and is finishing 3 years of piano study. He completed AIM level 1C and did awesome memory work. His successes at piano have been very exciting for him this year! He always has a smile as he skips into piano every week with or without shoes. His hard work includes a duet and a quartet for the recital this year! Timothy, you have come far this year. Good job!



## Asher McNeil

Asher is 9, in 3rd grade, and is completing his first year of piano study. We have enjoyed getting to know each other as we have made our way through the year. He is a very observant student, analyzing the very content of each and every song he plays. He has come far this year in understanding of the keyboard and his ability to play songs. His sense of humor has kept us both laughing each week! Asher, thank you for filling Tuesday afternoons with wit and charm. You have done very well this year. Good work!



## Gwenneth Nika

Gwennie, as we like to call her, is 7 and completing two years of piano study. She works hard to learn her music and grimaces through the "sweet spots" that challenge her. She completed AIM level 1B and was very successful with her memorized music. It has been a great year of growth for her! Gwenneth, you have done a great job this year and I am so proud of you!



## Maura Nika

Maura is 13, in 8th grade, and has been studying piano for 8 years. She loves to play music that is artistic and challenging. She loves to create music at the piano and improvise constantly. She skipped a level in AIM and completed level 6. She has learned a lot about perseverance through harder technical skills this year. Way to take the harder road, Maura! You have a wonderful talent and a bright future!!



## Leah Nika

Leah is 11, in 5th grade, and is finishing her 6th year of piano study. She loves music that has a great beat and is fun to play! She is an amazing gymnast and brings a lot of that energy and discipline to her music! She completed AIM level 3 this year with great success! Leah, you have learned so much this year and really blossomed in your musical understanding and expression! Congratulations on a great year!



## Kaleigh O'Brien

Kaleigh is 15, in 9th grade, and is finishing 9 years of piano study. Kaleigh loves to be busy and learning new music constantly! She doesn't like to be bored so she practices! Her energy is contagious! She is a very dedicated dancer and competes in Irish dancing. She was a level 7 AIM student, memorizing very difficult music this year. Kaleigh, you are an inspiration to me and a total joy in our studio. I have loved being your teacher, being October birthday mates, torturing you with high standards, and marveling constantly at your talent. You, in a word, are, amazing. Congratulations on getting in to IMSA. We all will miss you!



## Matthew Ratliff

Matthew is 12, in 6th grade, and is completing his 6th year of piano study. He continues to work at completing his practice each week and is very happy when he has accomplished his music. He worked hard at AIM level 1C and did a great job memorizing the music. He has an ear for beautiful music and has really enjoyed our duet this year. Matthew, you continue to grow, improve, and show a great musical talent. Way to go!



## Anna Reitz

Anna is 15, a freshman, and is finishing her 7th year of piano study. She has pushed herself in some truly challenging music this year even while adjusting to high school! She achieved AIM level 5 with great success. Her favorite thing in piano is new music and especially her recital music. We have had a lot of fun learning and playing music that has been so inspiring. I love the smile on her face when she is simply enjoying her music. Anna, you have had a wonderful year. Congratulations on all your accomplishments!



Performing May 22, 2016 @ 5:00 PM

Performing May 22, 2016 @ 7:00 PM



### Elise Ricamato

Elise is 14, a freshman, and is finishing 9 years of piano study. She has had a year filled with adjustment to high school and learning perseverance. She skipped a level in AIM and finished level 6 with great success! She loves music that inspires her and lives for AIM performance exams and recital season! Elise, I love your heart for piano and the joy you have playing beautiful music. You are so very talented. You have much music in your future!



### Sara Richert

Sara is 15, a sophomore, and has studied piano for 9 years. She works at many activities while pursuing the highest challenges in piano. She is artistic, talented and devoted to the music she loves to play. She has done wonderfully this year as she pursued many interests and her love of music. She has worked hard this recital season and has played truly beautiful music. You have a tremendous talent Sara. Go with it!!!!



### Katelynn Tracey

Katelynn is 12, in 6th grade and is completing her 6th year of piano study. She is creative, artistic, imaginative, and full of musical energy. She loves to explore learning songs she knows on the keyboard and is always picking out melodies and finding ways to play them. She comes to lessons ready to play, ready to learn, ready to create! Katelynn, I am so proud of your work in piano this year! You have grown and achieved your goals. Way to go!



### Kate Vallaro

Kate is 10, in 4th grade, and is completing her 3rd year of piano study. She is excited about all that she is learning and the fun of new songs. She completed her second AIM exam this year and did great memory work. She has worked hard, learned and enjoyed some great music this year. I love seeing her love her songs and her success. Kate, thanks for all your dedication this year. You are a great piano player and musician!



### Will Ricamato

Will is 12 in 6th grade, and is completing his 4th year of piano study! He has enjoyed working at his goals this year. He has grown and accomplished a lot this year! He completed his AIM level 2 like a champ. I love his confidence and his banter about all that he does in life. His enthusiasm and hard work has really paid off this year. Will, you continue to amaze me with all you are able to achieve. I am so proud of you!



### Lisa Soppi

Lisa is 8, in 3rd grade, and is completing her 3rd year of piano study in our studio! She has had so much fun playing the piano and learning how to move around on the keyboard. Lisa has enjoyed being motivated with hard music and has risen to every single challenge. She achieved AIM level 1C while playing level 3 music. She enjoys everything about piano, the solos, the ensembles, practice, and performance. I am so proud of you, Lisa, for going above and beyond in everything this year!



### Debi Inch

I have been teaching piano for 29 years, all of which has taken place here in West Chicago. I have been active in the National Music Teacher's Association for over 20 years, serving in many local capacities, including president from 2013 -2015. Currently, I am on the state board serving as the foundation chairperson. I attend many state and national conferences, constantly bringing the newest ideas to our studio. I have a love for all of my students, young and old, striving to find the music and styles which will bring excitement to all who are studying piano with me. I find the creativity in music making joyous, as well as deeply personal, with those God has entrusted me with each year. In all these years, the teaching journey has been a path through the lives and hearts of students and parents that count for blessing after blessing.



### Jessica Siletzky

As a professional musician and music teacher, stepping into an assistant position in my mom's piano studio has been very natural. When I'm not teaching piano, I work as an early childhood Music Together teacher at Wee Heart Music, I do digital filmmaking and photography through Living Legacy, am using the GI bill to go to film school at Columbia College in Chicago, and I am a mom of a lively, adorable 5 year old. There is no better way to enrich a child's mind than by bringing music to them through play, experimentation, community, and instrument study. I am blessed to have been part of each of your children's lives and piano study this year. Hopefully, I have been able to make them smile even a fraction of the amount they have made me smile.



### Tyler Ricamato

Tyler is 9, in 3rd grade, and is completing 3 years of piano study. He is an intensely chatty musician, talking, playing, playing, talking... Tyler is an animated adventure! He completed his second AIM exam this year with great memory work! He has taken the second half of this year by storm, working hard, with spirited enthusiasm. His recital music has been so exciting for him this year. Tyler, you are a rock star. Way to be!



### Dana Tomasevic

Dana is 9, in 4th grade, and is completing her second year of piano study. She has worked hard with note reading this year as she has begun to move around on the keyboard more and more. She achieved her first AIM exam with great success. Her musical expression has grown throughout the year which has been very exciting to experience. Dana, your work has paid off with many accomplishments this year. Congratulations!



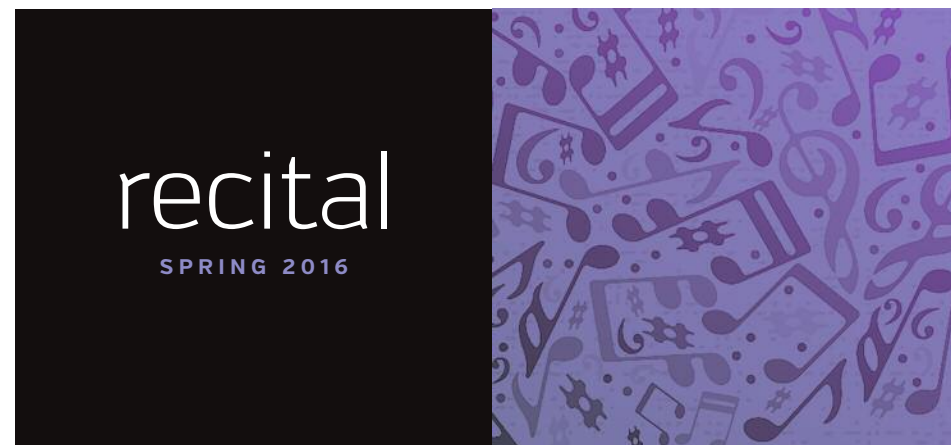
### Barbara Richert

Barbara is 17, a senior, and has studied piano for 9 years. She has had a really busy year with sports, job, and activities, but has still made piano a big part of her life. She loves to use her strong fingers for the big sounds with deep tones with an ever artistic quality to all her playing. She has been a dedicated student through the years, with a caring and responsible attitude, along with totally enjoying her music. I will miss her as she moves forward in life and goes to Houghton College in New York. Thank you, Barb, for ALL you have given to our studio. I wish you much success!



### Ema Tomasevic

Ema is 11, in 5th grade, and is completing her 3rd year of piano study in our studio. She completed her second AIM exam this year. She has taken on much more challenging music and has enjoyed her successes tremendously. Her enthusiasm and consistent work have been a joy to witness this year. She has made a huge leap in musicianship. Ema, I am very proud of your effort and success this year!



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