

What does a nine-foot Steinway & Sons grand piano sound like? Wow!

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Pianist Lucy Mauro practices on the grand piano Steinway & Sons built for pianist Van Cliburn.

Lucy Mauro took her seat at the massive Steinway & Sons grand piano in the lobby of Alfred University's Miller Theater and began playing. For the people watching and listening, the reaction was "Wow."

The piano, built by Steinway & Sons for Van Cliburn in 1976, had been delivered to Alfred University earlier in the week (in a massive crate marked "heavy"). It has a legendary reputation in the world of classical music and can be heard at 7 p.m. in the upcoming MostArts Gala Concert, which begins Sunday, July 9 in Miller Theater.

Mauro, an associate professor of piano at West Virginia University, will join other classical musicians, including Angelin Chang, Andreus Klein and Anthony Pattin, for solo performances during the festival. A native of Hornell, she made her concerto debut with the Dallas Symphony Orchestra when she was 14 years old. She is a graduate of the Peabody Conservatory of the Johns Hopkins University from which she received Bachelor's, Master's and Doctorate degrees.

Her classical music recordings have earned high praise and garnered numerous awards, including the 2011 Recording of the Year by MusicWeb International. American Record Guide has praised her as "a polished advocate, with delightful interpretations communicating the richness and variety of her piano works."

Seated at the Van Cliburn piano earlier this week, she played softly, listening to the extraordinarily rich tones of the instrument. "Wonderful," she said simply. The piano had been shipped to Alfred from Fort Worth Texas, where the 2017 Cliburn Competition had been held in Bass Performance Hall.

It will remain on display in the Miller Theater Lobby through July 15, and can be heard in informal performances from 7 to 7:15 p.m. prior to the Evening Concert Series. The MostArts Festival gratefully acknowledges the support of Steinway & Sons, and especially Peter Wagner for organizing this event.