

Staying sharp with Steinways

TICKLING THE IVORIES ON a grand piano while playing the same composition he's worked on for more than a year is par for the course for Collin College piano student Aavery Bull.

He has been practicing and perfecting Frederic Chopin's "Ocean Etude" for more than a year, and is still working to make it magnificent. And thanks to a new development at Collin College, the notes he's playing sound a little bit sweeter.

"Playing on the new pianos at Collin College is incredible," Bull said. "You're able to have a greater range, and the piano gives you more options to create feeling and sounds."

Collin College recently joined the elite roster of becoming an All-Steinway School, a designation that only 165 educational institutions have received. Schools who possess Steinway-crafted pianos can receive the honor.

The All-Steinway ranking adds even more distinction to Collin College's extensive piano program, said piano department head Dr. Brian Allison.

"Being an All-Steinway school represents a commitment to excellence," Allison said. "It's a strong



New pianos at Collin College have improved the playing experience according to Collin student Aavery Bull.

endorsement of our program and commitment to music."

The piano program provides students an opportunity to graduate with an associate degree in music.

"One of the benefits of taking music classes at Collin College is the smaller class size," Allison explained. "The smaller environment allows more opportunity for students to play in different ensembles and gain experience."

Music students can also take related courses in music literature and keyboarding skills. Aavery and his younger sister Anna, also a Collin College piano student, say the courses have helped them tremendously with their technique.

"I've learned a lot about music history," Aavery Bull said. "You learn about different techniques and styles used in different times, like the Renaissance. I try to incorporate that in my artistry."

For Anna, courses have helped her create better technique.

"I've really been able to work on improving my rhythm and counting

the notes," she said. "Playing on the Steinways really make a difference. You can get a better feel for the notes and create the sound that you want."

Steinway's national director of higher education sales Sally Coveleskie says Steinway pianos are unparalleled. "Throughout our more than 160-year history, pianos by Steinway & Sons have proven to be terrific investments and are often considered essential equipment for the study of music."

In addition to practicing on world-class Steinway pianos, music students also are eligible for music-specific scholarships and ensemble and recital performances.

The Bull siblings both started playing piano at age six and are working towards playing in recitals. The large range of options that playing the piano presents is irresistible to Anna Bull.

"Almost every year since I started playing piano I thought about quitting," she said. "But every year I just keep coming back to it. With piano, you get to play such large octaves and you really can play just about anything."

For more information about the Collin College music program, visit <http://www.collin.edu>. 

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