

Playing notes against the odds

By Anna L. Mallory, Times Staff Writer Carroll County Times, Saturday, July 23, 2005

KEN KOONS/STAFF PHOTO



Christopher Nusbaum, 7, plays the piano in his Taneytown home.

At age 7, Christopher Nusbaum doesn't stare at the piano keys, seeking the proper fingerings.

Even if he did, it wouldn't slow the song's rhythm. Nusbaum has been blind since birth.

But the Runnymede Elementary second-grader's musical talent rivals anyone with sight, his parents say.

"You can go out there and honk your [car] horn, and he'll tell you what key it's in," said his father, Michael Nusbaum.

It's a musical gift he's had since birth, according to grandmother Larue Nusbaum.

She was there to witness the young musician's growth.

From the days as a baby when Christopher would sit on her lap and pound out songs on the piano, she knew it was something special.

"He didn't just pound on the keys like other babies," she said. "He can hear music and just play it. He just has this natural talent, and he just took off on his own.

"All I did was instruct him a little bit," she said.

Christopher also can sing the words to songs he's crafted.

He'll showcase half of his musical ability when he kicks off the Frederick Keys' baseball game Monday night.

At the beginning of the season, he auditioned at Harry Grove Stadium with about 100 other musicians.

When he found out he'd been selected as one of the singers of the national anthem, Christopher was ecstatic.

Christopher is outgoing. He sings at his church and has been selected to join the **Children's Chorus of Carroll County**, a group of about 90 elementary and middle school students.

Christopher's love of music extends beyond singing and playing. One day, he'd like to run his own radio station, playing the classic rock sounds he's become fond of. At his home in Taneytown, family friends have even built a faux control board for his imaginary radio station.

Regardless of where he lands in a career, Christopher credits his gift to a higher power.

"God has been really good to me," he said.

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