

Steinway Grand Piano gifted to the OSO Arts Centre

The OSO Arts Centre is delighted to announce that, thanks to the extraordinary generosity of the Boyd family, the Steinway grand piano, previously on long-term loan, has just been donated to the OSO.

The piano has been in the Boyd family, a local family who lived on Castelnau for 90 years, since 1906 when it was purchased by Harold Tod Boyd, a pianist, choir master and composer. His wife was Isolde Menges, a well-known professional violinist, who performed her first concert at the Wigmore Hall in 1913. During the first half of the twentieth century, she worked alongside leading conductors and orchestras all over the world both as a soloist and as part of the Menges Quartet and Quintet. She was also a professor at the Royal College of Music, where a major prize still commemorates her.

The piano featured prominently throughout Menges' musical life in the Boyds' home on Castelnau where it was enjoyed by the many musicians who passed through their professional and social circle. Notable musicians who have used it include Cecil Sharpe as well as Ralph Vaughan Williams who composed his String Quartet No 2 in A Minor ('For Jean on her birthday') on it for the violinist Jean Stewart, who was part of the Menges Quartet. The piano was used also extensively to accompany Menges when practising for her various solo performances as well as those with her Quartet and Quintet during the 20s, 30s and 40s.

Following Menges' death in 1976, the piano passed to her son, David Tod (Toddy) Boyd, who held Musical Director and Conductor roles at the Carl Rosa Opera Company, West End Theatres, the National Theatre as well as the Royal College of Music. Following his death in 2012, his widow, Susan, a big supporter of the OSO, loaned the piano to it.

Since being at the OSO the piano has been used and enjoyed by several local musical organisations at events hosted by the OSO. These include the Barnes Music Society, 7 Star Arts as well as the Barnes Music Festival which has held several of its Young Musician of the Year competitions at the OSO.

Following Susan's death in 2021 Matt and Will Boyd, grandsons of the piano's original owners, Harold and Isolde Boyd, have now decided to donate the piano to the OSO so that it can continue to be played by the finest musicians and enjoyed by the many people that come through the OSO's doors.

The OSO feels privileged to have been gifted a Steinway piano especially one with such an interesting history and local connection and looks forward to it being an integral part of the OSO's musical offerings for many years to come. But with ownership also comes a responsibility to ensure that the piano is well looked after. It is currently in need of some essential work to bring it back to its former glory. We are fortunate to have already fundraised some £2,000; part of this sum was raised by us last year staging a show entitled *Tales of the Tod Boyd Steinway* in which many of our regular pianists, alongside Gyles Brandeth, performed to raise funds. But to be sure that the piano will be front and centre of our musical offerings for many years to come, we also need to be able to fund its regular tuning and maintenance for which we're launching a new fundraising initiative. You can give a one off donation by clicking [here](#). If you are willing to support the maintenance on an ongoing basis by giving a small monthly donation please email info@osoarts.org.uk for more information.

Thank you for supporting our very special piano.