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Sweet music: Haslett High School senior Megan Gray plays a reconditioned grand piano in the school's auditorium. The piano will be dedicated Sunday.

Grand piano takes spotlight

Haslett district plans performances with its refurbished Steinway

By Margarita Bauza
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HASLETT — Not often do you see a piano featured in a theater performance.

But Haslett School District officials and musicians think this one is worthy of its own night at the theater.

This is not just any old piano — although old it is.

"It's a Steinway grand piano, built in the '20s. It's one of the best," said Jean Frentz, assistant superintendent for Haslett schools.

A grand piano is a concert piano. It is the largest type of piano available.

And the most expensive.

Before acquiring the piano, the school district used an upright piano, which is smaller than a grand and has poorer tone quality.

The new piano is a semi-concert grand or music-room grand, a 7-foot wide black, semigloss Steinway.

"It looks beautiful," Frentz said. "It distributes the sound really well."

Frentz said the piano will showcase the talents of outstanding pianists, students and guest performers.

Guest performers will take to the keyboard at a dedication for the refurbished piano on Sunday. Guest performers will be singer Janine Novinski and pianists John Dale Smith and Ralph Votapek.

Students from Haslett's Murphy and Ralya elementary schools and Wilkshire Early Childhood Center also will perform on the piano.

Haslett Public Schools and the Foundation for Haslett Schools financed the purchase of the piano, which cost about \$20,000, including restoration expenses, said Frentz.

"It was a wonderful deal," said Frentz.

Jim Reeder, of Reeder Piano Inc. in Lansing, said the piano came from a musical institution in western Michigan.

The Reeder Restoration Center team worked on it for four months. "We replaced all of its mechanical parts," Reeder said. "The piano has new sound boards, strings, levers and hammers."

The center uses Steinway parts.

How to attend

Here are some details about the piano's dedication:

Where: Haslett High School Performing Arts Center, 5450 Marsh Road.

When: 3 p.m. Sunday.

"They are a very good fits," he said. "We've restored pianos as old as 125 years old."

The center does major restorations for pianos all over the United States.

Steinway, a German company, has been building pianos since 1853, he added.

A new Steinway piano costs around \$40,000. Average restoration of a piano costs \$12,000 to \$14,000.

Restoring a piano involves replacing parts, labor and refinishing.

"Pianos sound great after being restored, although they won't have the same tone as a new one," he added.