

# The DALLAS POST

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CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK PHOTOS/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

Ten-year-old Mark Pall, who has a rare musical talent, feels as if God is sitting close by him when he plays the organ.

## He's a musical rarity

### Just 10, Mark Pall already a master at playing the organ

By CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK  
Dallas Post Correspondent

"So, are you coming to my concert?" asks Mark Pall during a rehearsal for his upcoming Christmas organ concert. While asking the question, he stretches to reach the wooden organ pedals and keyboard octave ranges that are actually too long for his 10-year-old fingers and feet.

The compelling, captivating Dallas youngster has been amazing everyone with his rare musical abilities since he was a toddler.

"He could, as a baby, repeat tones back to you perfectly and then simple tunes by the time he was two," says his father, Jim Pall, a local minister, who does not play an instrument.

At 5 years old, Mark shocked his mother, who herself was learning to play "A Stairway to Heaven."

"I was practicing the piece and went into the kitchen," Susan Pall said. "Then I heard the whole piece being played by him in the other room."

Without any instruction whatsoever, Mark had learned and played the entire piece.

Self-motivated and extraordinarily self-composed, Mark, a student at the Dallas Elementary School, has organized a concert that will be held at 4 p.m. today, Dec. 2, at the Dallas United Methodist Church and has selected the pieces he will play.

Ed Loch, of Wilkes-Barre, Mark's teacher of two years, says of his student, "He is totally organized, amazing to watch and he's going to surprise me because I have not heard any of the music he is going to play."

"He shocked the congregation and choir members (with his ability)," added Loch of



The Rev. Jim Pall helps his son, Mark, prepare for an organ recital at 4 p.m. today, Dec. 2, at the Dallas Methodist Church. With a rare talent for music, Mark is especially fond of the pipe organ.

people who attend St. Nicholas Church in Wilkes-Barre where Mark has played the organ.

Loch has been responsible for teaching Mark to read music, which he says is not always easy for musically-gifted children. But Mark has the concept and now improvises pieces he calls "Like Bach" after his favorite composer, Johann Sebastian Bach.

"He has a tremendous love for the pipe organ and an incredible musical gift. Talent like his doesn't come along very often," Loch said. "A music teacher might see one every 15 years or so."

There seems to be no explanation for Mark's incredible musical talent at the keyboard.

"I live with a miracle," marvels his father, who acts as chauffeur and encourages his son by making suggestions and stressing fun. "He has a wonderful sense of humor."

#### IF YOU GO ...

Mark Pall's organ concert will be held at 4 p.m. today, Dec. 2, at the Dallas United Methodist Church, Church Street, Dallas. There is no charge at the door, however, an offering plate will be circulated during the performance with money collected to be donated to the Back Mountain Food Pantry.

Loch commends Jim and Susan Pall for keeping things in perspective and providing early lessons for their son who has been seen by a music psychologist. It was during those sessions the family observed Mark responded better to an unstructured environment.

At home, the young boy is a whirlwind of energy, going from one room of his house to

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CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

Old friends Harry Howell, left, and Bob Carey talk about their years with the Wilkes Barre Area Barbershop Harmony Society while holding the Member Emeritus plaques they received recently from the organization.

## Two honored for lifetime of singing

By DOTTY MARTIN  
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Harry Howell and Bob Carey may not be singing any more, at least not publicly, but the two Back Mountain men are still very well-respected members of the Wilkes-Barre Chapter, Barbershop Harmony Society.

That was rather evident a few weeks ago when approximately 30 members of the society converged on the family room of Carey's Sterling Avenue home in Dallas to present both men with "Member Emeritus" plaques.

"We were pleased," said Carey who smiled when remembering how the barbershoppers sang after the plaque presentation. "We didn't expect anything but that's the kind of group it is."

Howell couldn't agree more. "They're a pretty good organization," he said of the group that does charity work for several non-profit organizations.

The plaques recognize the men's outstanding and dedicated participation in barbershop harmony throughout their many years of membership in the chapter.

Carey, 92 years old, has served 45 years in the lead section while Howell, 89, has spent 49 years as a baritone in the chorus and quarteting.

"The lead section carries the tune," explained Carey, who has suffered partial blindness due to glaucoma for several months. Howell, who lives on Campground Road in Dallas, said his low voice made him a baritone or "next to the bottom" as he called it.

Neither Carey nor Howell has sung with the barbershop society for nearly a year, but both have kept their memberships active.

Howell, who is retired from the American Chain and Cable Co., joined the barbershoppers after leaving the Air Force following a stint in China-Burma-India during World War II where he flew aircraft over the Himalaya Mountains.

Having been a member of the Huntsville Christian Church choir, Howell remembers hearing the Buffalo Bills quartet from the movie, "Music Man," sing for the opening of a Wilkes-Barre Chapter Barbershop concert. From that point on, he was hooked.

"I just love to hear four-part songs sung in quartet," he said. Carey, who operated an insurance agency in Wilkes-Barre, joined the barbershoppers because he "liked to sing some."

Having been a member of the choir at the Forty Fort United Methodist Church and singing with its men's group, he walked into a barbershop rehearsal one day and "liked what I heard."

Carey remembers the group as having about 17 or 18 members at the time. Today's society membership stands at 55 or 60, although some of those members live out of town and not

#### BENEFIT HOLIDAY CONCERT TONIGHT

A "Home for the Holidays" concert to benefit Habitat for Humanity will be held by the Wilkes-Barre Chapter, Barbershop Harmony Society, at 7 p.m. today, Dec. 2, at the Church of Christ United, Market Street, Kingston. Back Mountain residents expected to take part in the concert are Ted Rebenack, of Shavertown; Bob Dingman, Dave Schooley and Jarrett Roan, all of Dallas.

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## BMT native loves what he's doing

By REBECCA BRIA  
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Most horses wouldn't do it. But John Lukas gets his horse to do it.

Lukas, formerly of Jackson Township, is the joust director, equine program manager and horse master at the Pennsylvania Renaissance Faire in Manheim where he is responsible for directing the joust show and coordinating stunts.

At the beginning of each joust show, Lukas mounts a horse and has it jump through a wall of fire, a near impossible feat that demonstrates the great trust the horse has in him. Likewise, Lukas has confidence in the eight warmblood horses



SUBMITTED PHOTO

needed to make every show a success. "I get to wake up everyday and do something that I love," he said.

From Monday through Friday, Lukas begins work at about 7:30 a.m. by feeding and

caring for the horses. Then, he and other staff members rehearse on horseback for about two hours. After a break for lunch,

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John Lukas and a horse jump through fire at the start of a show at the Pennsylvania Renaissance Faire in Manheim. Lukas, formerly of Jackson Township, is the joust director and equine program manager at the faire.

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