



Pianist, composer and singer/songwriter Christy Crowl performed for the Fete d' Excellence in Geneva, Switzerland, earlier this week and, later this month, will join Barbra Streisand for a performance at the Democratic National Convention. Crowl, who now lives in California, is a native of Boonsboro.

Christy

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later, she began studying piano with Juilliard-trained pianist Sung Mi Rhee in Hagerstown. At 12, she began playing keyboard with her father's musical group Friends 'n' Spirit. This group, which performed for 15 years, was a community musical troupe that sang in the style of the group Up With People. The troupe performed locally and throughout the East Coast.

She attended Boonsboro High School and the University of Miami, where she earned her bachelor's and master's degrees in classical performance and film scoring. She is now working on a doctor of musical arts degree at the University of Southern California.

Crowl now plays for several opera companies in Los Angeles, and she is the principal pianist for "Bugs Bunny on Broadway," a show with cartoons on a big screen accompanied by live classical music, much of it by Wagner and

Rossini.

She also has a debut CD, a blend of melody, jazz harmony and vocals, and music that moves from pop to jazz to classical. In between playing dates and recording sessions, Crowl plays for children, and gathered first-hand knowledge about the neglect of the arts in public schools. Music education from the primary grades on improves academic performance and behavior, she said, and that will be the topic of her speech at the UN's Roundtable session. She will discuss the importance of arts education with diplomats at the UN.

This speech preceded her performance in Victoria Hall. "It's a unique opportunity to perform there," she said. "It's a legendary symphony hall."

She and her husband often rehearse together in their home, where they have a small studio.

Crowl is no stranger to performing abroad. She spent several summers in Europe while in college as a

Christy Crowl: A world of opportunities at her fingertips

By KAREN GARDNER
Assistant Entertainment Editor

Christy Crowl, who once played Annie at the Maryland Theatre in Hagerstown, spoke this week at a United Nations Roundtable session on the role of arts and artists in the promotion of human values.

The Boonsboro native is now a pianist, composer and singer/songwriter based in Los Angeles. She was asked to perform for the opening ceremony and gala concert for Fete d'Excellence on Thursday at Victoria Hall in Geneva, Switzerland. She will also establish herself before the public later this month when she joins Barbra Streisand for a performance at the Democratic National Convention.

Her program of solo piano pieces included music by Debussy, Chopin, Bernstein and Vaughn Williams, as well as music from her new CD. Her song "I See Light" was chosen as the introductory music for the Lifetime Achievement Medal award.

"It's an honor to be asked to do this," she said in a telephone interview from California earlier this week, just hours before she was to fly to Geneva. She was to perform some pieces with her husband, baritone vocalist Scott Dicken.

Crowl, 28, began taking piano lessons at 3, after her parents noticed she could reproduce melodies on a toy xylophone. At 5, she played the title character in "Annie." A year

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part of a vocal ensemble, and she also performed in Japan. She and her husband, whom she met in college, moved to Los Angeles after graduate school because of the many musical opportunities there.

"We were going to visit here and New York, and we came here on a trip, and decided we liked the people and the area so much that we would stay," she said.

Fete d'Excellence is an annual two-week celebration of academic, athletic, business and cultural excellence. The founder and president of the Fete, Wilda Spalding, heard Crowl play her original song, "I See Light," and invited her to Geneva to speak and perform. Spalding and Crowl are also working on a "virtual academy" to help youngsters from all over the world learn about the arts.

Nominees for the medals to be awarded during the celebration include "Sesame Street," Nickelodeon and the Tiger Woods Foundation.