

Synopsis:

MIRACLE IN A BOX is an inspiring film about the coming together of three events—the bequest of a grand piano, the student competition to win it and the months and months of work required to make it sing again.

The First Berkeley Piano Competition provides most of the music in the film with six talented finalists playing several classical selections. But jazz and blues blossom as well while Callahan Piano artisans take apart and rebuild the instrument before our eyes, hewing to standards as precise as a tenth of a gram. The close relationships and easy humor of the workshop accompany the highly professional techniques and tools.

The winner of the competition, Jared Redmond, finally makes his debut on what is now his 1927 Steinway grand at the party given in the workshop as a finale. The celebration is not only about talent, but also about the dedication of crafts-people who give good performers a means to play better than they had imagined to be possible.

Appearing on screen are Garrick Ohlsson, touring concert pianist, Jake Heggie, opera composer, Tammy Hall, jazz artist, Frederick Hodges, music stylist, Jerry Kuderna, Bay Area modernist and Steve Willis, blues and boogie songwriter and performer. The narration is spoken by the distinguished actor, John Lithgow and the film-maker is Oscar-winning documentarian, John Korty.

Beyond the world of music, the documentary also provides a good look at some alternative ways to improve the American workplace, the quality of its products and the rewards for its employees.

Crew:

A film by John Korty

Edited by Jim Oliver

Audio by Jeremiah Moore

Color grading by Gary Coates

Music Clearances by Brooke Wentz / The Rights Workshop

Cast Members

Narrator: John Lithgow

Benefactor: Leone McGowan

Pianists:

Garrick Ohlsson Jake Heggie Tammy Hall Frederick Hodges

Jerry Kuderna Steve Willis Regina Li Chloe Ma

Callahan Piano Crew:

Jim Callahan, Sr.

John Callahan Rhys McKay Rachel Down Douglas Braak

Patricia Callahan Koa Stephens Steve Willis Dan Nieves

Student Finalists:

Dinah Lu Richard Zhu Jared Redmond Tony Lin

Pheaross Graham Percy Liang

Winner of First Berkeley Piano Competition: Jared Redmond

UC Berkeley Professor of Piano Studies: Davitt Moroney

Piano teacher: Jacqueline Chew

Inventor of Balanced Action Formula: David Stanwood

John and Linda Brooks, originators of the party tradition

Katie Hafner, author of "A Romance on Three Legs---

Glenn Gould's Obsessive Quest for the Perfect Piano"