



## Testament to a mother's efforts

Colin Ng dreams of becoming a music teacher, especially to the blind

Against the odds: Colin has been the resident pianist at Bangsar Village II since December last year.

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**W**HEN Colin Ng was three years old, his mother thought she heard the German musician Klaus Wunderlich's music playing in her son's room, but she did not recall putting on any for the boy to hear. Looking for the source, she found it to be her own son playing the tune on the buttons of a calculator.

Ng is now a talented 24-year-old pianist and keyboardist. He is also blind.

Born with visual impairment caused by a condition affecting the skull called Craniostenosis, and Spina Bifida, Colin owes his success very much to his mother, Janet Ng.

Janet may be petite, but don't let her size fool you into underestimating her strength. The fiery spirit of the small woman is evident the moment she starts speaking of the challenges she faced as a young mother bringing up her special son.

Janet encountered a lot of pessimism when she tried to educate her son in music.

"They were worried about the theory part of music. Colin could not see, so he could not sit for the music exams that also tested the theoretical part of music," said Janet.

She eventually managed to find someone willing to give Colin lessons on the organ - but only the practical side of it, not theory.

It was not enough for Janet, who had faith that her son could reach greater heights if he were given the chance.

"I wish people would look at his ability before judging him for his disability," said Janet.

Janet managed to enrol her son in music school in 1996, as well as help him throughout his advancement in music.

At an award for Mother of the Year by the Chinese Chamber of Commerce and *Nanyang Siang Pau*, Janet was asked to give a thank you speech, but she declined and requested that Colin be allowed a few minutes on the piano instead. In true fairy-tale fashion, Selangor Institute of Music (SIM) principal Dr Tan-Tat Chin was present among the audience and was convinced to give Colin a place at her school. Colin studied two years at SIM, completing his grade four and five in piano.

Janet also had a friend who

helped compile Colin's academic and music works into a folio. They sent this folio to University College Sedaya International (UCSI) with a letter asking for Colin to be given a chance to study at their faculty of music.

The issue of how Colin could learn the theory part of music was overcome when Janet suggested that Colin be tested orally for the theory, as was the practice in music schools abroad when dealing with blind musicians.

Janet took it upon herself to translate Colin's notes into Braille. She made a special request to Colin's class teachers to describe whatever visuals there were in detail so that Colin was not left out of the class.

»I wish people would look at his ability before judging him for his disability«

JANET NG

All the adversity and hardship that she faced has been compiled into a book, entitled *Harvest of Love*, authored by Janet herself.

Colin graduated with a Bachelor in Music from UCSI in 2006 and it is a testament to Janet's efforts at giving her son the best that he deserved.

He has been the resident pianist playing at the concourse area of Bangsar Village II since December last year; before that, he had worked a year with the Kuala Lumpur Performing Arts Centre (KLPAC) as a foyer pianist.

With Colin having achieved what he has, both mother and son share a simple dream: that Colin may someday be recognised by the Education Ministry as a music teacher, especially for the blind.

"Colin can give the blind a true education in music, as he is perfectly qualified and understands the needs of the visually impaired. He just needs to be given a chance," said Janet.

Colin plays at the concourse area of Bangsar Village II from 12.45pm to 2.15pm on weekdays and from 1pm to 3pm on weekends. He takes a break on Mondays.