

June 12, 2011

Encore for city street piano project

TICKLED IVORIES



By CANDICE M. GIOVE

We're "grand" central. These wild baby grands are among a symphony of elaborately decorated pianos set to be deployed from a downtown warehouse to the city's streets and parks next Saturday as part of the Sing for Hope charity's second annual Pop-Up Pianos show.

New Yorkers are invited to tickle the ivories on the 88

instruments, up from last year's 60.

This time, the pianos were jazzed up by a boldfaced roster of artists, fashionistas and other creators, including designer Isaac Mizrahi and actor B.D. Wong.

The Post got a sneak peek at the creations, which will be donated to schools and hospitals after the show ends on July 2.



MOIRA FAIN, collage artist and children's book illustrator
Tavern on the Green, Manhattan

■ **Style:** Andy Warhol's Factory meets Willy Wonka.

Fain envisioned decorated Airstreams, subway cars and diners while putting together roofing material, piping, screws and metal scraps to form a bizarre silver contraption. "You just keep finding things and making decisions," she said. "You let it evolve. I let the piece talk to me." She dreams about steam rising from the piano's protruding pipes as a player performs on the street.

OLEK, crochet artist
DUMBO archway, Brooklyn

■ **Style:** A piano in sheep's clothing, cloaked in a wool veneer.

"I like using ready-made objects that we all know and transforming them by adding a new skin," the Polish-born crochet queen said. Olek eyed the grand piano and spent countless hours crocheting shapes. She spent two hours fitting and stitching them together like puzzle pieces. On June 25, Olek will crochet an actual person who is playing the piano. "I'm going to have her covered [in crochet] from head to toe," she said.



ISAAC MIZRAHI, fashion designer
Greeley Square, Manhattan

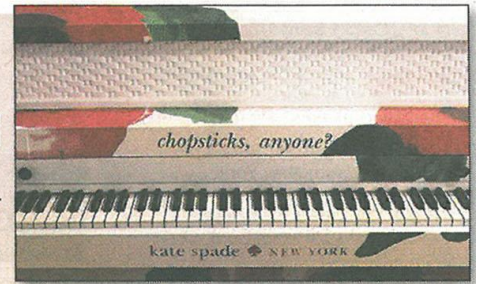
■ **Style:** A shocking shade of pink, showered in glitter and adorned with a larger-than-life bow.

"They're my favorite three things," Mizrahi said of pink, glitter and bows. "I don't know what inspires them except the 12-year-old girl that's deeply, deeply rooted in my soul." The designer loves the subversive idea of outdoor instruments: "I like a piano that gets rained on occasionally."

KATE SPADE, fashion designer
Carl Schurz Park, Manhattan

■ **Style:** A wicker-weave piano white-washed and embellished with adhesive rose prints.

Kate Spade creative director Deborah Lloyd said it was serendipitous to snag this uniquely detailed piano. "To find a piano that has that wicker weave that looks like baskets from our store with these beautifully turned legs with brass on the bottom — the shape was just perfect," Lloyd said. Inscribed in gold lettering above the keys is "Chopsticks, anyone?" — which Lloyd jokes was "the height" of her own piano repertoire.



B.D. WONG, actor
Van Cortlandt Park, The Bronx

■ **Style:** 20 hours of dripping silver paint, brushing teal circles and swirling black glitter to create an art-deco look.

The "Law and Order: SVU" star said it felt like a forbidden act. "I didn't have a piano in my house, but I grew up with this uber respect for pianos and being careful with them and treating them quite delicately. The whole notion of painting a piano really appealed to this kind of rebellious, childlike kind of part of me. It's turned out to satisfy that fix greatly."