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Classical pianist plays for graduates

Jamie Holloman
The Journal News

MOUNT VERNON — George Albano, the principal of Lincoln Elementary School, had a special treat for his graduating sixth graders on Tuesday.

Albano arranged for internationally renowned pianist Katya Grineva to perform in front of parents, teachers and students at the commencement ceremony.

Albano, in addition to being principal, sometimes co-hosts the "Joey Reynolds Show" on WOR radio.

During one hosting stint, he

met Grineva, who was a guest on the show, and the two immediately hit it off. Albano suggested that she play for the students and she agreed.

"I love playing for children because you can see their reaction immediately. It really touches me how much they respond to the music," Grineva said.

The auditorium of Lincoln Elementary School was a change of venue for Grineva, who has performed at Carnegie Hall, on the Silver Sea and Radisson Seven Seas cruise ships, and around the world.

countries, and in 2006, she was awarded the Gusi Peace Prize by Philippines President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo.

Recently, she has done different types of performances.

"I started playing for children the last three years as part of my own outreach program," she said. At the graduation ceremony, Albano introduced Grineva by saying, "My gift to the graduates is the gift of classical music."

Over the years, Albano said, he has tried to incorporate the arts in his educational practices whenever possible. This year, he brought one of his students down to WOR

radio to recite poetry she had written.

Albano said he believes the arts have been a major force in helping Lincoln Elementary School close the gap in learning that typically exists in schools where students come from mixed racial and low-income backgrounds.

In 2003, Lincoln Elementary School received the prestigious Blue Ribbon School award for its academic achievement.

Reach Jamie Holloman at jholloma@lohud.com or 914-694-3527.

Renowned Russian pianist Katya Grineva performs during Tuesday's Lincoln Elementary School graduation in Mount Vernon. The principal met Grineva on the "Joey Reynolds Show" and she agreed to visit the school and perform two arrangements.

Jamie Holloman
The Journal News

