

RESULTS OF THE 2017 FESTIVAL FOR CREATIVE PIANISTS

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Thirty-nine young pianists from Colorado (Bow Mar, Centennial, Colorado Springs, Denver, Elizabeth, Highlands Ranch, Littleton, Morrison, and Pine) competed in the 2017 Festival for Creative Pianists on June 7-10 at [Classic Pianos](#) and the [Wash Park Center for Music and Arts](#) in Denver, CO.

Three renowned judges adjudicated for the festival: [Dr. John Salmon](#), [Wynn-Anne Rossi](#) and [Dr. Kevin Olson](#).

The festival included highly engaging presentations by all three judges, one-on-one student sessions with clinicians ([Lori Frazer](#) and [Martha Hill Duncan](#)), and workshops by [Martha Hill Duncan](#) ("When the Piano Sings"), Dr. [Arthur Houle](#) ("[Clementi's Sonatinas, Op. 36 'With Considerable Improvements'](#)"), Maria Ali ("Music and American Sign Language"), [Lori Frazer \(Clavinova Presentation\)](#) and [Feldenkrais® Practitioner Bethany Cob](#).

Student Award Highlights

Two of the four [Best Original Written Composition](#) Finalists were honored as "Best of the Best." Their compositions have been selected for web posting by [Abundant Silence](#):

- Maria Evans: "Nostalgia" (voice and piano)
- Desi Silverman-Joseph: "Fisherman's Dance" (piano solo)

Special kudos to Samantha Ng, age 13, and James Algermissen, age 11, who each won a total of FOUR First prizes:

Samantha Ng:

- **ARTIST PIANIST AWARD (1 of 2 awards in this category; also given to Sophie Brants)**
- **BEST PERFORMANCE OF A PRE-BAROQUE OR BAROQUE PERIOD WORK**
- **BEST PERFORMANCE OF A CONTEMPORARY WORK**
- **BEST PIANIST STUDYING WITH A DAMTA MEMBER**

James Algermissen:

- **BEST DEMONSTRATION OF GENUINELY SPONTANEOUS IMPROVISATION IN ANY STYLE (PIANO ENSEMBLE)**
- **BEST PERFORMANCE OF A WORK FOR 4 OR MORE HANDS**
- **MOST VERSATILE PIANIST**
- **BEST DEMONSTRATION OF SPONTANEITY AND/OR IMPROVISATION JAZZ, POP, GOSPEL OR RAG**

Sophie Brants and Desi Silverman-Joseph, both age 12, also distinguished themselves by scooping THREE prizes:

Sophie Brants

- **ARTIST PIANIST AWARD (1 of 2 awards in this category; also given to Samantha Ng)**
- **BEST PERFORMANCE OF A ROMANTIC PERIOD WORK**
- **BEST PIANIST STUDYING WITH A CMTA MEMBER**

Desi Silverman-Joseph:

- **BEST PERFORMANCE OF A CLASSICAL PERIOD WORK**
- **MOST CREATIVE PIANIST (split award; also given to Maria Ali)**
- **FINALIST: BEST ORIGINAL WRITTEN COMPOSITION (SELECTED FOR WEB POSTING)**

Other top awardees included:

- Dual prizewinners Maria Ali (age 19), Maria Evans (age 15), Zachary Freeman (age 14), Charlie Graham (age 15), Jacob Hon (age 16), and Heather Hunt (age 13).
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Complete List of 2017 Prizes Awarded

- Best Performance of a Pre-Baroque or Baroque Period Work
Samantha Ng, age 13, (teacher: Valerie Mishek)
- Best Performance of a Classical Period Work
Desi Silverman-Joseph, age 12 (teacher: Joyce Li)
- Best Performance of a Romantic Period Work
Sophie Brants, age 12 (teacher: Joyce Li)
- Best Performance of a Work by an Impressionist Composer
Cole Barringer, age 18 (teacher: Istvan Hornyak)
- Best Performance of a Contemporary Work
Samantha Ng, age 13, (teacher: Valerie Mishek)
- Best Performance of a Work Written or Edited by John Salmon, Kevin Olson or Wynn-Anne Rossi (split award)
Andrew Mazurek, age 11, (teacher: Sheila Hamaker)
Elia Muncey, age 13 (teacher: Jodie Jensen)
- Best Performance of a Composition in any Style by a Female Composer
Maria Evans, age 15 (teacher: Deborah Turnbull)
- Best Performance of a Composition in any Style by Marjorie Burgess
Sonja Bennion, age 9 (teacher: Janet Ali)
- Best Performance of any Piano Solo Work Published by Abundant Silence
Jacob Hon, age 16 (teacher: Bonnie Early)
- Best Performance of any Chamber Work Published by Abundant Silence
[No contenders, not awarded]
- Best Performance of One or More Movements of Clementi's Op. 36 ([Houle edition, publ. by Abundant Silence](#))
Heather Hunt, age 13 (teacher: Karen Greenhalgh)
- Best Performance of a Lyrical and Predominantly Slow Work
Samantha Johnson, age 16 (teacher: Kellie Johannik)
- Best Pianist Studying with a DAMTA Member
Samantha Ng, age 13 (teacher: Valerie Mishek)
- Best Pianist Studying with a CMTA Member
Sophie Brants, age 12 (teacher: Joyce Li)
- Artist Pianist Award (two awards in this category)
Samantha Ng, age 13, (teacher: Valerie Mishek)
Sophie Brants, age 12 (teacher: Joyce Li)
- Piano Ensemble Award for Best Performance of a Work for 4 or More hands
James Algermissen, age 11 (teacher: Kellie Johannik)
- Most Versatile Pianist
James Algermissen, age 11 (teacher: Kellie Johannik)
- Most Creative Pianist (split prize)
Maria Ali, age 19 (teacher: Janet Ali)
Desi Silverman-Joseph, age 12 (teacher: Joyce Li)

- Best Demonstration of Embellishing and/or Improvising in a Classical Work
Connor Watz, age 16 (teacher: Heather Woll)
- Best Demonstration of a Concerto Movement Featuring the Performer's Own Original Cadenza(s) and/or Lead-in(s)
[No contenders, not awarded – two awards in the "Artist Pianist" category given instead]
- Best Demonstration of Genuinely Spontaneous Improvisation in any Style (solo piano)
Mason Marcy, age 12 (teacher: Jodie Jensen)
- Best Demonstration of Genuinely Spontaneous Improvisation in any Style (piano ensemble)
James Algermissen, age 11 (teacher: Kellie Johannik)
- Best Demonstration of Spontaneity and/or Improvisation Playing from a Lead Sheet
Eva Bennion, age 12 (teacher: Janet Ali)
- Best Demonstration of Spontaneity and/or Improvisation in a Jazz, Pop, Gospel or Rag Style Work
James Algermissen, age 11 (teacher: Kellie Johannik)
- Best Performance of a Cowboy Jazz Selection
Heather Hunt, age 13 (teacher: Karen Greenhalgh)
- Best Composition Written and Performed by the Contestant
Zachary Freeman, age 14 (teacher: Bonnie Early)
- Best Composition in a Selected Style or Genre Written and Performed by the Contestant
[No contenders, not awarded]
- Best Composition by a Budding Young Composer (age 12 or under)
Kenneth Fleenor, age 6 (teacher: Janet Ali)
- Best Performance of a Tasteful Transcription or Arrangement for Piano Solo or for 4 or More Hands
Kira Waite, age 17 (teacher: Kellie Johannik)
- Best Performance of an Original Tasteful Transcription or Arrangement for Piano Solo or for 4 or More Hands
Maria Ali, age 19 (teacher: Janet Ali)
- Best Original Written Composition Finalists
Maria Evans, age 15, "Nostalgia" for voice and piano (teacher: Deborah Turnbull)
Desi Silverman-Joseph, age 12, "Fisherman's Dance" for piano solo (teacher: Joyce Li)
Charlie Graham, age 15, "Angenehm" for piano solo (teacher: Laura Rogers)
Jacob Hon, age 16, "Dreams" for piano solo (teacher: Bonnie Early)
- Free Finale Music Notation Program (generously donated by [MakeMusic, Inc.](#))
Zachary Freeman, age 14 (teacher: Bonnie Early)
Ashley Morris, age 14 (teacher: Bonnie Early)
- Honorable Mentions
Ian Andrews, age 14 (teacher: Kellie Johannik)
Charlie Graham, age 15 (teacher: Laura Rogers)
Lilly Meyer, age 17 (teacher: Kellie Johannik)
- Creative Teaching Incentive Awards
The judges and directors commend all the teachers for their outstanding work!
Two especially stellar teachers were recognized for "fostering creativity, imagination, versatility and/or originality" in students:
Janet Ali
Kellie Johannik