

RESULTS OF THE 2018 FESTIVAL FOR CREATIVE PIANISTS

[Back to Archives](#) | [Back to Homepage](#)

Thirty-nine young pianists from Colorado (Arvada, Centennial, Denver, Englewood, Highlands Ranch, Littleton, Lone Tree, Longmont, Morrison, and Pine) competed in the 2018 Festival for Creative Pianists on June 6-9 at [Classic Pianos](#) and the [Rockley Community Recital Hall](#) in Denver, CO.

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

The festival included highly engaging workshops by all three judges, one-on-one student sessions with clinician [Martha Hill Duncan](#), and other presentations by [Evelyn Billberg](#) ("Notation Software") and [Martha Hill Duncan](#) ("Musicianship: Tips on Notation, Finding the Beat, Key Signatures, Staff Writing for Piano, & Cross Staff Notation").

Student Award Highlights

Congratulations to the four "BEST WRITTEN COMPOSITION" Finalists who were featured in the Thursday evening recital:

- Zachary Freeman: "Freedom in Resolution"
- Jacob Hon: "Northern Lights"
- Leslie Wilburn: "Valse Scherzando"
- Jiyang Zhou: "Retrospection"

Special kudos to Claire McCollough, who won a total of FOUR First prizes!

Triple First Prize Winners:

- James Algermissen
- Zachary Freeman
- Julianne McCollough
- Elliott Ng

Dual First Prize Winner:

- Leslie Wilburn,

Complete List of 2018 Prizewinners

- James Algermissen, age 12 (teacher: Kellie Johannik):
 - Most Creative Pianist (split prize with Zachary Freeman)
 - Best Demonstration of Genuinely Spontaneous Improvisation in any Style (piano ensemble)
 - Free Finale Music Notation Program (generously donated by [MakeMusic, Inc.](#))

- **Thomas DeGraw, age 11 (teacher: Janet Ali):**
 - Best Performance of a Work Written or Edited by Wynn-Anne Rossi
- **Rory Devin, age 17 (teacher: Janet Ali):**
 - Best Performance of a Composition in any Style by a Female Composer (1 of 2 prizes awarded for this category)
- **Kenneth Fleenor, age 7 (teacher: Janet Ali)**
 - Best Demonstration of Spontaneity and/or Improvisation Playing from a Lead Sheet
- **Ava Frederick, age 10 (teacher: Janet Ali)**
 - Best Performance of a Composition in any Style by a Female Composer (1 of 2 prizes awarded for this category)
- **Zachary Freeman, age 15 (teachers: Bonnie Early & Errol Haun)**
 - Most Creative Pianist (split prize with James Algermissen)
 - Best Pianist Studying with a CMTA Member (split prize with Claire McCollough)
 - Best Composition Written and Performed by the Contestant
- **Gwen Hall, age 14 (teacher: Valerie Mishek)**
 - Best Pianist Studying with a DAMTA Member (split prize with Samantha Ng)
- **Erica Harvey, age 13 (teacher: Kellie Johannik)**
 - Best Performance of a Pre-Baroque or Baroque Period Work (1 of 2 prizes awarded for this category)
- **Nathan Harvey, age 16 (teacher: Kellie Johannik)**
 - Best Performance of a Romantic Period Work
- **Jacob Hon, age 17 (teacher: Bonnie Early)**
 - Best Performance of a Tasteful Transcription or Arrangement for Piano Solo or for 4 or More Hands
- **Heather Hunt, age 14 (teacher: Karen Greenhalgh)**
 - Best Performance of a Lyrical and Predominantly Slow Work (1 of 2 prizes awarded for this category)
- **Aidan Lindstrom, age 17 (teacher: Lois Sollenberger)**
 - Best Performance of a Work by an Impressionist Composer
- **Claire McCollough, age 18 (teacher: Janet Ali)**
 - Best Pianist Studying with a CMTA Member (split prize with Zachary Freeman)
 - Best Performance of a Work Written or Edited by Kevin Olson
 - Best Performance of One or More Movements of Clementi's Op. 36 ([Houle edition, publ. by Abundant Silence](#))
 - Best Performance of a Lyrical and Predominantly Slow Work (1 of 2 prizes awarded for this category)
- **Julianne McCollough, age 13 (teacher: Janet Ali)**
 - Best Performance of a Composition in any Style by Marjorie Burgess
 - Most Versatile Pianist
 - Best Demonstration of Genuinely Spontaneous Improvisation in any Style (solo piano)
- **Lilly Meyer, age 18 (teacher: Kellie Johannik)**
 - Best Demonstration of Spontaneity and/or Improvisation in a Jazz, Pop, Gospel or Rag Style Work
- **Elliott Ng, age 11 (teacher: Valerie Mishek)**
 - Best Performance of an Etude (any style)
 - Best Performance of any Piano Solo Work Published by Abundant Silence
 - Best Performance of a Cowboy Jazz Selection
- **Samantha Ng, age 14 (teacher: Valerie Mishek)**
 - Best Pianist Studying with a DAMTA Member (split prize with Gwen Hall)
- **Mary O'Donoghue, age 17 (teacher: Carrie Christensen)**
 - Best Performance of a Pre-Baroque or Baroque Period Work (1 of 2 prizes awarded for this category)
- **Harrison Payne, age 15 (teacher: Janet Ali)**
 - Best Performance of an Original Tasteful Transcription or Arrangement for Piano Solo or for 4 or More Hands

- **Gitanjali Rao, age 12 (teacher: Valerie Mishek)**
 - **Best Performance of a Contemporary Work**
 - **Luke Smith, age 15 (teacher: Janet Ali)**
 - **Best Performance of a Work Written or Edited by John Salmon**
 - **Connor Watz, age 17 (teacher: Heather Woll)**
 - **Best Demonstration of Embellishing and/or Improvising in a Classical Work**
 - **Leslie Wilburn, age 16 (teacher: Jeremy Dittus)**
 - **Artist Pianist Award**
 - **Best Performance of a Classical Period Work**
-

• **Honorable Mentions**

- **Bethany Kempe, age 16 (teacher: Janet Ali)**
 - **Carl Krim, age 9 (teacher: Jeremy Dittus)**
 - **Jerry Krim, age 9 (teacher: Jeremy Dittus)**
 - **Jiyang Zhou, age 16 (teacher: Brenda Ohlschwager)**
 - **Helen Zhu, age 11 (teacher: Valerie Mishek)**
- **Free Finale Music Notation Program Awardees (generously donated by [MakeMusic, Inc.](#)):**
- **James Algermissen, age 12 (teacher: Kellie Johannik)**
 - **Janet Ali (teacher)**
- **Creative Teaching Incentive Awards**
The judges and directors commend all the teachers for their outstanding work!
Three especially stellar teachers were recognized for "fostering creativity, imagination, versatility and/or originality" in students:
- **Bonnie Early**
 - **Janet Ali**
 - **Kellie Johannik**
- **New 2018 Award:**
- **TEACHER WHO FOSTERS THE MOST IMAGINATIVE INTERPRETATIONS IN REPERTOIRE**
...was conferred to Valerie Mishek, whose students inspired the judges to create this new honor. Congratulations!