

## Pianists strike creative chord

By MELINDA MAWDSLEY  
Melinda.Mawdsley@gsentinel.com



**JONATHAN MANN**, an associate professor of music at State University of New York at Fredonia, introduces one of the pieces he played at the Festival for Creative Pianists at Mesa State College on Friday night. The festival, which concludes today, is a chance for young pianists to perform and grow as musicians.

DEAN HUMPHREY/The Daily Sentinel

The nerves were worth it all. Grand Junction's Kaycee Detmers, 13, performed four songs Friday before a panel of three pianists during the Festival for Creative Pianists, and she admitted she was jittery once she went on the Mesa State College stage.

However, the constructive comments she received will make her a better pianist, she said. Plus, she added, she loves to compete, so the nerves were no big deal.

The festival is a chance for young pianists to perform and listen to constructive criticism from three adult pianists well-versed on the topic.

The festival concludes today at Mesa State with the final adjudications and concert.

The best pianist is not always the one who wins this festival. The festival winner is usually the most creative pianist, said Calvin Hofer, head of Mesa State's music department.

The judges this year are: Monte Atkinson, Mesa State's director of choral activities; John Salmon, a faculty member at the University of North Carolina-Greensboro and a jazz musician; and Jonathan Mann, a faculty member of the State University of New York at Fredonia.

The three men listened to Detmers play "Amazing Grace," Frederic Chopin's "Prelude in E Minor, Opus 28, No. 4," and two other songs, including Arthur Houle's "Cowboy Karen."

Houle, Mesa State's director of keyboard studies, founded the Festival for Creative

Pianists. He had a front-row seat Friday for Detmers' performance of the jazz song he wrote.

The variety of songs Detmers performed this year was by design.

"I was trying to show versatility," said Detmers, who takes weekly lessons from Joann Hall.

Detmers is one of 22 contestants in this year's festival. The pianists are 19 and younger and perform everything from classical works to original compositions, which enables pianists to express their creativity.

The festival concludes with adjudications from 9:05 a.m. until 1:45 p.m. today at the Recital Hall in Moss Performing Arts Center, 1100 North Ave. Adjudications are open to the public for \$5 per session or \$20 for all sessions.

After all of the competitors have performed, the judges select winners and award nearly \$2,000 in prizes.

The "Winners Recital and Awards Ceremony" is 7:30 p.m. today at the Recital Hall. Tickets are \$10 for adults, \$8 for seniors and \$5 for students.

If all goes well, Detmers will have a chance to perform again today.

Either way, she always will remember to be more expressive when she plays and bring out more melody with her left hand. Those were tips from the judges, she said.

"I practiced really hard for this," Detmers said. "I think I did the best I could do."