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## Hey Mozart! You got some competition

By Kirsten Laskey

Mozart started composing music when he was 5 years old. At 7, Thomas Chadwick of Los Alamos isn't too far behind the famous composer. Chadwick is one of 16 finalists in the Hey Mozart!, a statewide program that encourages children who are 12 and younger to create an original melody. The program is now in its third year.

The project is supported in part by a grant from the New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs, the ASCAP Foundation, individual and corporate donors and partner organizations including the New Mexico Symphony Orchestra, the Las Cruces Symphony Orchestra, Classical KHFM and the National Hispanic Cultural Center.

The project's finalists will have their original melodies arranged for a full orchestra. During a free concert Sept. 12 at the Hispanic Cultural Center in Albuquerque, the composers will perform their pieces and the New Mexico Symphony Orchestra will also play each piece. Additionally, each piece will be recorded on a CD.

Chadwick was one of 264 young composers who submitted work to the competition.

He explained he participated in the concert at the encouragement of his music teacher, Juanita Madland.

When he discovered his piece, "A Mysterious Night," was selected as a finalist, "I was really happy," Chadwick said. "I wanted compose more pieces."

Plus, he might compose another winning entry again, he added.

Chadwick has already composed two new pieces and is currently working on his third.

While Chadwick came up with the melody entirely on his own, Madland helped him with composing a chord.

He explained he wrote a little of the piece at a time.

In addition to Mozart, Chadwick said he loves to listen Beethoven and Bach. His mother, Frances, joked he must be the only kid in Los Alamos whose most request on i-Tunes is Mozart's music.

"He really loves music," she said.

In addition to composing, Chadwick also plays the piano. He started playing the piano about two years ago. "I kind of enjoy playing different keys and switching to different notes," he said.

Although Chadwick will perform his work on the big stage, he has unveiled it to local audiences, too. He performed his piece during his first piano exam.