

abq's thriving
local music scene

TIEMPO

by mel minter



Musical Callings



Jocelyn Boyack plays her composition, which won a place in Hey, Mozart! New Mexico.

MOVE OVER, MOZART!

On September 7, at the National Hispanic Cultural Center, a concert featuring 22 members of the New Mexico Symphony Orchestra, conductor David Felberg, and entirely new music from 16 composers packed the house.

That in itself is unusual enough, since new music typically must search high and low for an audience. Even more unusual, however, were

the composers, all of whom were New Mexicans and not one of whom was older than 12.

They were the 2007 winners of Hey, Mozart! New Mexico Child Composer Project. The Hey, Mozart! project was originally developed in 2001 by Alejandro Rutty, then a professor at Hartwick College in Oneonta, New York. Conductor and musician Javier Lorenzo, whose friendship with Rutty dates back to their graduate years at UNM, brought

the project to New Mexico.

Now in its third year, Hey, Mozart! New Mexico invites children to submit an original melody for consideration by a judging panel. "The nice thing about the project—you don't have to know music. All you have to do is to be able to record yourself singing or playing an instrument to submit the music," says Brookes McIntyre, the nonprofit's president (and full-time volunteer).

Photos by Liz Lopez/ATM

Winning tunes are then distributed to professional musicians and Hartwick music faculty and students, who arrange them for orchestra. At the culminating concert, each composer performs his or her melody as submitted. Then, the orchestra plays the arrangement. It's the first public performance of the orchestral version—and the first time the composer gets to hear it. To cap it, a CD of the orchestral versions is distributed to the participants after the concert.

The project is growing—with school concerts, a statewide composition workshop for teachers, and appearances by winning composers at high-profile musical events. Felberg, who fills the role of musical director for the organization, would love to see the concert televised statewide—and he's right, it's great entertainment.

While it would be nice to find the next Mozart through the project, that really isn't the point. "Basically, we want to help children find an anchor in music that will stay with them for the rest of their lives," McIntyre says.

Judging from the faces of the composers listening to the orchestral versions of their melodies for the first time, that objective was accomplished.

To learn more about Hey, Mozart! New Mexico and the 2008 competition, hum your way to www.heymozartnm.org.