

'Friday's Mood' proves to be a winner



CLAUDETTE SUTTON
Family cafe

She named her song "Friday's Mood," because it captures the way she feels on Friday afternoon: "relaxed, joyful and free."

The composer, 12-year-old Rocío Archuleta, a seventh-grader at Ortiz Middle School, is one of the winners of the first Hey Mozart! New Mexico competition for young composers.

Hey Mozart! is a collaboration between Crisol Bufons, a nonprofit educational corporation; the New Mexico Symphony Orchestra; and Hartwick College in New York.

This fall, they invited New Mexicans 12 and under to create an original melody. Tunes could be submitted in any form: sung, hummed, played on an instrument or written in musical notation.

Of 80 submissions, 15 were selected. Professors and graduate students at Hartwick College then arranged these tunes for orchestration.

Winners played their melodies Friday at the National Hispanic Cultural Center in Albuquerque. Following the children's original versions, the New Mexico Symphony performed the orchestral arrangements.

Archuleta, the only winner from Santa Fe, composed "Friday's Mood" with the help of Petra Babankova, her guitar teacher at Ortiz, who plays it



Luis Sánchez Saturno/The New Mexican

Rocío Archuleta, 12, poses with her guitar on Thursday. Archuleta wrote a song called 'Friday Mood' for a contest and was one of the winners. She has been playing guitar for two years.

with her in a higher octave.

"It's cool playing around with notes, seeing how it sounds," Archuleta says. "My teacher helped me get the beat right and have it make sense."

She blended her own notes with rhythms she'd heard before, resulting in a melody that "makes me think about relaxing. It makes me feel like I do on Friday: I'm free from school!"

The other winning melodies reflect varied styles and abilities. Some are just a couple of simple

musical phrases. Others show more advanced knowledge.

The critical factor, program coordinator Tom Lozano explains, is freshness.

"What we want is music that comes spontaneously from a child," he says. "You know it when you hear it. You know it's composed by a child and not an adult, even in the arranged version."

This was Archuleta's first composition, but she may continue; she already has more ideas. As

for a music career, it's too soon to say. Friends tell her she should be a model because she's slender and tall; she's also interested in studying psychology and magic. At 12, she has plenty of time to decide.

In the meantime, she said, "I don't know why, but I want to hear music more often, and I pay more attention to it."

Getting inside the creative process deepens children's musical understanding and appreciation, conductor and project director

Javier Lorenzo said.

"As a professional musician, I used to perform dead composers," he adds. "Now I'm in contact with a fresh, new, high-quality repertoire. Everybody has something to learn from this."

To order the Hey Mozart! CD, call (505)884-3601, or e-mail heymozartnm@gmail.com. Cost is \$15, plus \$5 for shipping.

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