

Francois best of grade 7 pianists



Francois Cloete has recently been awarded the Sheila Mossman Memorial Prize after gaining the country's top mark in his grade 7 piano exam, which he passed with distinction.

(Picture by Peter Frankland, 15479767)

A STUDENT at Elizabeth College who passed his grade 7 piano with distinction achieved the highest score of anyone in the country.

Francois Cloete, 13, has been awarded the Sheila Mossman Memorial Prize, which goes to the candidate with the highest mark during the 2015-16 exam period.

Francois scored 144 marks out of a possible 150.

He said he was delighted to receive the award.

'I was overjoyed to get the award, I wasn't expecting it,' he said. 'I was really pleased when I got my score back.'

The grade 7 examination encompasses three pieces – one classical, one romantic and one modern.

In the exam Francois played Allegro, the 1st movement from Mozart's Sonata, Shui Cao Wu, composed by Du Mingxin, and Debussy's Canope, for which he received full marks.

Comments on Francois's mark sheet praised his recital as having 'a beautiful tone' and as being 'rhythmically confident with hardly a notational blemish'.

Francois has already begun preparing for the grade 8 curriculum, which is the highest grade available.

He attributed his skill as a pianist to his passion both for playing and for understanding the theory behind the music.

'At the moment I am waiting for next year's syllabus to come out,' he said.

'In the meantime it is fun to play other styles and extend my repertoire. I love getting new pieces, making photocopies and

by Aaron Carpenter

acarpenter@guernseypress.com

analysing them.'

His mother, Jeanne, said his success in the exam was a reflection of her son's intelligence and natural talent.

'He just picks things up straight away, he can listen to a piece and tell you who it is by and what scale it is in,' she said.

'He is a very bright boy at school as well and he is really patient.'

She thanked his past and present piano teachers, Bridget MacRae and Laura Colley, who, she said, had helped Francois to refine his technique and hand position when playing.

And Francois, who said he practised for one to two hours a day in a normal week, said enjoying what you did was the key to anyone wanting to take up the piano.

'I like writing and composing my own work, getting my head round the theory, and I enjoy teaching as well,' he said.

'If you want to try the piano, do it because you want to. You will play better if you enjoy yourself.'

■ To see and hear Francois playing Maple Leaf Rag, go to the Guernsey Press YouTube channel <http://bit.ly/29jG2Oh>.

'He can listen to a piece and tell you who it is by and what scale it is in'

Jeanne Cloete,
Francois' mother



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