

## April 6-9: Bunny Just Piano Festival

**The 10th annual Bunny Just Piano Festival, featuring concerts, classes and competitions, will take place April 6-9.**

The Minnesota State Mankato Department of Music presents the Tenth Annual Bunny Just Piano Festival Thursday, April 6 through Sunday, April 9. The festival features performances by professional and amateur pianists. Other events include master classes and competitions for junior high school through college age students. This is an excellent opportunity for teachers, students, and community members to experience world-class piano performance and a substantial addition to piano offerings in our area.

Beneta Just initiated the Bunny Just Piano Festival at Minnesota State University in 1996. In 2004 Bunny's estate created an endowment to fund the festival on an annual basis. She died realizing her support would fund the festival each spring for 100 years and beyond. Just was a promoter, volunteer, and financial supporter of many local social concerns, including special education and human rights. An MSU scholarship in special education remains in her name today.

Jazz pianist and composer Gary Motley is Director of Jazz Studies at Emory University in Atlanta. Motley began studying the piano as a young child and would later be exposed to jazz as a teenager. It was soon thereafter that he would decide to make music his life's endeavor. During his career, Motley established a professional association with many of today's leaders in jazz. He has worked with artists ranging from Dave Brubeck, Clarke Terry, Debbie Allen, Phyllicia Rashad, Whoopi Goldberg and Sean Combs.

Dr. Charles Asche is currently a member of the Piano Faculty at the University of California at Santa Barbara. Asche has performed as a recitalist, a concerto soloist and as a chamber musician throughout the United States as well as in Russia and in South America. A graduate of the University of Texas at Austin, Dr. Asche has been awarded first prizes in the Wiedemann Shreveport Symphony Competition and the Three Rivers Southwestern Regional Competition. Students and former students of Dr. Asche have been prizewinners in several competitions including the Van Cliburn International Competition.

Piano Festival events are held in the E.J. Halling Recital Hall unless noted. Scheduled events include the following:

### *Thursday, April 6*

7:30 PM Gary Motley, Artist Showcase: An evening of stride, boogie-woogie and jazz piano

### *Friday, April 7*

10:00 AM Gary Motley: Joplin, Waller and more - a historical overview of jazz piano: Gary Motley recreates the styles of pianists spanning the entire history of jazz piano.

2:00 PM Charles Asche: College master classes

7:00 PM Tysen Dauer and Nathan Knutson perform Timeless Classics: Performances of classical piano masterpieces. Centenary United Methodist Church, 501 South Second St., Mankato

### *Saturday, April 8*

10:00 AM Performance Competition (Grades 6 - 12)

1:00 PM Junior and Senior High School master classes

3:30 PM Award presentation - cash prizes and certificates of merit

### *Sunday, April 9*

7:30 PM Charles Asche, Artist Showcase: Solo classical performance. Multi-piano performance with Charles Asche, Daniel Reippel, David Viscoli, and Joseph Zins

The festival concludes with a performance featuring four artists performing on four Steinway grand pianos. Tickets for the Artist Showcase concerts are \$12 adults, \$9 students and \$7 for MSU students with a valid ID. Advance purchase is strongly encouraged. All other festival events are free and open to the public. For festival information, call Dale Haefner at 507-389-5549.