



[Published at MountainTimes.com](http://MountainTimes.com) - July 2, 2009

## **Fenwick nets Bernstein award**

University of North Carolina School of the Arts (UNCSA) Chancellor John Mauceri has announced that James Baron Fenwick III of Todd is the first recipient of The Leonard Bernstein Excellence Award.

The award was created by Mauceri with a gift from Leonard Bernstein's three children, Jamie, Alexander and Nina, and matched by The William R. Kenan Jr. Charitable Trust. Fenwick, 15, is a piano student of Clifton Matthews in the School of Music at UNCSA, where he is a rising 10th-grader.

Fenwick performed as a violist with the UNCSA Symphony Orchestra when Mauceri conducted Shostakovich's "Symphony No. 5" at the Stevens Center in Winston-Salem, and subsequently at the Grove Park Inn in Asheville, last winter.

"I am so thankful to Leonard Bernstein's children for helping me establish this scholarship in their father's name," said Mauceri.

"Providing assistance for talented, deserving students to continue their study here perpetuates Leonard Bernstein's commitment to teaching and to the arts.

"Interim Music School dean Michael Rothkopf and I chose Baron because he has not only been a terrific student," Mauceri said, "but he has gone the extra mile to represent UNCSA at frequent events.

"He is a model citizen, and as a freshman in high school, has set a standard that is absolutely inspirational.

"I know Leonard Bernstein would have been delighted with this choice," Mauceri said. "In the words of Nina Bernstein Simmons, 'All hail, Baron Fenwick III!'"

The Leonard Bernstein Excellence Award will be awarded annually to a music student at UNCSA who best epitomizes the talent and commitment to society of Leonard Bernstein.

"I didn't know what to think," said Fenwick, when asked how he felt about being the first Leonard Bernstein Excellence Award winner at UNCSA. "It's such an honor!"

The son of Cynthia Norris and Jay Fenwick, Fenwick has been playing the piano since age 5.

He has performed as a soloist with the Western Piedmont Youth Symphony, playing Haydn's "Concerto in D Major."

This spring, he shared first prize in the Junior Division of the North Carolina Symphony's 2009 Youth Concerto Competition, playing the first movement of Prokofiev's "Concerto No. 3." He was a finalist in the same competition in 2006.

Earlier this month, Fenwick won third place in the Arthur Fraser International Piano Competition, for 8th- through 12th-graders, and, as a result, will be performing the first movement of Prokofiev's "Concerto No. 3" with the South Carolina Philharmonic sometime during its 2010 season.

Before coming to UNCSA, Fenwick competed in the nation's largest spelling bee, the 2008 Scripps National Spelling Bee.

He was one of only 45 contestants (out of 288) to make it to the televised semifinals.

To get there, Fenwick won the spelling bee at Green Valley Elementary School, and went on to win his countywide bee and then the Winston-Salem Journal Regional Spelling Bee.

Fenwick previously studied piano with Bair Shagdaron at Appalachian State University, and also violin and viola with Eric Koontz, also at App State.

The University of North Carolina School of the Arts is the first state-supported, residential school of its kind in the nation.

Established as the North Carolina School of the Arts by the N.C. General Assembly in 1963, UNCSA opened in Winston-Salem in 1965 and became part of the University of North Carolina system in 1972.

More than 1,100 students from middle school through graduate school train for careers in the arts in five professional schools: dance, design and production (including a visual arts program), drama, filmmaking and music.

UNCSA is the state's only public arts conservatory, dedicated entirely to the professional training of talented students in the performing, visual and moving image arts.

Internationally renowned conductor John Mauceri has been chancellor of UNCSA since 2006.

UNCSA is located at 1533 S. Main St., Winston-Salem. For more information, visit the Web at [www.uncsa.edu](http://www.uncsa.edu).