

ASMTA CONVENTION RUCCOLO SOLO PIANO AWARD

WHAT: JAMES SAVERIO RUCCOLO SOLO PIANO AWARD

A James Saverio Ruccolo Solo Piano Award will be presented to four (4) ASMTA teen piano students at the Arizona ASMTA State Convention.

The award includes a \$100.00 Award to one (1) student in each of the Intermediate Levels I and II and Advanced Levels I and II and with a performance in the Arizona ASMTA State Piano Convention Honors Recital.

The James Saverio Ruccolo Solo Piano Award is presented in memory of Dr. James Ruccolo, pianist, composer and Professor Emeritus, Arizona State University, 1975-1985.
Dr. Ruccolo was an active contributor to the ASMTA Piano Division.

WHO: STUDENT AGE ELIGIBILITY: Intermediate Level I Ages 11 - 12
 Intermediate Level II Ages 13 - 14
 Advanced Level I Ages 15 - 16
 Advanced Level II Ages 17 - 18

The students will be selected by the state competition piano judges during the state competition to receive the James Saverio Ruccolo Solo Piano Awards. The award will be based on the age eligibility and performance award criteria.

HOW: PERFORMANCE AWARD CRITERIA

The students will demonstrate the following three (3) performance criteria:10

1. Demonstrate musical talent potential beyond technical craft.
2. Demonstrate a unique sense of musical communication.
3. Demonstrate attributes of artistry
 - a. DRAMA Personal Vision and Voice
 - b. POETRY Sensitivity and Emotional Nuance
 - c. IMAGINATION Curiosity and Imagination
4. PERFORM IN ARIZONA STATE CONVENTION HONORS RECITAL

WHY: The James Ruccolo Solo Piano Award is designed to identify teen talent potential and encourage the exploration of his or her musical ability.

Margaret Roebke Ruccolo, DMA, ASMTA Award Donor

JAMES SAVERIO RUCCOLO
1943 -- 1985

Few people arrived in mid-to-late 20th Century America equipped to accept the title of the *complete* musician more than did James Saverio Ruccolo.

Born in Akron, Ohio, James displayed exceptional gifts in music from early childhood, playing accordion, clarinet, and trombone. But it was the piano and its potential that captured his heart and mind at age 13 and the synergy they produced was wonderful to behold.

His talent matured into extraordinary skills in both the classical and jazz genres. James played with equal skill, respect and insight, with dazzling technique and musical prowess received by enthusiastic audience applause. His skills as a classical pianist and jazz artist are well documented with rave reviews throughout career performances and recordings. James Ruccolo's distinctive interpretations of jazz improvisation were living affirmations of his opinion that jazz was meant to be played freely at the moment of conception rather than as a learned skill such as in classical music literature. He stated that jazz required playing this style of music spontaneously, while it was actually being created.

His teen years gave us a glimpse of the breadth of his abilities, but it was at the piano that the depth of his creativity was truly illuminated. His musical curiosity and probing intellect emerged and expanded, leading to world-class educational opportunities and culminating in an impressive list of achievements in performance, composition and teaching.

Most notably, James' education included an Eastman School of Music Bachelors Degree in Music as a Rochester National Scholar, graduating second in his class. He then earned a Masters Degree in Music Composition, Summa Cum Laude, from Arizona State University followed by a Doctorate in Musical Arts Degree in Piano, Summa Cum Laude, as a National Defense Education Act Fellow from the University of Arizona.

Dr. Ruccolo's education further included study with many notable piano artist teachers such as Grant Johannesen, Cicile Genhart, Jose Echaniz, Armand Basile, Dalies Franz, and Ozan Marsh, along with published composition teachers Clifton Williams, Robert Muzynski and Grant Fletcher.

In addition to piano and jazz performance, James wrote music in several composition genres. Collectively, they express a unique combination of his life-experiences, his education and tremendous gifts as a creative person. Each composition allows the listener to intimately know this man as a complete musician and creator.

Dr. Ruccolo held the position of Artist-in-Residence and Music Program Director at Prescott College, in Prescott, Arizona, for four years. Until his death in 1985, he served as Professor of Music in Piano at Arizona State University in Tempe, Arizona. During his tenure, he taught piano majors, served as a Coordinator of Keyboard Studies, and conducted state and national master classes, adjudicated piano competitions, performed and recorded from live concerts.

James Ruccolo's success in performance, recording, and composition, enhanced by an appointment as an Artist Representative of the United States Cultural Embassy Department, are living proof that he learned from others while relying heavily on that which is spirit-born.

"A pianist of power and imagination..." The Phoenix Gazette

"He is a force to reckon with, an artist and no doubt about it." The Arizona Republic

"...nothing short of dazzling..." San Francisco Chronicle

The Reverend Robert P. Snyder