

# Worcester Telegram & Gazette (MA)

## At age 14, drummer/composer wins jazz award from ASCAP

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By Scott McLennan

Like lots of teenagers, Lucas Apostoleris is into music. Unlike a lot of teenagers, Apostoleris is enamored by the jazz of the 1950s. "Philly Joe Jones," he snapped without pause when asked about favorites. "Max Roach." Like Jones and Roach, Apostoleris is a drummer. And his love of the music is not limited to simply listening to and recreating the work of past masters. Apostoleris is also a composer. Make that an award-winning composer.

The American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers named Apostoleris a recipient of an ASCAP Foundation Young Jazz Composers Award. Though other 14-year-olds have won the award since its inception in 2002, ASCAP's Ken Cicerale said it is rare for someone so young to have his or her work selected for this competitive national recognition.

Apostoleris is in good company this year, as well-known teen prodigies Grace Kelly and Matt Savage were also singled out by ASACP. Honorees range in age up to 29 years old, and the field will be honored at a ceremony on June 17 in New York City.

Apostoleris is a student at the Joy of Music Program in Worcester. The home-schooled ninth grader from Princeton started playing drums, then added guitar, and now is also playing in a couple of the music school's combos. He worked primarily with teacher Jerry Sabatini on composing the piece that ASCAP judges called "original, promising and exciting." "We were just hoping to get some feedback," Sabatini said of **JOMP**'s encouragement to Apostoleris. "I guess we got pretty good feedback."

The title of the piece is something Apostoleris keeps to himself (not even his mother Sue knew what the song is called). He revealed that it is a ballad written in the bebop style, and that he recorded it himself on piano. There are hopes that the **JOMP** jazz combo he plays in will premier the work later this year.

Apostoleris said he has been writing songs for about four years. He developed a jazz vocabulary after drum teacher Mike Connors started him off on Charlie Parker tunes. "I had to hear the solos, then sing the solos, then learn to play the solos," Apostoleris said. Working with Sabatini, Apostoleris transcribed batches of bebop songs and became fluent in the language of jazz, according to the teacher.

But it was not the notes on the page that convinced Apostoleris he had something worthy of submission to ASCAP. "It had a good feel," he said of the piece entered into the national competition. But those at **JOMP** see in Apostoleris a talent that goes beyond feel or luck. "He does a lot with music. He plays drums, he studies classical music. He works with jazz. And he is not a dabbler," said **JOMP**'s Rich Ardizzone. "He is going to do anything he wants to with music."