

Morning Sun, The (Pittsburg, KS)

September 22, 2006

PSU pianist wins honors

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Gulimina Mahamuti won many honors for piano performance in her native China, and she's doing the same thing in Kansas.

The Pittsburg State University graduate student will perform today at the Kansas Music Teachers Association in White Hall on the campus of Washburn University, Topeka.

She will perform "Laments or the Maiden and the Nightingale" and "El Pelele" from the opera "Goyescas," both by Enrique Granados.

Mahamuti was selected for this honor in November, placing second in the graduate division of the KMTA Collegiate State Artist Auditions.

"Mina got second place in the state, and was the only graduate student in Kansas invited to perform in the winners concert at Washburn," said Dr. Reena Berger, her principal teacher at **PSU**.

Mahamuti said that Berger is responsible for her coming to **PSU**.

"Dr. Berger gave a master class and a concert at Harbin Normal University, in China," Mahamuti said. "Her performance gave me and the other students a very great impression, and we learned a lot in her master class. I knew that she was at **PSU**, so I applied here.."

Mahamuti had already earned a bachelor of music in piano performance from the Northwest University for Nationalities in Lanzhou, China, and a master of music in piano performance and piano pedagogy from Harbin Normal University.

"For me, coming to **PSU** is a great opportunity," Mahamuti said. "This is my dream - to study abroad. I never imagined that I could come to the United States."

However, she had never been abroad before, and felt sad and alone after she arrived.

"On the first day Dr. Berger found me," she said. "She took me around the campus, and to places to shop. She is so kind and makes a good balance between being a teacher and a friend."

Mahamuti is scheduled to graduate from **PSU** in May 2007 with a master's degree in piano performance. In 2006 she received the Outstanding Student Award (Graduate Student) and the Outstanding Student Award (Piano Area).

She plans to continue her studies and pursue a doctorate.

"After that, I hope to return to China and teach at a university," Mahamuti said. "I want to be like Dr. Berger, both a teacher and a performer."

The two also hope to someday start a music festival together in China.

She also hopes to stay in touch with Berger by seeing to it that the **PSU** teacher is invited to perform more concerts and have more master classes in China.

"We also have a dream of together starting a music festival in China," Berger said.

"I think that can happen," Mahamuti replied.

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