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Piano fellows to perform

Award winners celebrate CD releases with free concert Wednesday at Omni

By Whitney Smith

whitney.smith@indystar.com

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Three winners of the American Pianists Association's Classical Fellowship Awards will perform Wednesday at a release party for their debut recordings on the internationally known Harmonia Mundi label.

Michael Sheppard, one of the Indianapolis-based APA's 2003 Classical Fellows, and 2006 winners Stephen Beus and Spencer Myer have each released a solo album.

The party will start at 5:30 p.m. in the Severin Ballroom lobby of the Omni Hotel, 40 W. Jackson Place. The performance will begin at 6:30 p.m. Both are free and open to the public.

"The APA has never sponsored CDs of our fellows on a major label," said Joel Harrison, the organization's artistic director. "Each CD has some representation from American composers, and Michael Sheppard's is 100 percent American."

Beus, 26, who played with the Indianapolis Chamber Orchestra this past weekend, focused on composers who worked mainly during the early 20th century. He recorded American composer Charles Tomlinson Griffes' Piano Sonata, and the Sonata No. 6 and some etudes by Russia's Alexander Scriabin.

Myer, 29, selected Book 2 of French composer Claude Debussy's "Preludes," Aaron Copland's "Piano Variations" and the premiere of Ellis Kohs' "Variations on 'L'Homme Arme.'"

Sheppard, 31, recorded the Stephen Hough settings of "The Carousel Waltz" and "My Favorite Things" by Richard Rodgers, George Crumb's "Dream Images" and John Corigliano's "Etude Fantasy."