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Jade Lester is a Gem!

Western Fair's Youth Talent finalist takes first place at National Youth Talent Competition in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

It won't be long before the name, Jade Lester, rolls off the tongue of every Country/Pop music aficionado from Nashville to New Zealand. Jade Lester, a 17-year-old, from the small town of Chatham, Ontario won first place at the 2008 Canadian Association of Fairs and Exhibitions National Youth Talent Finals held on Friday, November 7 at the Prairieland Trade Centre, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, during the Association's annual convention. Jade was the 2008 Western Fair Youth Talent Finalist this past September, making her eligible to compete in the Youth Talent National Competition.

Judging for the youth talent competition is based on Natural Ability, Quality of Performance, Showmanship & Audience Rapport. Jade sparkled in her recent Saskatoon performance, as she has in so many shows across Ontario. Gifted with an angelic voice and commanding stage presence, she is an accomplished vocalist and musician who has won countless awards, prizes, scholarships and trophies.

Also of note, the second place winner in the national competition was Gabriella Caruso, Vocal Solo representing the Canadian National Exhibition, Toronto Zone and Connor Steele-Falconer, Vocal Solo, representing the Pacific National Exhibition, British Columbia Zone, who took home third.

The National Youth Talent Awards is an annual event presented by the Canadian Association of Fairs and Exhibitions since 1991, the Awards celebrate the performing arts talents of Canada's youth. Young Canadians between 13 and 21, representing fourteen zones from across Canada, perform their way from the local fair to the provincial zone level and then on to the National Finals. Since its inception, the National Youth Talent Awards have been supported by Conklin Shows, through the Patty Conklin Memorial Fund.

Youth Talent preliminary competitions take place across Ontario, prior to the Western Fair finals in September. Watch for 2009 competitions in Clinton, Burgessville, Barrie, Hamilton, Del-Ko-Brydges (Deleware, Komoka, Mount Brydges), Essex, Sarnia, Listowel,

London, Kitchener, Stratford, Tillsonburg, Bayfield, Ridgetown, Woodstock, Teeswater, Paris, Glencoe and Thorndale.

Some notable performers who have participated at some level in this competition over the years are; Jamie Warren, Beverley Mahood, Tiffany Deriveau, Andrea Henry of "Sugar Jones", Michael Bubl , Paul Brandt, and Alannis Morrissette.

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