



*The 2007 Lamont Younger Poets: (from left) Max de La Bruyere, Samantha Reckford, Jill McLaughlin and Sydney Meadow.*

### ‘THE DANCE THAT POETRY DOES’

“I like the dance that poetry does, the mystery that’s maintained because you can’t just hammer it out—it’s a story told very, very carefully,” says Samantha Reckford ’09 of Short Hills, NJ. This May, along with her classmates Max de La Bruyere of Edmonton, Alberta, Jill McLaughlin of New Castle, NH, and Sydney Meadow of Chicago, IL, Reckford received the 2007 Lamont Younger Poets Prize—and the chance to give a public reading of their work at the Academy Library. The Lamont Younger Poets prize was started in 2004 and commemorates the dedication of English instructor Rex McGuinn (1951–2002) to student poetry at Exeter—particularly his encouragement of student poets at the ninth- and 10th-grade levels. English instructor Todd Hearon, who founded the award, says, “We wanted to find a way to carry forward Rex McGuinn’s example: fostering not only an excitement about poetry but also an encouragement to younger Exonian poets. I’ve been encouraged myself, at times amazed, by the resources and native talent that these students have been able to draw upon.”

—Nicole Pellaton

### MANNING DING ’08 WINS ‘GRANITE STATE AUDITION’

Manning Ding, an upper from Johnston, IA, got two pleasant surprises when she entered this spring’s “Granite State Audition,” a New Hampshire competition for classical instrumentalists and vocalists. The first was the news that she won the competition; the second was that the selection had been made by the highly regarded pianist and Eastman School of Music professor Nelita True, one of three judges for the contest.

“I was so surprised she was judging a high school competition!” says Ding. “She’s been a judge for piano competitions all over the world, as well as the U.S., and has won many awards for teaching. It was exciting to realize she judged my performance and picked me as a winner.”

Ding performed works by Chopin, Beethoven and the contemporary Chinese composer Tan Dun. She had a chance to preview her pieces during an April master class led by Gilbert Series guest artist Awadagin Pratt, which, she says made it easier to perform them in May at the competition. She also credits her piano teacher, music instructor Lodowick Crofoot, “a really knowledgeable teacher who always gives me helpful advice.”

—FW



*Pianist Manning Ding ’08*