

4 April 2011

PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE USE



COMPETITION

THE LEADING
INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION
FOR YOUNG VIOLINISTS

Menuhin Competition goes to Beijing in 2012

With the approval by the Ministry of Culture, the next Menuhin Competition – the world’s leading competition for young violinists, widely regarded as the ‘Olympics of the violin’ – will be held for the first time ever outside Europe. It will be hosted by the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing, China from 6 to 15 April 2012. It’s believed that the competition of this time will attract a great number of violin talents all over the world.

“Yehudi would have been thrilled!” says Menuhin’s daughter Zamira Menuhin Benthall. The connection between Menuhin and China goes back a long time and Menuhin was the first Western musician to receive an Honorary Professorship from the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing in 1979.

The Central Conservatory of Music is honored to host and organize this renowned international event for various reasons; one of the most important reasons is that the Chinese Government pays great attention on cultural construction with the development of China’s economy. Holding an international musical competition shall undoubtedly enrich the artistic life in Beijing but also flourish and promote Chinese Culture and Arts. What is more, the competition enjoys a fine reputation and wide influence in China and many talented young Chinese violinists are willing to participate in it, but one more important reason owns to Lord Menuhin, the founder of the competition and a good friend of the Central Conservatory of Music and Chinese musical world. He was the first person who had been honored honorary professor of the Central Conservatory of Music. Mr. Menuhin has a friendly affection to China and a deep love to Chinese culture. He had visited China many times and helped Chinese violinists in their professional career. A lot of Chinese prizewinners in past Menuhin Competitions have gained the international fame. 25 Chinese competitors have won the prizes since the foundation of the Menuhin Competition, including LU Si-qing, NING Feng, ZHANG Le, CHAI Liang, WANG Zheng-rong, WANG Xiao-dong, GU Wen-lei, WANG Zhi-jiong, HE Hong-ying, GUO

Chang, etc. Actually, he devoted to the education of young musical talents and also revealed the wish to hold the competition in China. Gordon Back, Competition Director, also says: “Over the decades, the Menuhin Competition has seen many Chinese prize-winners, with an increasing number of entries coming from Asia. So it seemed a natural choice to take the Competition to China.” According to Tao Qian, the Central Conservatory’s Deputy Director, around 10 million children are currently learning the violin in China, which is second in popularity only to the piano. To host the Menuhin Young Violinists International Competition in Beijing is to commemorate Lord Menuhin and also to pay our great respect and sincere gratitude to him.

The Menuhin Competition attracts applicants from all over the globe (from 34 different countries in 2010) including some of the world’s most gifted violinists. Previous winners include Isabelle van Keulen, Julia Fischer, Ilya Gringolts, Daishin Kashimoto and Nikolaj Znaider.

The star-studded 2012 jury panel will be composed of nine internationally acclaimed musicians, including British former Menuhin Competition prize-winner Tasmin Little and Russian virtuoso and conductor Maxim Vengerov. The panel will be chaired by the USA’s Pamela Frank.

The Menuhin Competition is unique among music competitions in several ways:

- the competition format is combined with a 10-day festival of high profile concerts and other events
- all the members of the jury perform concerts and teach during the event
- like the Olympics, each competition is hosted in a different city.

All successful applicants, who must be aged under 16 for the Junior Competition and under 22 for the Senior Competition, will spend the entire 10 days in Beijing, where in addition to competing they will also perform concerts and take part in workshops and master-classes. Bursaries are available to ensure any successful applicants who require financial assistance are able to take part.

With support from the Chinese Ministry of Culture, Beijing Menuhin Competition will

collaborate with the world top violinists and the country's premier orchestras and venues including the China Philharmonic Orchestra, China Youth Orchestra, Beijing Concert Hall and the new NCPA (National Centre for Performing Arts) to present 5 brilliant concerts including opening gala concert, jury concerts and prize award concert which would attract at least 5,000 audiences from all over the world. The Beijing Menuhin Competition will also invite the chamber music ensemble from the Menuhin School, which is full of gifted musical children, to perform at Beijing for the first time that would be a refreshing experience for most of Chinese audiences. Besides that, relevant teaching of public good will be conducted together with the competition, master classes, workshops and high level concerts for competitors to participate. All in all, ten-day Menuhin Competition Beijing 2012 will be a great festival for all violin professionals and music lovers to have deep musical exchange and wonderful violin musical enjoyment.

Meanwhile, both the British Embassy and British Council have pledged their support for the event, which will also form part of the prestigious 'UK Now Festival' being organised by the British Council alongside the Olympics in London.

Notes for editors:

BACKGROUND

The Menuhin Competition was founded by Yehudi Menuhin in Folkestone, England in 1983 and is the leading international violin competition for young players under the age of 22. Competitors are divided into two groups: Juniors (aged under 16) and Seniors (aged under 22). In recent years, the Competition has become a truly global event. It has been hosted in major cities in Europe, including London and Oslo, and will be staged in Beijing, China in 2012.

The Competition celebrated its 25th anniversary in Cardiff, Wales in April 2008, hosted in partnership with the Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama and the University of Glamorgan. The competition rounds, and more than 20 live concerts, attracted live audiences in excess of 10,000 and there were more than 39,000 viewings of live-streamed competition rounds on the internet.

The Menuhin Competition Oslo 2010 was hosted by the Norwegian Academy of Music, the Barratt Due Institute of Music, Oslo Opera House, Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra and

the Norwegian Council for Schools of Music and Performing Arts. It was under the patronage of King Harald V of Norway and had the generous support of the Norwegian Ministry of Culture, the Norwegian and British Embassy, the Norwegian Foreign Ministry and Dextra Musica/Sparebankstiftelsen. The Menuhin Competition Oslo attracted more than audiences of more than 12,000 people to 40 concerts and more than 20 ancillary events, talks and conferences that were arranged around the actual competition rounds. Senior Finals and the Gala Concert were broadcast live on Norwegian national TV and via the EBU (European Broadcasting Union). Supported by a live web-stream watched by 43,000 people from 68 countries, the event enjoyed extensive global exposure.

In addition to the competition rounds and concerts, the 2010 competition featured an extensive Outreach & Education programme in collaboration with the Norwegian Council for Schools of Music and Performing Arts.

SCHEDULE FOR BEIJING 2012

11 April 2011 – Application period opens

5 May 2011 – Competition launches at Asia House, London

31 October 2011 – Closing date for applications

November 2011 – International Pre-Selection jury in London selects candidates

December 2011 – Successful candidates notified

6-15 April 2012 – Menuhin Competition Beijing 2012

REPERTOIRE FOR BEIJING 2012

The repertoire will build on the innovative changes the Competition has made over the last years and will also feature some newly commissioned Chinese works.

Although competitors are divided into two age groups (Juniors and Seniors), the level of difficulty of the repertoire is almost identical in both groups. This is the result of the incredibly high technical skills and musicianship displayed by Junior competitors in recent competitions. For example, in Beijing both groups will be asked to perform works for solo violin by Bach in the first round.

In 2010 the Competition introduced improvisation – unique among violin competitions – to the Junior repertoire for the first time. This will be repeated in 2012. Competitors will be given a four to eight bar phrase on which to improvise for three minutes.

In the Finals, Junior competitors will perform one of Vivaldi's Four Seasons without a

conductor – each finalist will direct the orchestra themselves. This is another unique element that does not feature in other violin competitions.

Candidates are also encouraged to add their personal note to their repertoire. Both Junior and Senior competitors may pick a virtuoso work of their choice in the second round. And Senior candidates are given an extensive choice of 11 of the greatest violin concertos for their performance in the Finals.

All recent competitions have featured newly commissioned works, adding some flavour of the host country's musical traditions. This time a Chinese national composing competition will be held prior to the Menuhin Competition. The two best works for violin will be chosen, one for the Senior and one for the Junior section.

More information can be found at www.menuhincompetition.org

For press enquiries please contact:

For Chinese

Ms. SONG Xuejun

8610-66425660

For English

Kate Whyman PR

kate@katewhymanpr.co.uk

01273 252725/07766 686259

2012 Menuhin Competition for Young Violinists, Beijing

Press Conference Process

Time: 14:00, April 12, 2011

Venue: the Recital Hall at the CCOM

Presided: Mr. YE Xiao-gang

1. Short film—(about 8 mins.)
 2. Introduction to the Guests
 3. President Wang Cizhao's Speech
(As President of CCoM and Chairman of the Host Organising Committee)
 4. Duncan Greenland's Speech
(As Chairman of the Menuhin Competition Trust)
 5. Ambassador Wood's Speech
(As UK ambassador to China)
 6. Gordon Back's Speech
(As Artistic Director of the Menuhin Competition)
 7. Professor Wu Zuqiang's Speech
(As a former member of the jury of the Menuhin Competition)
 8. Answer the Questions from Media
 9. Closing
- Individual interview