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PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE USE



Competition hots up as record number of violinists apply to Menuhin Competition 2012

231 world-class young players vie for only 42 places

Organisers have been overwhelmed by a record number of entries for next year's Menuhin Competition, to be held in Beijing from 6 to 15 April 2012. More than 230 applications have been received from every part of the world, which is the highest number in the competition's entire 28-year history.

The applicants, all aged under 22, represent 28 different countries from Norway to New Zealand. They include the competition's youngest ever entrant, an eight-year-old boy from California who started playing the violin at just two-and-a-half years of age.

Entries have increased remarkably from the USA, China, Canada and Australia, where the popularity of the Menuhin Competition has soared since the success of recent winners Ray Chen, Chad Hoopes, Kerson Leong and Xiang Yu.

The entrants' biographies have revealed an interesting insight: Chinese, Korean and Japanese violinists are the best-travelled, with nearly one third studying abroad, mostly in Europe and the USA.

The Menuhin Competition Artistic Director, Gordon Back said: "We are thrilled that the competition is being held in Asia for the first time. The quality of entries has been truly stunning, with many applicants studying with world-renowned teachers at the world's leading conservatoires. This promises to be an exceptional event."

The final 42 short-listed competitors – 20 for the Junior Competition (aged under 16) and 22 for the Senior (aged under 22) – are being selected by an international jury: Kenneth Silito, Artistic Director of the Academy of St Martin-in-the-Fields, London; Alf Richard Kraggerud, Director of Talent Programme, the Barratt-Due Institute, Oslo; and Gordon Back, Artistic Director of the Menuhin Competition. The shortlist will be announced in December.

The Menuhin Competition 2012 will be hosted by the Central Conservatory of Music in association with the National Centre of Performing Arts (NCPA), Beijing Concert Hall and the China Philharmonic Orchestra in Beijing, China from 6 to 15 April 2012.

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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 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 Menuhin Competition has an impressive track record of participants and prize winners including Tasmin Little, Isabelle van Keulen, Nikolaj Znaider, Ilya Gringolts, Julia Fischer, Daishin Kashimoto, Feng Ning and more recently Chad Hoopes, Ray Chen, Callum Smart and Kerson Leong.

The 2008 Junior 1st Prize winner Chad Hoopes became the youngest violinist ever signed by IMG Artists, and the 2008 Senior 1st Prize winner Ray Chen went on to win the Queen Elisabeth Competition in 2009, was signed by CAMI in 2010 and now exclusively records with Sony. He has recently won the ECHO Classic Award for his debut album "Virtuoso".

JURY PANEL FOR BEIJING 2012

Pamela Frank, Chair (USA), Joji Hattori, Vice-Chair (Japan), Olivier Charlier (France), Dong-Suk Kang (Korea), Hu Kun (China), Henning Kraggerud (Norway), Tasmin Little (UK), Yan Pascal Tortelier (France), Vera Tsu (China). All jury members will also perform and give masterclasses during the competition.

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS BEIJING 2012

- 6 April 2012: Opening Concert at NCPA with Tasmin Little, Ning Feng, Hu Kun, Xiang Yu and Kerson Leong
- 12 April 2012: Violin Trilogy with Henning Kraggerud, Olivier Charlier, Joji Hattori and the China Philharmonic Orchestra
- 13 April 2012: Junior Finals with the Yehudi Menuhin School Orchestra
- 14 April 2012: Senior Finals with the China Philharmonic Orchestra
- 15 April 2012: Closing Gala Concert at NCPA with Dong-Suk Kang, the 1st Prize winners and the NCPA Orchestra under the baton of Yan Pascal Tortelier.

MORE INFORMATION AND EVENT DETAILS: www.menuhincompetition.org

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