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NEWS *from Young Concert Artists, Inc.*

THREE FIRST PRIZE WINNERS CHOSEN BY YOUNG CONCERT ARTISTS AT THE 2010 INTERNATIONAL AUDITIONS

November 8, 2010 – **Narek Arutyunian**, 18-year-old Russian clarinetist; **Benjamin Beilman**, 20-year-old American violinist; and **George Li**, 15-year-old American pianist, were announced as First Prize Winners after the Finals of the 2010 Young Concert Artists International Auditions at the 92nd Street Y on Saturday, November 6. The Winners were chosen from twelve Finalists, chosen from 278 applicants from 21 countries.

Each First Prize Winner will be presented in a debut recital in the 2011-2012 Young Concert Artists Series in New York and in Washington D.C. at the Kennedy Center's Terrace Theater, and also in Boston at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum. All three Winners join the roster of Young Concert Artists, Inc., which offers management services, including concert engagements, promotion, and career development. Young Concert Artists has been discovering and launching the careers of extraordinary musicians since 1961. Famous former YCA artists include Emanuel Ax, Pinchas Zukerman, Richard Goode, and Dawn Upshaw.

The Young Concert Artists International Auditions are unlike a competition: there are no rankings, and any number of winners in a wide range of instruments and voice can be selected. The artists compete against a standard of excellence, not each other.

The members of the Jury for the Final Auditions were Michael Barrett (voice), Colin Carr (cello)*, Robert Franz (conductor), Gary Graffman (piano), Ani Kavafian (violin)*, Scott Nickrenz (viola), Todd Palmer (clarinet)*, Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg (violin), James Sinclair (conductor), Ilana Vered (piano)*, Susan Wadsworth (Chairman), and Edith Wiens (voice).

(* Alumnus/Alumna of Young Concert Artists)

The other nine Finalists were awarded Second Prize. They are *Da Sol Kim*, 21-year-old Korean pianist, who won the 2010 European Young Concert Artists Auditions in Leipzig, Germany; the *Amphion String Quartet* (Katie Hyun and David Southorn, violinists; Andy Lin, violist; Mihai Marica, cellist); *John Brancy*, 21-year-old American baritone; *Yen-Yu (Jenny) Chen*, 16-year-old Taiwanese pianist; *Alexej Gorlatch*, 22-year-old Ukrainian pianist; *Giorgi Kharadze*, 26-year-old Russian cellist; the *Old City String Quartet* (Bryan Lee and Joel Link, violinists; Milena Pajaro-van de Stadt, violist; Camden Shaw, cellist); and *Yu-Chien (Benny) Tseng*, 16-year-old Taiwanese violinist.

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The members of the Jury of the 13th **European Young Concert Artists International Auditions** in Leipzig at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater "Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy" in September were: Joel Shapiro (piano, Director of the European Auditions)*; Christiane Edinger (violin)*; Robert Cohen (cello)*; Michel Lethiec (clarinet); Robert Ehrlich (flute); Berthold Schmid (voice); and Susan Wadsworth (Chair).

The Preliminary and Semi-Final Jury members included Sanford Allen (violin)*, Edward Arron (cello), Peggy Bouveret (voice), Irene Gubrud (voice), Ida Kavafian (violin)*, Nicholas Mann (violin)*, Marya Martin (flute)*, Robert Martin (cello)*, Marni Nixon (voice), Ken Noda (voice), Fred Sherry (cello)*, and Jeffrey Swann (piano).*

THE THREE FIRST PRIZE WINNERS

Narek Arutyunian, clarinetist

18-year-old Narek Arutyunian was born in Armenia but moved to Moscow at a young age. He has appeared as soloist with orchestras including the Moscow Virtuosi Chamber Orchestra with Vladimir Spivakov, who gave him the gift of the clarinet he is playing, the Prague Radio Symphony, and the Moscow State Symphony. Mr. Arutyunian has won awards including First Prize in the 2008 International Young Musicians Competition in Prague and a prize awarded by Yuri Bashmet to perform and record the Weber Concertino with the State Symphony Orchestra of New Russia. He currently studies with Charles Neidich at Queens College.

Mr. Arutyunian was awarded YCA's Rhoda Walker Teagle Prize which will sponsor his New York debut in the Young Concert Artists Series next season, and YCA's Ronald A. Asherson Award for career development. He was also awarded two performance prizes: a concerto appearance with The Meridian Symphony Orchestra (Mississippi) and an appearance at The Usedom Music Festival in Germany.

Benjamin Beilman, violinist

20-year-old Benjamin Beilman won First Prize of the 2010 Montréal International Violin Competition as well as the Bronze Medal of the 2010 Indianapolis Violin Competition. He also won First Prize in the 2009 Corpus Christi Competition and the Astral Artists Auditions. He has performed at the Marlboro Festival, Music from Angel Fire, the Verbier Festival, and on Ravinia's Rising Stars Series. He was a 2007 Presidential Scholar in the Arts and received a Gold Award in Music from the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts. He has appeared as soloist with orchestras including the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Detroit Symphony, and the RAI National Symphony in Turin, Italy. Upcoming engagements include solo appearances with the Edmonton Symphony, the Montréal Bach Festival, and L'Orchestre Métropolitain de Montréal.

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Mr. Beilman was awarded YCA's Peter Jay Sharp Foundation Prize, which will sponsor his New York debut in the Young Concert Artists Series next season, and the Summis Auspiciis Prize. He was also awarded three performance prizes: concerts with The Buffalo Chamber Music Society (Buffalo, NY), The Candlelight Concert Society (Columbia, MD), and Friends of Music Concerts (Sleepy Hollow, NY). Mr. Beilman currently studies with Ida Kavafian at the Curtis Institute of Music.

George Li, pianist

15-year-old pianist George Li is a student at the Walnut Hill School and the Preparatory Division of the New England Conservatory, where he studies with Wha Kyung Byun. Since his first public performance at Boston's Steinway Hall at the age of nine, George Li has performed on "From the Top" on NPR and the television series on WNET. He has a wide range of concerto repertoire and has appeared as soloist with orchestras including the Cleveland Orchestra as First Prize winner of the Cooper Piano Competition, the Xiamen Philharmonic in China, the Simon Bolivar Youth Orchestra in Venezuela, the Nordic Chamber Orchestra in Sweden, the Albany Symphony Orchestra, and with "I Solisti di Perugia" in Italy. On May 6 he will perform Rachmaninoff's Concerto No. 2 with the Ridgewood Symphony Orchestra (NJ).

Mr. Li was awarded YCA's Alexander Kasza-Kasser Prize, which will sponsor his Kennedy Center debut in the Young Concert Artists Series next season, and the Peter Marino Prize, which will sponsor his New York debut next season. Mr. Li also received the Sander Buchman Prize and the Paul A. Fish Prize, which support career development, and the Slomovic Prize for a concerto engagement.

Mr. Li was also honored with YCA's Ruth Laredo Prize and John Browning Prize, each established in memory of the two great artists to further the career of a young pianist. He was also awarded three performance prizes: a concerto appearance with The Boise Philharmonic and concerts for The Vancouver Recital Society and at the Festspiele Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (Festival) in Germany.

Press Contacts:

Susan Wadsworth, Director susan@yca.org

Lindsay Schweriner, Management Associate lindsay@yca.org