

**Sunday 7 June 2009**

**Press release for immediate release:**

**There were eighteen, but now there are six...**  
Announcing the six semi-finalists in the  
Michael Hill International Violin Competition 2009

**The thrilling first and second rounds of the 2009 Michael Hill International Violin Competition have taken place in Queenstown over the past three days. A total of 18 rising stars of the music world have flown in from all corners of the globe to compete in the prestigious contest.**

New Zealand's winter capital played host to the first two rounds of the semi-finals of the biennial competition from Thursday 4 June to Saturday 6 June. From a field representing 30 nationalities that entered the competition in December, 18 semi-finalists aged between 18 to 28 years performed demanding programmes of solo and piano-accompanied works. They performed live before a panel of internationally renowned judges including Shmuel Ashkenasi (Israel), Pamela Frank (USA), Philippe Graffin (France), Dong Suk Kang (Korea), Oleh Krysa (Ukraine/USA), Wilma Smith (NZ/Australia) and Radoslaw Szulc (Poland/Germany).

The semi-final rounds have whittled the competition down to just six for the third round focusing on chamber music. They are:

1. Yoo Jin Jang - Korea
2. Dami Kim - Korea
3. Tessa Lark - USA
4. David McCarroll - USA
5. Josef Spacek – Czech Republic
6. Danbi Um - Korea

The prize for the Best Performance of the NZ commission work was won by Yoo Jin Jang of Korea.

The six will perform in Auckland on June 8 and 9, with cellist Ashley Brown and pianist Michael Houstoun. The final top three will advance to the Final Round of the Michael Hill International Violin Competition on Thursday, June 11, performed live in the Auckland Town Hall and accompanied by the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra.

The overall winner stands to receive a cheque of NZ\$40,000, a recording with classical music label, Naxos, and a winner's tour in 2010. Second through sixth place getters receive from NZ\$10,000 to NZ\$1,000 and a prize of NZ\$2,000 will be awarded to the semi-finalist who has the best performance of New Zealand composer Gareth Farr's, specially-commissioned work. In a first for the competition, the audience on the night of the final will determine The *Michael Hill Audience Prize* through text voting. A highly sought prize is the two-year loan of a contemporary Cremonese violin by master craftsman, Riccardo Bergonzi. The Competition provides the semi-finalists with airfares to New Zealand and accommodation in private homes.

Masterclasses with the visiting artist judges will also take place as part of the competition in Auckland on June 10 and 11. These are open to the public and free of charge and will feature competitors who have not advanced to the finals and university music students.

**Tickets for the live performances in Auckland are available from 0800 BUY TICKETS or <http://www.buytickets.co.nz>**

The Michael Hill Violin Competition is a member of the World Federation of International Music Competitions (Geneva).  
Visit: [www.violincompetition.co.nz](http://www.violincompetition.co.nz)