

Press release for immediate release:

Announcing the three finalists in the Michael Hill International Violin Competition 2009

From eighteen, to six to three...the third round of the Michael Hill International Violin Competition took place in the Auckland Town Hall Concert Chamber on Tuesday 9 June to decide which final three will advance to a Final Round accompanied by the Auckland Philharmonia ORCHESTRA on Thursday 11 June.

A total of 18 rising stars of the music world have competed in the prestigious contest, with the first two rounds in Queenstown and third and final rounds in Auckland. From a field representing 30 nationalities that entered the competition in December 2008, 18 semi-finalists aged between 18 to 28 years have 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 third round on Tuesday 9 June saw six semi-finalists perform with cellist Ashley Brown and pianist Michael Houston. The three finalists below 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:

1. Danbi Um (Korea)
2. Josef Spacek (Czech Republic)
3. Yoo Jin Jang (Korea)

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> <<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

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Image attached picturing L - R: Danbi Um, Josef Spacek, Michael Hill and Yoo Jin Jang
Photo Credit: Simon Darby

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