

Press release for immediate release:

The Winner of the Michael Hill International Violin Competition 2009: Josef Spacek (Czech Republic)

From eighteen, to six to three to one...the winner of the Michael Hill International Violin Competition was named tonight after the Final Round at the Auckland Town Hall accompanied by the Auckland Philharmonia ORCHESTRA on Thursday 11 June. Josef Spacek of Czech Republic took out the title of winner, after an exhilarating set of performances by all the three finalists.

23 year old Josef Spacek of Czech Republic was educated at the Prague Conservatory, Curtis Institute of Music. Josef has won numerous national and international competitions including 3rd Prize and Young People's Jury Prize at the Carl Nielsen International Violin Competition in 2008 and the Grand Prize at the Kocian International Violin Competition in 1999. He has performed solo with the Philadelphia Orchestra, Prague Philharmonia, Czech Philharmonic Chamber Orchestra, Moravian Autumn Festival with Russian Chamber Philharmonic St Petersburg, Bohuslav Martinu Philharmonic Orchestra, Hradec Kralove Philharmonic Orchestra. His final round repertoire for the Michael Hill International Violin Competition was Prokofieff: Concerto No 2 in G minor Op 63.

The second place getter is Yoo Jin Jang of Korea followed by third place getter Danbi Um of Korea. Tessa Lark (USA) has been awarded fourth place, David McCarroll (USA) fifth place and Dami Kim (Korea) sixth place. Second through sixth place getters receive from NZ\$10,000 to NZ\$1,000.

As winner, Josef Spacek will receive a cheque of NZ\$40,000, a recording with classical music label, Naxos, and a winner's tour in 2010.

In a first for the competition, the audience on the night of the Final Round determined the winner of The *Michael Hill Audience Prize* through text voting. The winner of this prize was 18 year old Yoo Jin Jang of Korea (also second place getter).

The prize for the Best Performance of the NZ commission work was won by Yoo Jin Jang of Korea. As a special award Sarah Buchan of New Zealand has been loaned a contemporary Cremonese violin by master craftsman, Riccardo Bergonzi for the next two years. Sarah Buchan, originally of Christchurch was also awarded the Competition's inaugural *NZ Development Prize* - created to offer an intensive development opportunity for a Kiwi violinist to accompany and observe the competition's proceedings, participate in the masterclasses being offered by the international Artist Judges and be acknowledged in the prize-giving.

Arts Culture and Heritage Minister Christopher Finlayson congratulated all contestants in the Michael Hill International Violin Competition at the conclusion of the Final Round at the Auckland Town Hall. He also remarked that the arts prosper in New Zealand due to the support and generosity of New Zealanders such as Michael and Christine Hill, even in tough times.

A total of 18 rising stars of the music world have competed in the prestigious contest which began on June 4, 2009, 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. The Competition provides the semi-finalists with airfares to New Zealand and accommodation in private homes. Competitors 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).

Michael Hill, Founding Trustee of the Competition spoke to the contestants at the conclusion of the Final Round from the stage, "You've changed our lives...tonight is proof that music is a common language of all nationalities."

He said of this year's Competition, "The field this year reflected the truly international status this biennial Competition has achieved since its inception in 2001. I am always vastly impressed with the talent, dedication and commitment shown by the semi-finalists, and was thrilled with their performances in the final rounds – it was just extraordinary to watch and listen to."

"It is my dream that New Zealand will one day become a much more balanced society with not just wonderful sport – but also wonderful classical music."

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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