

Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Top-Drawer judges line up and more prizes in the Michael Hill International Violin Competition

Seven violin luminaries will be travelling to New Zealand for the next Michael Hill International Violin Competition. 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) will serve on the international panel of judges, chaired by New Zealander Dr Robin Congreve.

The Competition has added even more prizes to the already generous prize pool. First prize is NZ\$40,000, a CD recording on the Naxos label and a winner's tour in 2010. Second through sixth prizes receive 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. The Michael Hill Audience Prize will be determined by audience texting – a first for the competition. Again, one lucky semi-finalist will be awarded a two year loan of a contemporary Cremonese violin by master craftsman, Riccardo Bergonzi.

Also new to 2008 is the NZ Development Prize - created to provide an intensive development opportunity for one Kiwi violinist who will accompany the 18 semi-finalists to Queenstown and Auckland and observe the competition's proceedings. He or she will participate in the masterclasses being offered by the Artist Judges at the University of Auckland and will be acknowledged in the prize-giving and related publicity materials.

Applications for the 2009 Michael Hill International Violin Competition close this week and will be assessed by a panel of top NZ and Australian violinists. Dmitri Atannasov, Justine Cormack, Vesa-Mati Leppanen, Dene Olding and Wilma Smith will select 18 semi-finalists to compete live in New Zealand.

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Queenstown again plays host to the first two rounds where all 18 semi-finalists perform a grueling programme of solo and piano-accompanied works. The top six semi-finalists then perform in Auckland with cellist Ashley Brown and pianist Michael Houstoun with the three finalists advancing to compete in the final round, a concerto performance on Saturday 11 June in the Auckland Town Hall accompanied by the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra.

All rounds of the Competition are open to the public. Bookings for the Queenstown rounds at Ticket Direct 0800 4 TICKET or www.ticketdirect.co.nz. Bookings for the Auckland rounds at Ticketek (09) 307 5139 or www.ticketek.co.nz.

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Further information: www.violincompetition.co.nz

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