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NEWS *from Young Concert Artists, Inc.*

TWO FIRST PRIZES AWARDED IN THE 2007-08 YOUNG CONCERT ARTISTS INTERNATIONAL AUDITIONS

New York, New York — **Pius Cheung**, a 25-year-old Chinese-Canadian marimbist and **Narek Hakhnazaryan**, a 19-year-old Armenian cellist were announced as First Prize Winners after the Finals of the 2008 Young Concert Artists International Auditions held at the 92nd Street Y on Saturday, January 19. The YCA Winners were chosen from fifteen Finalists, selected out of 261 applicants hailing from 36 countries.

Each First Prize Winner was awarded a \$5,000 career development grant, and will be presented in debuts in the 2008-2009 Young Concert Artists Series in New York at Carnegie's Zankel Hall, in Washington D.C. at the Kennedy Center's Terrace Theater, and in Boston at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum. The two Winners join the roster of Young Concert Artists, Inc., which offers a minimum of three years of management services, including concert engagements, promotion, and career development. Young Concert Artists has been discovering and launching the careers of extraordinary musicians since 1961.

The members of the Jury for the Final Auditions were Stephen Burns (trumpet/conductor)*, Daniel Druckman (marimba), Pamela Frank (violin), Gary Graffman (piano), Marya Martin (flute)*, Robert McDuffie (violin), Roberto Montenegro (conductor), Scott Nickrenz (viola), Lorraine Nubar (voice), Toby Saks (cello)*, Geoffrey Simon (conductor/cello), Ignat Solzhenitsyn (conductor/piano), Paul Sperry (voice), Ilana Vered (piano)*, and Susan Wadsworth (Chairman). The Semi-Finals Jury included Ani Kavafian (violin)*, Jon Manasse (clarinet), Ken Noda (piano/voice) and Jeffrey Swann (piano)*.

The other thirteen Finalists were awarded Second Prize and a cash award of \$1,000. They were *Gabriel Cabezas*, 15-year-old Costa Rican-American cellist; the *Salvador Dali Piano Trio* (Vineta Sareika, 21-year-old Latvian violinist; Christian-Pierre La Marca, 24-year-old French cellist; Amandine Savary, 23-year-old French pianist); *Ran Dank*, 25-year-old Israeli pianist; *Charlotte Dobbs*, 24-year-old American soprano; *Hahn-Bin*, 20-year-old Korean violinist; *Stephanie Jeong*, 20-year-old American violinist; *Satenik Khouardoian*, 24-year-old French violinist; *Yaron Kohlberg*, 24-year-old Israeli pianist; *Sean Lee*, 20-year-old American violinist; *Brandon Ridenour*, 22-year-old American trumpeter; *Yoonshin Song*, 25-year-old Korean violinist; *Matei Varga*, 26-year-old Romanian pianist; and *Tien-Hsin "Cindy" Wu*, 23-year-old Taiwanese violinist.

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 criteria are musicianship, virtuosity, communicative power, individuality and readiness to begin a concert career.

Major underwriting support for the 2007-08 Young Concert Artists International Auditions was provided by the Alexis Gregory Foundation and Mimi Levitt.

Biographies of the 2007-08 Winners:

25-year-old marimbist **Pius Cheung** won a First Prize of \$5,000 and the opportunity to begin his career under the auspices of Young Concert Artists. At the Auditions, he was also awarded the Miriam Brody Aronson Award, the Brownville Concert Series Prize, the Swiss Global Artistic Foundation Award for an engagement in Europe, the University of Georgia Performing Arts Center Prize, and the Usedom (Germany) Music Festival Prize.

Pius Cheung was born in Hong Kong and moved to Vancouver with his family at the age of 12. His debut album of his own transcription of Bach's Goldberg Variations is the first and only recording of the work on marimba. The album has won rave reviews and has been aired on CBC Radio in Canada and National Public Radio in the U.S. He appeared as soloist with the Philadelphia Orchestra at the Kimmel Center in 2003 as winner of the orchestra's concerto competition. As a composer, he was awarded First Prize in the Classical Marimba League's 2007 Composition Competition for his *Three Etudes*. He has written numerous works for the marimba, including a Marimba Concerto. Mr. Cheung earned a Bachelor of Music degree from the Curtis Institute of Music and his Artist Diploma from The Boston Conservatory. He is currently pursuing a Doctorate at the University of Michigan.

19-year-old cellist **Narek Hakhnazaryan's** First Prize of \$5,000 is sponsored by the Paul A. Fish Memorial Fund. At the Auditions, he was awarded the Jerome L. Greene Foundation Prize, which will sponsor his New York debut at Carnegie's Zankel Hall, the Ruth Laredo Memorial Prize, the Slomovic Orchestra Soloist Prize, the Bridgehampton Chamber Music Festival Prize, the Buffalo Chamber Music Society Prize, the Candlelight Concert Society Prize, the Princeton University Concerts Prize, the Roberto Montenegro Prize and the Saint Vincent College Series Prize.

Narek Hakhnazaryan was born in 1988 in Yerevan, Armenia, into a family of musicians: his father is a violinist and his mother, a pianist. His early studies were at the Sayat-Nova School of Music in Yerevan with Zareh Sarkisyan. At the age of 12, he began studies at the Moscow Conservatory with Alexey Seleznyov. Mr. Hakhnazaryan is a laureate of several international competitions, having won First Prize in the 2006 Aram Khachaturian International Competition in Armenia, and Fifth Prize at the 2007 Tchaikovsky International Competition in Moscow. He has received scholarships from the Rostropovich Russian Performing Arts Fund and has performed in Russia, Europe, Greece and Turkey.

The Sander Buchman Memorial Fund sponsored the Second Prizes of 15-year-old cellist Gabriel Cabezas, the Salvador Dali Piano Trio, and 22-year-old trumpeter Brandon Ridenour. The Emerging Artist Prize of the Seattle Chamber Music Festival was also awarded to Gabriel Cabezas, and the Seattle Chamber Music Festival Prize was awarded to Second Prize Winner, the 25-year-old pianist Ran Dank.

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