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# **NEWS** *from Young Concert Artists, Inc.*

## **SEVEN FIRST PRIZES AWARDED IN THE 2008-09 YOUNG CONCERT ARTISTS INTERNATIONAL AUDITIONS**

*January 19, 2009* – **Ray Chen**, 19-year-old Australian violinist; **Ran Dank**, 26-year-old Israeli pianist; **Jeanine De Bique**, 27-year-old Trinidadian soprano; **Hahn-Bin**, 21-year-old Korean violinist; **Bella Hristova**, 23-year-old Bulgarian violinist; **Noé Inui**, 22-year-old Greek-Japanese violinist; and **Carolina Ullrich**, 25-year-old Chilean-German soprano were announced as First Prize Winners after the Finals of the 2008-09 Young Concert Artists International Auditions held at the 92nd Street Y on Saturday, January 17. The YCA Winners were chosen from fourteen Finalists, selected out of 365 applicants hailing from 37 countries. Mr. Inui and Ms. Ullrich previously won First Prizes in the 2008 Young Concert Artists European Auditions held in Leipzig, Germany, co-sponsored by Young Concert Artists and the Hochschule für Musik und Theater “Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy.”

**Each First Prize Winner** was awarded a \$5,000 Prize and will be presented in debuts in the 2009-2010 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. All seven Winners join the roster of Young Concert Artists, Inc., which also offers management services, including concert engagements, promotion, and career development. Young Concert Artists has been discovering and launching the careers of extraordinary musicians since 1961. Famous former YCA artists include Emanuel Ax, Pinchas Zukerman, Richard Goode, and Dawn Upshaw.

**The members of the Jury** for the Final Auditions were Phyllis Bryn-Julson (voice), Gary Graffman (piano), Ani Kavafian (violin)\*, Marya Martin (flute)\*, Scott Nickrenz (viola), Daniel Phillips (violin)\*, Julius Rudel (conductor/voice), Geoffrey Simon (conductor/cello), James Sinclair (conductor), Jeffrey Swann (piano)\*, Ilana Vered (piano)\*, and Susan Wadsworth (Chairman). The Semi-Finals Jury included Edward Arron (cello), Kyung-Wha Chung (violin), Jerome Lowenthal (piano), Thomas Muraco (voice), Marni Nixon (voice), Christòphenen Nomura (voice)\*, and Todd Palmer (clarinet)\*. (\* Alumnus/a of Young Concert Artists)

**The other seven Finalists** were awarded Second Prize and a cash award of \$1,000. They were *Hrachya Avanesyan*, 22-year-old Armenian violinist; *Gabriel Cabezas*, 16-year-old Costa Rican-American cellist; *Josu De Solaun*, 26-year-old Spanish pianist; *Aleksandr Haskin*, 25-year-old Belarusian flutist; *Julian Steckel*, 26-year-old German cellist; *Jiří Vodička*, 20-year-old Czech violinist; and *Keju Wang*, 22-year-old Chinese violist.

**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.

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**Major support** for the Winners' Prizes was graciously provided by Mimi Levitt.

**Biographies of the 2008-09 Winners:**

19-year-old violinist **Ray Chen's** First Prize of \$5,000 is sponsored by the Ronald Asherson Fund. At the Auditions, he was also awarded the Friends of Music Prize for an engagement in Sleepy Hollow, New York.

Born in 1989, Ray Chen began violin studies at the age of four in Australia. He made his solo orchestral debut at the age of eight with the Queensland Philharmonic Orchestra and the following year was invited to perform at the opening celebration concert for the Winter Olympics in Nagano, Japan. At the age of 15, he was accepted to The Curtis Institute of Music, where he works with Aaron Rosand. He has also studied with David Cerone, Pamela Frank, Joseph Silverstein, Maxim Vengerov, and Antje Weithaas.

Mr. Chen won First Prize in the 2008 International Yehudi Menuhin Violin Competition in Wales. He has performed in over 20 countries, including recent debuts with the Mariinsky Theatre Orchestra in St. Petersburg and The State Symphony Orchestra in Baku, Azerbaijan, under the baton of Maxim Vengerov.

26-year-old pianist **Ran Dank's** First Prize of \$5,000 is sponsored by the Sander Buchman Memorial Fund. At the Auditions, Mr. Dank was also awarded the Jerome L. Greene Foundation Prize, which will sponsor his New York debut in the Young Concert Artists Series; the Miriam Brody Aronson Award; the Slomovic Orchestra Prize; the Albany Symphony Prize for a concerto engagement in Georgia; the Embassy Series Prize for an engagement in Washington, DC; and the Saint Vincent College Concert Prize for an engagement in Latrobe, Pennsylvania.

Ran Dank was born in Israel in 1982 and started playing the piano at the age of seven. He received his Bachelor's degree from the Rubin Academy of Music at Tel Aviv University, where he studied with Emanuel Krasovsky. In 2005 he received his Master's degree from the Juilliard School studying with Robert McDonald, where he continues in the Artist Diploma Program with Emanuel Ax and Joseph Kalichstein (both YCA Alumni).

Mr. Dank won the 2006 Gina Bachauer Competition at the Juilliard School and in 2007 won the Arthur Rubinstein Prize at the Cleveland International Competition, bringing him an appearance with the Cleveland Orchestra. He has also received grants from the America-Israel Cultural Foundation.

Mr. Dank has performed as soloist with orchestras including the Juilliard School Orchestra as winner of the Concerto Competition, and in Israel with the Rishon Lezion Symphonic Orchestra, the Jerusalem Symphonic Orchestra, and the Raanana Symphony Orchestra. He has appeared in festivals including the Chopin Festival in Warsaw, the Mänttä Festival for Virtuoso Pianists in Finland, and the Israel Festival, where he performed the complete sonatas of Scriabin.

27-year-old soprano **Jeanine De Bique's** First Prize of \$5,000 is sponsored by the Paul A. Fish Memorial Fund. Born in Trinidad, Jeanine De Bique received her Bachelor's degree from the Manhattan School of Music in 2006 and her Master's degree in 2008, studying with Marlena Malas, Hilda Harris, Warren Jones, and Christopher Cano. This spring, she performs the role of Adele in Strauss's *Die Fledermaus* at the Manhattan School, where she has also appeared in the title role of Handel's *Semele*, as Gilda in Verdi's *Rigoletto*, Laretta in Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi*, and Soeur Constance in Poulenc's *Les Dialogues des Carmelites*. Her other operatic

appearances include the title role in Monteverdi's *L'Incoronazione di Poppea* in the Chautauqua Music Program, Yum Yum in Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Mikado* with St. Louis Opera Theatre, and Clara in Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* on tour in Eastern Europe and Russia. In June 2009 she will appear with Lorin Maazel and the New York Philharmonic in performances of Mahler's Symphony No. 8 at Avery Fisher Hall.

Ms. De Bique was a Regional Finalist and Study Grant Winner in the 2007 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, Winner of the Outstanding Voice Award in the Kurt Weill Foundation's 2007 Lotte Lenya Competition, and First Prize Winner in the 2006 National Association for Negro Singers Competition.

At the Auditions, 21-year-old violinist **Hahn-Bin** was also awarded the John Browning Memorial Prize, the Brownville Concert Prize for an engagement in Nebraska, and the Swiss Global Artistic Foundation Award for an engagement in Europe.

A protégé of Itzhak Perlman, Hahn-Bin made his international debut at the age of twelve at the 42nd Grammy Awards' *Salute to Classical Music* honoring Isaac Stern. Shortly thereafter, he appeared as soloist with the Seoul Philharmonic and then moved to the U.S. Appearances with the Pacific and San Diego Symphonies followed quickly. At the age of sixteen Hahn-Bin made his European debuts in a four-city tour with Landesjugendorchester Rheinland-Pfalz followed by performances in five cities across the U.S. with the orchestra. In 2005, Universal Music, Ltd. released his debut CD HAZE, featuring works by Pärt, Janáček, Poulenc, Ravel, and Prokofiev.

In the 2006-2007 season, Hahn-Bin made notable appearances with all three of Korea's major orchestras, the Seoul, Bucheon, and Daejeon Philharmonics, in Korea and Japan. This season, Hahn-Bin makes his Paris debut at the Louvre, and appears as soloist with the Queensland Orchestra in Australia and the Simfònica de Balears of Spain with the conductor Geoffrey Simon. Hahn-Bin currently works with Itzhak Perlman and Catherine Cho on scholarship at the Juilliard School. He plays an 1875 J. F. Pressenda violin from the Mandell Collection of Southern California.

23-year-old violinist **Bella Hristova** was also awarded the Rhoda Walker Teagle Prize, which will sponsor her New York debut in the Young Concert Artists Series; the Ruth Laredo Memorial Award; the Mortimer Levitt Career Development Award for Women Artists; the Candlelight Concert Society Prize for an engagement in Columbia, Maryland; and the Lied Center of Kansas Prize.

Born in Pleven, Bulgaria, Bella Hristova began violin studies at the age of six. At the age of 12, she participated in master classes with Ruggiero Ricci at the Mozarteum. Since 1999, she has lived in the United States, studying with Stephen Shipps and then at The Curtis Institute, where she studied violin with (YCA Alumna) Ida Kavafian and chamber music with Steven Tenenbom. She performed the Brahms Violin Concerto with the Curtis Symphony Orchestra. She is currently pursuing an Artist Diploma with Jaime Laredo at Indiana University.

As Winner of First Prize in the 2007 Michael Hill International Competition in New Zealand, she will record a CD of solo violin works by the Belgian virtuoso Charles de Berio on the Naxos label. She has received a career grant from the Salon de Virtuosi in New York and is a new member of Chamber Music Society Two at Lincoln Center.

Ms. Hristova was a Laureate of the 2006 Violin Competition of Indianapolis and has made musical appearances on Garrison Keillor's *A Prairie Home Companion*. She has performed at festivals including The Grand Teton

Music Festival, Music@Menlo, Music from Angel Fire, and Ravinia's Steans Institute for Young Artists, and in 2009 will participate in the Marlboro Music Festival. Ms. Hristova plays a 1655 Nicolò Amati violin, once owned by the violinist Louis Krasner.

22-year-old violinist **Noé Inui's** First Prize of \$5,000 is sponsored by the S & R Foundation. At the Auditions, he was also awarded the Summis Auspiciis Prize, which will sponsor his New York debut in the Young Concert Artists Series; the Paramount Theatre Prize for an engagement in Rutland, Vermont; and the Saint Vincent College Concert Prize for an engagement in Latrobe, Pennsylvania.

Born in Brussels in July 1985 to a Greek mother and a Japanese father, Noé Inui was given a toy violin at the age of 2, and started lessons at 4. At the age of 14 he went to Paris and studied with Suzanne Gessner, continuing at the Paris Conservatory with (YCA Alumnus) Olivier Charlier. Since 2004 he has worked with Ulf Hoelscher in Karlsruhe.

He has performed chamber music frequently, including concerts in Argentina with pianist Martha Argerich at her Festival in Buenos Aires and at the Llao Llao Festival, and has concertized in Japan, including concerts in Tokyo's Suntory Hall and Casals Hall. He has appeared as soloist with orchestras including the Philharmonic Orchestra of Liège in Belgium, the Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra in Germany and the Philharmonic Orchestra of Thessaloniki, Greece.

25-year-old soprano **Carolina Ullrich's** First Prize of \$5,000 is sponsored by the Alice Rosner Foundation. At the Auditions, she was also awarded the Princeton University Concerts Prize, for an engagement in New Jersey; and the Usedom Music Festival Prize for an engagement in Germany.

Carolina Ullrich was born in Chile in 1982 and graduated *summa cum laude* from the Universidad Católica in Santiago, where she studied with Ahlke Scheffelt. Since 2005 she has been working with Edith Wiens at the Hochschule in Munich, on scholarships from the Fundación Andes and the Freunde Junger Musiker in Berlin.

Her opera roles in Santiago at the Teatro Municipal include Papagena in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*, Despina in *Così fan tutte*, Zerlina in *Don Giovanni*, and Soeur Constance in Poulenc's *Dialogues des Carmélites*. Recently she has sung in the Bayerische Theaterakademie and at the Prinzregententheater in Munich. Her oratorio appearances include the St. John Passion and the St. Matthew Passion, the Messiah, and the Brahms Requiem with the Stuttgart Orchestra under Helmuth Rilling in Germany and Italy. She has also sung Mozart concert arias in Japan, and will record songs of Joaquin Turina for the Naxos label this year.

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