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NEWS *from Young Concert Artists, Inc.*

CLARINETIST, VIOLINIST, AND PIANIST WIN 2013 YOUNG CONCERT ARTISTS INTERNATIONAL AUDITIONS



Stephen Waarts, Raphaël Sévère, Yunqing Zhou

November 11, 2013 – **Raphaël Sévère**, 19-year-old French clarinetist; **Stephen Waarts**, 17-year-old American violinist; and **Yunqing Zhou**, 24-year-old Chinese pianist, were selected from eleven Finalists as the First Prize Winners of the 2013 Young Concert Artists International Auditions at the Final Auditions on Saturday, November 9 at Merkin Hall. The 2013 Young Concert Artists Auditions drew over two hundred musicians from thirty-five countries.

Each First Prize Winner will be presented next season in three major debuts by the Young Concert Artists Series in New York at Merkin Hall, in Washington, D.C. at the Kennedy Center's Terrace Theater, and in Boston at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum. The Winners join the roster of Young Concert Artists, Inc., which provides 3 years or more of management services, concert engagements, promotion, and career development.

The members of the Jury for the Final Auditions were **Sanford Allen** (violin)*, **Edward Arron** (cello), **Paul Green** (clarinet)*, **Kazuhide Isomura** (viola)*, **Jerome Lowenthal** (piano), **Sivan Magen** (harp), **Israella Margalit** (piano), **Anne-Marie McDermott** (piano)*, **Anne Akiko Meyers** (violin)*, **Scott Nickrenz** (viola), **Gerard Schwarz** (conductor)*, and **Susan Wadsworth** (chair).

The remaining eight Finalists were awarded **Second Prize**. They are Nikki Chooi, 24-year-old Canadian violinist, Elizabeth Fayette, 25-year-old American violinist, Emily Levin, 22-year-old American harpist, Zeyu Victor Li, 17-year-old Chinese violinist, Jun Sun, 25-year-old Chinese pianist, Dmitry Volkov, 25-year-old Russian cellist, Han Bin Yoon, 25-year-old Korean cellist, and Xiang Yu, 24-year-old Chinese violinist.

The Young Concert Artists International Auditions differ from a competition: there are no rankings, and any number of winners on a wide range of instruments and voice can be selected, competing against a standard of excellence, not each other.

Jury members of the Preliminary and Semi-Final auditions in New York were Michael Barrett (voice); Amy Burton (voice); Colin Carr (cello)*; Ida Kavafian (violin)*; Chee-Yun (violin)*; Seymour Lipkin (piano); Nicholas Mann (violin)*; Marya Martin (flute)*; Ken Noda (voice); Todd Palmer (clarinet)*; Jeffrey Solow (cello)*; Karen Lindquist (harp)*; Jeffrey Swann (piano)*; Charles Wadsworth (piano); Robert White (voice).

Young Concert Artists, Inc., a non-profit organization founded in 1961, has launched the careers of many admired musicians, including pianists Jean-Yves Thibaudet, Emanuel Ax, Murray Perahia, Jeremy Denk, and Richard Goode; the soprano Dawn Upshaw, and the violinist Pinchas Zukerman.

* *Alumnus/Alumna of Young Concert Artists*

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THE THREE 2013 YOUNG CONCERT ARTISTS INTERNATIONAL AUDITIONS FIRST PRIZE WINNERS

19-year-old **Raphaël Sévère** was born in Rennes, France. He has appeared as soloist with many orchestras, beginning with a performance of the Mozart Concerto at the age of 11 with the Macau Youth Symphony in Hong Kong. At the age of 12, he won First Prize in the Tokyo Clarinet Competition and four special prizes. At 15, he was the first clarinetist ever nominated as 'Instrumental soloist revelation' at the Victoires de la Musique (Classical Music Awards). At 18, he graduated with a Masters from the Conservatoire National Supérieur in Paris. His performances with orchestras include the Orchestre d'Auvergne, the Czech Philharmonic, the Budapest Chamber Orchestra, and the Orchestre National de France.

Mr. Sévère was awarded YCA's Alexander Kasza-Kasser Prize, sponsoring his Kennedy Center debut, the Korean Society Prize, and the Leona Green Award for Winds. He was also awarded a concerto appearance with the Sinfonia Gulf Coast Orchestra and engagements for the Washington Performing Arts Society, Vancouver Recital Society, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Festival in Germany, and Embassy Series in Washington D.C.

A native of Shenyang, China, 24-year-old pianist **Yunqing Zhou** began his piano studies at the age of 7. He came to the U.S. at 19 to the Curtis Institute of Music to study with Robert McDonald and Gary Graffman. He continues his studies with Mr. McDonald at The Juilliard School, where he won First Prize in the 2013 Gina Bachauer Piano Competition, which brought him a full scholarship and an appearance on WQXR's Young Artists Showcase with Robert Sherman. He has won top prizes in the Gulangyu Piano Competition in Xiamen and at the China International Piano Competition, the Cleveland Piano Competition, and the Busoni Piano Competition in Italy. He has performed with many orchestras in China including the China National Symphony Orchestra.

Mr. Zhou was awarded YCA's Slomovic Prize, which provides support for his Kennedy Center debut next season, the John Browning Memorial Prize, and the Ruth Laredo Memorial Award. He also received five performance prizes: engagements on the Harriman-Jewell Series, the Friends of Music Series, the Sunday Musicale Series, the Vancouver Recital Society, as well as the Saint Vincent College Bronder Prize for Piano.

A native of the Bay Area, 17-year-old violinist **Stephen Waarts** has performed over thirty standard as well as rarely performed violin concertos in his young career, appearing abroad in Germany, Spain, Norway, Canada, and Russia. He won Second Prize and the Audience Prize in the 2013 Montreal International Music Competition and First Prize in the 2011 International LOUIS SPOHR Competition in Germany. Orchestra highlights include performances with the Staatskapelle Weimar Orchestra, Navarra Symphony, Saratoga Symphony, and multiple orchestras throughout the Bay Area including the Redwood Symphony, the Silicon Valley Symphony, and the San Francisco Chamber Orchestra. Mr. Waarts studied with Li Lin at the San Francisco Conservatory, and has worked with Itzhak Perlman in the Perlman Music Program since 2010. He currently attends the Curtis Institute of Music, where he studies with Aaron Rosand.

Mr. Waarts was awarded YCA's Sander Buchman Prize, which provides major support for his New York debut, and the Ronald A. Asherson Prize. He also received two performance prizes: a concerto appearance with the Albany Symphony (GA), and a recital for the Buffalo Chamber Music Society.

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