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Alex Zhou Wins 33rd Annual Irving M. Klein International String Competition ***16-year old San Jose CA violinist captures top prize***

SAN FRANCISCO, CA — The first prize of the 33rd Annual Irving M. Klein International String Competition, carrying a purse of \$13,000, has been awarded to violinist **ALEX ZHOU**. The Competition Finals were held Sunday, June 3rd at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music and featured three competitors advancing from the Semifinals the previous day, an original group of nine. Alex's winning program for the final round included movements from the Bach *Sonata No. 1 in G Minor*, Mozart's *Sonata No. 18 in G Major* and the Tchaikovsky *Violin Concerto in D Major, op. 35*.

Second prize went to **JULIAN RHEE** (violin, 17). He is a student of Almita Vamos at the Music Institute of Chicago. Julian also won both the prize for the Best Performance of the Commissioned Work, and the Pablo Casals Prize for the best performance of the solo Bach work.

Third prize went to **ISABELLE AI DURRENBERGER** (violin, 19). She attends Cleveland Institute of Music and is a student of Jaime Laredo and Jinjoo Cho.

"The level of performance, poise and deeply expressive artistry was beyond impressive this year," said **Mitchell Sardou Klein**, competition artistic director and co-founder. "My father, Irving M. Klein, would be proud to see the continuously extraordinary performances by such remarkable young people throughout the past 33 years, and the encouragement of our enthusiastic and loyal audiences who provide steadfast support to these aspiring musicians."

"On behalf of the Conservatory of Music, I am pleased to offer my heartiest of congratulations to all of the young musicians who participated in this event. The Klein Competition continues to attract the finest talent in the world and every young artist in this competition is worthy of recognition. They have all done tremendous work and we wish them the very best in all future endeavors," said **David Stull**, president of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music.

Alex Zhou, 16, studies under the tutelage of Zhao Wei at the Pre-College Division of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. Alex has won numerous awards, including 1st Place at the 2010 Menuhin-Dowling Competition, the 2011 CMTANC Competition, the 2011 Pacific Musical Competition, the 2012 CYS Concerto Competition, the 2012 Andrea Postacchini International Violin Competition, Grand Prize at

the 2012 Mondavi Center Competition, and 4th Place and Composer's Prize at the 2014 Menuhin International Violin Competition. He has been invited to the 2018 Shanghai Isaac Stern International Competition.

In 2009, Alex was invited to play at Carnegie Hall for the American Fine Arts Festival. He has performed with several orchestras, such as the California Youth Symphony, Palo Alto Philharmonic, University of Texas Orchestra, Symphony Parnassus, Camellia Symphony Orchestra, and Master Sinfonia Chamber Orchestra. Alex has appeared on the NPR radio show *From the Top* in 2012 (Show 263).

Alex has attended masterclasses with Gil Shaham, David Kim, Pamela Frank, Ning Feng, Chen Xi, and Alexander Barantschik. He attended the 2011 and 2012 Music@Menlo Festival, the 2014-2017 Perlman Music Program Summer Festival, and the 2014-2015 Perlman Music Program Winter Residency.

The full list of this year's selected competitors includes **Paolo Dara**, (violin, 20), **Isabelle Ai Durrenberger** (violin, 19), **Jean Kim** (cello, 22), **Julian Rhee** (violin, 17), **Angela Ryu** (violin, 18), **Sophia Su** (violin, 16), **Davis You** (cello, 16), **Hua Zhang** (violin, 21) and **Alex Zhou** (violin, 16). The young musicians were selected from a pool of 90 entrants from fourteen countries, ranging in age from 15 to 23.

The jury for this year's Competition included **Glenn Dicterow**, **Karen Dreyfus**, **David Froom** (the 2018 Klein Competition Composer), **Janet Horvath**, **Mel Margolis**, **Ian Swensen** and **Barbara Day Turner**.

Competitors in the Competition were required to perform at least one movement of an unaccompanied Bach work, a concerto, a commissioned work by David Froom, and, for the three musicians selected to advance to the final round, a movement from a sonata with piano.

Previous winners of the Klein Competition include Jennifer Koh, Frank Huang, Robert deMaine, Tessa Lark, and David Requiro. Last year, the Competition awarded now 19-year-old cellist Jeremy Tai of Palo Alto first prize. For more information, visit kleincompetition.org.

PRIZES

First Prize goes to 16-year old **ALEX ZHOU**, violin. (\$13,000, includes performances with the Peninsula and Santa Cruz Symphonies, the Gualala Arts Chamber Music Series, Music in the Vineyards, and Noontime Concerts) given this year in memory of Amnon Goldworth.

Second Prize goes to **JULIAN RHEE**, violin, 16. (\$6,300, includes performances with the San Jose Chamber Orchestra and Piedmont Center for the Arts) is given by Ruth Short in honor of Elaine H. Klein, wife of Irving M. Klein. For the past 32 years, Mrs. Klein has served on the board in support of the Klein Competition and the California Music Center.

Third Prize goes to **ISABELLE AI DURRENBERGER**, violin, 19. (\$2,500) is given by David and Judy Anderson, in memory of Judy's father, Milton Preves, principal violist with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra from 1939 to 1986 and instrumental in developing the basis for the current judging procedures for the Klein.

Fourth Prizes (\$1,500 each) go to cellist **JEAN KIM** (22), and **SOPHIA SU** (violin, 16).

Best Performance of the Commissioned Work (\$500) named in memory of Allen R. and Susan E. Weiss.

Pablo Casals Prize (\$500) for the best performance of the solo Bach work, given this year by Loretta O'Connell in memory of Harry Adams.

Each Semifinalist not awarded a named prize receives \$1,000.

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About the California Music Center

CMC was founded in 1974 by Irving M. Klein, a virtuoso chamber musician and master cello teacher, as the sponsoring organization for a summer music institute and chamber music series for young artists. Following Mr. Klein's passing in 1985, CMC inaugurated the Irving M. Klein International String Competition ("the Klein") in 1986; since then, the Klein has become one of the most prestigious events of its kind, attracting ever-increasing numbers of entries annually from throughout the world and helping to enhance the developing careers of players who have gone on to become renowned soloists, chamber musicians, teachers, and prominent members of the world's finest orchestras. CMC also produces concerts year-round featuring laureates and conducts masterclasses and community engagement activities around the Bay Area. The Klein Competition is supported in part by the Mervyn L. Brenner Foundation, New Music America, the Ross McKee Foundation, and the Sam Mazza Foundation; and is presented in partnership with the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. Learn more at californiamusiccenter.org.

About the San Francisco Conservatory of Music

Founded in 1917, the San Francisco Conservatory of Music (SFCM) is a global destination for musical excellence, earning an international reputation for producing musicians of the highest caliber. Located in the heart of San Francisco's Civic Center, SFCM's faculty includes nearly 30 members of the San Francisco Symphony as well as Grammy Award-winning artists in fields ranging from orchestral and chamber performance to classical guitar. The Conservatory offers its 400-plus collegiate students fully accredited bachelor's and master's degrees and professional diplomas in composition and instrumental and vocal performance, as well as in newly established, groundbreaking tracks such as Technology and Applied Composition and Roots, Jazz, and American Music. SFCM's collaborations with major Bay Area arts presenters, including the San Francisco Symphony, Opera, Ballet, and SFJAZZ Center, present an unprecedented learning environment for Conservatory students to engage with the world's leading artists. The Conservatory's relationships with Sony Playstation, Skywalker Sound, and other Silicon Valley companies also offer unique opportunities that reinforce the institution's innovative curricular approach in artistic, intellectual, professional, and individual development, a connected learning sequence that gives students an education for life. SFCM's collegiate and Pre-College students have appeared at such storied venues as Carnegie Hall and Davies Symphony Hall and have performed on national radio programs including NPR's *Live from Here* and *Performance Today*. Notable alumni include violinists Yehudi Menuhin and Isaac Stern, conductor and pianist Jeffrey Kahane, soprano Elza van den Heever, the Naumburg Award-winning Telegraph Quartet (on faculty as SFCM's Quartet-in-Residence), Blue Bottle Coffee founder James Freeman, and Ronald Losby (President of Steinway & Sons - Americas), among others. For more information, visit sfc.edu.

Photos attached. Photo credit: Carlin Ma.