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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

The Ottawa Chamber Orchestra announces the finalists in their annual Concerto Competition.

The Ottawa Chamber Orchestra is pleased to announce the finalists in their 2012 Concerto Competition, this year featuring promising young pianists.

With the invaluable support of the Ontario Trillium Foundation, the competition was started in 2002 with the aim to discover, reward and support young singers, wind, brass or string players, and pianists under the age of 25, and provide them with the opportunity to gain orchestral experience. It has been held annually since that time (except in 2010). More than 60 young artists have auditioned for these events, and more than 30 have been given the opportunity to perform a classical work of their choosing with the orchestra, and to have their playing evaluated by a panel of professional judges.

On January 21st, ten semi-finalists performed for the judges of this year's competition, hoping to secure a place in the finals and a chance to perform with the Ottawa Chamber Orchestra in their final concert of the season.

This year, the panel of judges included Cynthia Tormann, Michel Szczesniak and Dina Namer, all prominent pianists and members of the faculty at Queen's University in Kingston. The jury felt that the performances of all ten semi-finalists were at a very high level. They were astounded that the level of maturity in the playing was being delivered by such a youthful group of candidates, and were moved by the quality and sensitivity of the performances. They felt it was encouraging to see that there is a next generation of young players in our area who will bring a high level of performance craft to our concert halls.

After the second round of this year's competition, here are the finalists:

Anita Pari
Robin Pan
Phillip Cho
Sharon Ding
Stanley Li

On Saturday, June 2nd 2012, 8 p.m., at Tabaret Hall, these 5 finalists will perform as soloists in a concert with the OCO, under the baton of Maestro David Thies-Thompson. Following their performances in the concert June 2nd, three winners will be selected and announced that evening. Prizes will be awarded to the top three finalists in the amount of \$1,000.00, \$500.00 and \$300.00 with the support of TELUS. In addition, the winner will be invited to perform for the Festival Pontiac Enchante (www.venturinghills.ca) in one of their concerts during the year or at their summer festival in July 2013. As well, the winner will

be invited to participate in a masterclass at this year's festival given by the German pianist Hinrich Alpers (www.hinrichalpers.com).

The Ottawa Chamber Orchestra is looking forward to the final concert of the season and the chance to play with these promising young musicians.

For more information, please contact OCO President Gabriella Csoti (gcsoti@magma.ca) or competition coordinator Bob Mallard (bostomal@rogers.com).

Anita Pari



Fourteen-year-old Anita Pari has charmed audiences with her beautiful interpretations of the piano repertoire. Anita began playing piano at the age of three, composing music at four and playing cello at seven. She is in her fifth year of studies with pianist Andrew Tunis of the School of Music of the University of Ottawa and her sixth year with cellist Anne Contant of the Conservatoire de musique de Gatineau. Among the noteworthy accolades Anita has received are first and second places in piano and strings, respectively, in the ten-year-old age group of the 2009 Canadian Music Competition, third place at the 2011 Virginia Waring International Piano Competition, and first place in both the provincial (2009) and Young Artist (2011) ORMTA provincial competition. This last win led to a concert tour in which Anita was able to share her love of piano music with audiences in Sarnia, Waterloo, North Bay, Burlington, Sault Ste. Marie and Ottawa. In 2010, Anita completed the Performers' Diploma of the Royal Conservatory of Music (piano) with distinction, receiving a gold medal for maintaining the highest average mark in music theory exams among graduating students across Canada. Her piano compositions have been awarded first and second prizes in Canadian national competitions and her Nocturne for Strings, composed in 2010, was performed at the Ottawa International Chamber Music Festival by the Cecilia String Quartet. Anita plans to begin, in the fall of 2012, a Bachelor of Music degree with pianist Santiago Rodriguez, at the Frost School of Music of the University of Miami.

Robin Pan



Currently 14, Robin gave his first solo recital at the age of 12 as part of Amal' Gamme's 2010 "Our Young Virtuosos" concert. During this hour long program with no intermission, Robin captivated his audience with "a sensitivity which was almost touchable coupled by astonishing agility" (Journal de Prévost). This great success has led to a subsequent re-engagement for a solo recital in the 2011-12 season.

Robin began his piano studies at the age of four. Besides consistently winning top prizes and scholarships locally, Robin is an RCM Silver Medalist and the recipient of the 2008 RCM Patricia McLean Memorial Scholarship for obtaining the highest piano exam mark in his category across Canada. Most recently, Robin placed first in the Baroque and Sonata classes of the "Open Piano" category at the Kiwanis Music Festival, and has been awarded scholarships at the provincial and national levels of the Canadian Music Competition. Robin has also performed for a full house at the Dominion-Chalmers United Church of Ottawa.

Robin's dream of playing Beethoven's Third Piano Concerto with live orchestral accompaniment sprouted from his first encounter with the Ottawa Chamber Orchestra Concerto Competition in 2006, when the eight year old became instantaneously mesmerized by the passion and beauty of this concerto upon hearing it for the first time. Robin attributes his rapid musical growth to his current teacher pianist/conductor Maestro Michel Brousseau, as well as his past teachers composer Gabor Finta (theory), Ms. Paulette Price (piano) and Professor Gilles Comeau (piano).

Phillip Cho



Sixteen year old pianist Phillip Cho is a student pursuing the International Baccalaureate Diploma at Colonel By Secondary School. He is currently studying piano with Zhanna Gumenyuk. He began studying piano at the age of seven with Mrs. Cheryl Ranacher.

Phillip has won both the ORMTA Region Zone Competition and ORMTA Provincial Competition in Ottawa. In 2010, he completed his RCM Grade 10 Piano Examinations, winning the ORMTA scholarship with the highest mark in the Ottawa region. An active participant for many years in the Kiwanis Music Festival, Phillip has earned several scholarships and trophies, including the Violet Patten Memorial Trophy in 2011, and was also a prize winner at the 2010 Canadian Music Competition National Finals.

Phillip has been performing at various venues in Ottawa including several embassies and Tabaret Hall of the University of Ottawa as part of the Canadian Music Competition fundraising concerts. In 2011, Phillip was televised nationally on CBC News for his performance during the launch of the new website from the National Arts Centre, Timeline. He also performed in the Rising Stars concert during the 75th Ottawa International Chamber Music Festival. In addition to solo piano, Phillip enjoys participating in chamber music ensembles.

Sharon Ding



Fifteen year old Sharon Ding started taking piano lessons at age five. Currently she is a grade 11 student at Merivale High School.

Winner of countless awards and scholarships, some of her noteworthy accomplishments include being the top winner of her piano grade at the Ontario Provincial Music Festivals Association competitions for three consecutive years and also receiving 90+ marks from international jurors at the National Finals of the Canadian Music Competitions. In addition, she achieved the highest mark in the Royal Conservatory of Music Grade 9 piano examinations for Ontario, and was presented the Silver Medal at Toronto's Glenn Gould Studio. One of her most memorable performances includes her performance as piano soloist with the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony. She was recognized for her musical accomplishments and her contribution to the community when she was presented with the Leading Edge Kitchener-Waterloo Arts Award in 2009. In 2011, she competed at the ORMTA Provincial Final competition, receiving second place.

Sharon participates annually in her school musicals as pianist with the band, which was nominated for a CAPPIES award last year. She especially enjoys working with the singers and dancers, as she feels this is a great way to get involved in the school community. In addition, she serves as Publicity Representative on her school's Student Council and really enjoys organizing most of her school's exciting events. In her spare time, Sharon also enjoys playing the violin, reading, writing and drawing.

Stanley Li



Stanley Li was born in Ottawa, Ontario and began studying piano at the age of four. Fifteen years old, he is currently studying with Galina Shostakovsky for his Performer's ARCT of the Royal Conservatory of Music. Annually competing in the Kiwanis Music Festival, he has won awards such as the Irene Woodburn Wright Trophy and the Adele Starcher Memorial Scholarship. He was a provincial finalist in the Canadian Music Competition in 2008 and in 2010. Stanley frequently participates in the Kanata Music Club. He enjoys experimenting on the piano and guitar, as well as playing hockey and soccer throughout the year.