



CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA ASSOCIATION

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News

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**WINNERS OF 2011 CRAIN-MALING FOUNDATION CHICAGO SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA YOUTH AUDITIONS ANNOUNCED**

Cellist Johannes Gray of Wilmette Wins First Prize

CHICAGO—The Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association announces that cellist Johannes Gray is the first-place winner of the 2011 Crain-Maling Foundation Chicago Symphony Orchestra Youth Auditions. Gray, age 13, is an eighth grader at Wilmette Junior High School and studies with Hans Jørgen Jensen and Gilda Barston. His winning performance was on the cello, with the second movement of Prokofiev's *Symphonie Concertante in E Minor, Op. 125*. As this year's winner, Gray will appear as a soloist in a Chicago Symphony Orchestra education concert during the 2011/12 season.

The young cellist was one of six talented musicians from around Illinois who auditioned on Saturday, March 5, 2011, on Orchestra Hall's Armour Stage.

Johannes Gray, currently in the eighth grade at Wilmette Junior High School, began his musical studies at age 2. He is involved with his school's Latin Club and Certamen, a Latin sport. Yo-Yo Ma was his inspiration to start playing the cello and his favorite composer is Brahms. He is interested in playing music that is heavily influenced by the struggles in Soviet Russia. Outside of performing, Gray enjoys playing chamber music with his family, bird watching, and photography; other interests include skiing, playing ping-pong, and learning languages.

Laura Park, age 16, of Palatine and a student who is home schooled, was named the first alternate for her performance of the first movement from Sibelius's *Violin Concerto in D Minor, Op. 47*. Park is a junior and studies with Almita and Roland Vamos, and Marko Dreher.

Violinist **Kelly Talim**, age 15, of Buffalo Grove, was chosen as second alternate for her performance of the first movement of Bartok's *Violin Concerto No. 2*. Talim is a freshman at Adlai E. Stevenson High School, and she studies with Cyrus Forough.

The other four finalists were (in alphabetical order): violist **Stephanie Block**, age 16, of Barrington, a junior at Barrington High School; violinist **Jennifer Cha**, age 14, of Naperville, a freshman at Neuqua Valley High School; and violinist **Gallia Kastner**, age 13, of Arlington Heights, an eighth grader at St. James School.

The CSO is grateful to the Crain-Maling Foundation as its title sponsor of the Youth Auditions. Special thanks to Beatrice Crain and Dr. Michael Maling for their enduring support and continued generosity.

RICCARDO MUTI
Music Director

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The Crain-Maling Foundation supports educational institutions, programming and scholarships, the arts, cultural events and festivals, medical translational research, venues for spiritual development, and human service organizations. The Crain-Maling Foundation is proud to sponsor the CSO Youth Auditions, a competition that shines the spotlight on many of the young musicians who will delight the world through their future musical performances.

The **Crain-Maling Foundation CSO Youth Auditions**, presented by The League of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association, offer an invaluable experience to young musicians. The program provides contact with other student instrumentalists, an opportunity to be evaluated by music professionals, and the chance to perform onstage with the CSO. Additionally, three Youth Auditions participants receive scholarships for further instrumental study: one applicant receives a full six-week summer scholarship to Interlochen Arts Camp in Michigan, provided by the League, and Interlochen Center for the Arts; one student receives a two-week scholarship to the Midwest Young Artists Summer Music Camp, held on the campus of Carthage College in Kenosha, Wisconsin; and one student receives a six-week summer scholarship to Brevard Music Center in Brevard, North Carolina. Scholarships are awarded to promising students whom the judges determine will most benefit from the experience. The Auditions rotate instruments every three years, focusing on strings, piano or winds/brass/percussion.

The Chicago Symphony Orchestra has a long history of presenting competitions for young musicians. Music Director Frederick Stock initiated the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Youth Auditions during the 1919/20 season. The winners would perform on the Children's Concert Series, which was founded in the same season. In the early 1980s, the auditions were renamed Illinois Young Performers' Competition, under which name they took place until 1994. Past winners of the Youth Auditions competition include pianists Walter Liberace, Eugene Istomin, and Herbie Hancock; violinist Rachel Barton Pine; and several members of the CSO—former concertmaster Samuel Magad, former principal second violin Joseph Golan, former cellist Philip Blum, and harpist Lynne Turner. The 2012 Crain-Maling Foundation CSO Youth Auditions will feature piano.

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