



Press Release

For release: Monday 29 April 2013

Royal Philharmonic Society Young Musicians Programme

Support for String Players

- **Wu Quartet wins inaugural RPS Albert and Eugenie Frost Prize**
- **Benjamin Baker awarded RPS Emily Anderson Prize**

Outstanding young string players have been recognised through two special awards as part of the Royal Philharmonic Society Young Musicians Programme.

The **Wu Quartet** is the inaugural winner of the **RPS Albert and Eugenie Frost Prize** for young string players. Violinist **Benjamin Baker** has won the longstanding RPS Emily Anderson Prize for young violinists, whose previous winners include Alina Ibragimova. Selected following recent YCAT Trust auditions, the Wu Quartet will receive £5,000 towards professional development, and Benjamin Baker £2,500.

The RPS Albert and Eugenie Frost Prize, specifically for violin, viola or cello players (or in combination as a Trio or Quartet) is a new addition to the Society's burgeoning Young Musicians Programme which offers support to talented young musicians when it helps them most, from starting at music colleges to establishing their professional careers.

The Society makes an annual commitment to around 30 young musicians, helping to develop the next generation of outstanding musical talent with practical and creative support tailored to individual needs. Help comes in many guises: grants to buy instruments; bursaries for specialist training at home and abroad; professional mentoring from the best in the business; performance opportunities; awards and prizes to celebrate and develop new talent.

The RPS Albert and Eugenie Frost Prize is supported by the music trust set up in memory of businessman and music philanthropist Albert Frost and his wife Eugenie. Frost, who died aged 96 in 2010, was a keen violinist with a passion for chamber music and during his lifetime, was an active supporter of a range of musical and other causes. In his later years he was a member of the Arts Council and the appeal committee of the Royal Opera House, a deputy chairman of the Association for Business Sponsorship of the Arts, chairman of the Robert Mayer Trust for Youth and Music and of the City of London Carl Flesch international violin

competition, and was a driving force in establishing the Loan Fund for Musical Instruments to encourage young British string players. The Trust has also offered additional support to the RPS Emily Anderson Prize.

The Wu Quartet

The Wu Quartet (Qian Wu (violin) Edward Brenton (violin) Matthew Kettle (viola) and Joe Zeitlin (cello) gained entry into the European Chamber Music Academy in 2011, allowing it the opportunity to study at conservatoires around Europe with some of the world's finest chamber musicians; it is now being mentored by its founder Hatto Beyerle (Alban Berg Quartet), and is also studying for an International Artist Diploma at the Royal Northern College of Music. The quartet performs regularly across the UK and Europe. In 2011 it made its Wigmore Hall debut, returning in July 2012 to play as part of the IMF Prussia Cove 40th anniversary celebrations. They have performed at the Purcell Room, Music in the Round, the Arnold Schoenberg Centre in Vienna, the International Concert Hall in Beijing, Santa Croce in Florence, Snape Maltings, Buckingham Palace and at many chamber music societies. www.wuquartet.com for full biography and photos

Benjamin Baker

Born in New Zealand in 1990, Benjamin first picked up a violin aged just three years old. At the age of seven he played with Nigel Kennedy who recommended The Yehudi Menuhin School where he subsequently accepted a scholarship. Benjamin was privileged to be the last student at the school to know the late Lord Menuhin who glowingly wrote him a personal note: *'Knowing you will do wonderfully well'*.

At 12 years old he made his concerto debut at the Mozart Festival in Istanbul. Since then he has performed to great acclaim internationally including concerts in Turkey, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Switzerland, France, Denmark, Sweden and New Zealand as well as major venues in England.

Competition successes have included Second Prize from The Postacchini International Violin Competition in Italy. In 2012 Benjamin was awarded 1st Prize in the Royal Overseas League Competition string section and most recently in March 2013 was awarded 1st Prize and Audience Prize from the Windsor Festival International String Competition. www.benbakerviolin.co.uk

Royal Philharmonic Society Young Artists Programme

The Royal Philharmonic Society receives no public funding and its work for young artists is supported by donations. The Bowerman Charitable Trust and Selina and David Marks have recently become the first patrons of the RPS Young Musicians Programme. Further information about how to support the programme can be found at rps200.org

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