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For immediate release:

Young Artist Competition Winners to Play the Mondavi Center

March 3, 2008; Davis, California—Seven of Northern California’s finest young musicians will sing and play works by **Beethoven, Liszt, Mozart, Schumann**, and more when the **Young Artist Competition Winners** come to the **Robert and Margrit Mondavi Center for the Performing Arts** at **UC Davis** on March 30. The young musicians submitted recordings last fall and performed in January before a renowned panel of judges including **Lara Downes**, pianist and Mondavi Center artist in residence. The winners, who range in age from 10 to 17, will receive a variety of scholarships and awards, including the opportunity to perform at this special concert.

The event will begin at 2 pm on March 30 in the Mondavi Center’s Studio Theatre on the UC Davis campus. Tickets are available from the Mondavi Center Ticket Office at 530.754.ARTS (2787) or online at MondaviArts.org. The concert is presented as a Mondavi Center Special Event.

The Young Artists Competition Winners for 2007-08 are **Amber Brent**, mezzo soprano, Vocal Prize; **Evie Chen**, violin, Instrumental Prize, Senior Division; **Daniel Hsu**, Piano Prize, Junior Division; **Christine Kim**, Piano Prize, Senior Division; **Clark Pang**, cellist, Instrumental Prize, Junior Division; **Nicole Raynor**, soprano, Vocal Prize; **Stephen Waarts**, violin, Grand Prize, Junior Division; and **Jason Zhang**, piano, Grand Prize, Senior Division.

Open to pianists, instrumentalists, and chamber ensembles enrolled in grades 4-12 and vocalists enrolled in grades 9-12, the Young Artists Competition was judged by jurors including Downes, **Sheri Greenawald**, soprano, director of the **San Francisco Opera Center**; members of the **Cypress String Quartet**, Ensemble in Residence at **San Jose State University**; **Paul Perry**, artistic director of the Music in the Mountains Festival; and **Timm Rolek**, artistic director of the **Sacramento Opera** and Lake Tahoe Music Festival.

Prizes for the Junior Division (grades 4-8) include the Grand Prize of \$1,000, awarded to the overall first-prize winner at the discretion of the jury, and the first place prize of \$350 in each category (piano, instrumental, and chamber music). Prizes for the Senior Division include the Grand Prize of \$3,000, a concerto performance with orchestra at the Lake Tahoe Music Festival, and a recording session in the Mondavi Center’s Jackson Hall. First place winners in each category in the Senior Division will earn a prize of \$1,000. All winners have the opportunity to perform at the Young Artists Competition Winners concert.

Mezzo soprano and Vocal Prize winner Amber Brent was born in 1992 and is a sophomore at **Granite Bay High School**, where she is a member of the school's award-winning choir. In addition to her vocal studies with **Robin Fisher** at **California State University, Sacramento**, she also enjoys studying cello and piano.

Violinist **Evie Chen**, Instrumental Prize winner in the Senior Division, is 16 years old and a junior at **Palo Alto High School**. She began studying the violin at age four and is currently a student of **Jenny Rudin**. She has received numerous awards, including the American String Teachers Association Solo and State competitions 2001, 2002, 2006, and 2007. In 2004, she was a featured artist with the **San Francisco Chamber Orchestra** and also has given solo and chamber performances at the Soestenberg International Music Festival in Holland. Chen performed as soloist with the **Palo Alto Chamber Orchestra** in 2006 and will be a featured soloist with PACO again this season, performing **Vaughn William's** *The Lark Ascending*.

Junior Division Piano Prize winner Daniel Hsu, age 10, is currently a student of **Santa Clara University** Professor of Music **Hans Boepple**. He started piano at age six with **Larisa Kagan** and has also studied with **Olya Katsman**. He has won numerous competitions, including the 2007 Menuhin-Dowling Young Artist Competition, the El Camino Youth Symphony Piano Concerto Competition, the All-State Music Teachers Association of California Piano Concerto Competition, the California Association of Professional Music Teachers All-State Bartok and Contemporary Music competition, the San Francisco Chopin Competition, the Fremont Cultural Arts Young Artist Showcase, and the Taghioff Prize of the Fremont Symphony Concerto Competition. He has performed with numerous orchestras, including the **El Camino Youth Symphony Sinfonietta Orchestra**, the **Fremont Symphony**, and the **Castro Valley Chamber Orchestra**. He enjoys reading, collecting toy cars, and playing piano duets with his brother and sister.

Piano Prize winner in the Senior Division Christine Kim, age 16, is a student of **John McCarthy** at the **San Francisco Conservatory of Music**. She began playing the piano at age 5 and made her concerto debut with the **El Camino Youth Symphony** at age 11. She has received numerous awards, including third prize in the 2007 Virginia Waring International Piano Competition, grand prize in the Korea Times Competition, and first prizes in the Olympiad of Arts, Chopin Foundation of San Francisco, and Ross McKee piano competitions. In addition to her commitment to the piano, Kim is also a cellist, and enjoys reading and running cross-country.

Clark Pang, cellist, is the winner of the Junior Division Instrumental category, but will be unable to perform at the March 30 event because he has been selected as a national finalist in the Music Teachers National Association competition in Denver. He is a student of **Jonathan Koh** at San Francisco Conservatory and a seventh grader at **Orinda Intermediate School**.

Soprano and Vocal Prize winner Nicole Raynor, age 16, is a student in the Young Musicians Program at **UC Berkeley**, where she studies with **David Tigner**. She has performed at the White House as a recipient of the 2007 Coming Up Taller Awards, and was a first place winner of the National Association of Negro Musicians in 2007 as well as the 2007 Junior Bach Festival. She is in the ninth grade at **Maybeck High School** in Berkeley and plans to attend a music conservatory upon graduation.

Violinist Stephen Waarts, Grand Prize winner in the Junior Division, is 11 years old and studies with **Li Lin** of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. Recent awards include first place in the 2008 Young Artist Competition of **Diablo Symphony Orchestra**, winner of the Taghioff Prize in the 2007 Fremont Symphony Young Artist Competition, and the 2007 Menuhin-Dowling Young Musicians' String Competition. Waarts was selected to perform in the 2007 Junior Bach Festival and the Music at Menlo 2006 and 2007 Summer Institutes. In his free time, Waart enjoys reading, math, gymnastics, biking, drawing, and playing with his twin brother and his younger sister.

Pianist Jason Zhang, age 17, is the Grand Prize Winner in the Senior Division. He is a student of **Erna Gulabyan** at the **San Francisco Conservatory of Music**. Zhang made his concerto debut with the **Danbury**

Symphony at age 10, and has since won numerous awards, including fourth prize of the Los Angeles International Liszt Piano Competition, first prize of the Music Teachers Association of California State Piano Solo Competition, and first prize in the El Camino Youth Symphony Concerto Competition. He is a senior at **Henry M. Gunn High School** in Palo Alto and in addition to his piano studies, enjoys basketball and creating rap music.

The Young Artists Competition is a part of the Mondavi Center's Arts Education Program, which is committed to enriching the lives of children and adults through a broad range of arts-related activities. The program strives to make the arts as informative, accessible, and enjoyable as possible for audiences in the capital region, reaching more than 35,000 children and adults each year through its Pre-performance Lectures, School Matinee performances, classroom visits by artists in the Artists on Tour program, hands-on instruction in K-12 classrooms through the ArtsBridge program, and more.

The program for the March 30 concert will be:

- Daniel Hsu, piano: Robert Schumann: *Papillons, Op. 2*
- Stephen Waarts, violin: **Henryk Wienawski**: Concerto No. 1, Op. 14 (first movement), with Lara Downes, piano
- Nicole Raynor, soprano: **Henri Duparc**: "L'Extase"; Douglas Moore: "Dearest Mama" from *The Ballad of Baby Doe*, with Lara Downes, piano
- Christine Kim, piano: Ludwig van Beethoven: Sonata in E major, Op. 109 (third movement)
- Amber Brent, mezzo soprano: W.A. Mozart: "Non so piu cosa son" from *Le Nozze di Figaro*; **Armstrong Gibbs**: "The Cherry Tree", with Lara Downes, piano
- Evie Chen, violin: **Camille Saint-Saens**: Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso, with Lara Downes, piano
- Jason Zhang, piano: Franz Liszt: *Mephisto Waltz No. 1*

"We are again pleased to be hosting the Young Artist Competition Winners contest, and to be able to offer support and encouragement to these talented young musicians," said Mondavi Center Executive Director **Don Roth**.

What: Young Artists Competition Winners
When: Sunday, March 30 • 2 pm
Where: Jackson Hall
Robert and Margrit Mondavi Center for the Performing Arts
University of California, Davis
Admission: \$16 Adults • \$8 Students, Children
Tickets/Info: 530.754.ARTS (2787)
866.754.ARTS (toll-free)
<http://www.MondaviArts.org>
530.754.5402 [TDD]

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