

Heida Hermanns International Piano Competition winners

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Connecticut Alliance for Music announces the winners of the 2011 Heida Hermanns International Piano Competition held recently at Westport Town Hall. The Westport Arts Center and WSHU supported this annual event, traditionally bringing together young musicians from around the world, many of whom have garnered top prizes in competitions and performed with leading orchestras and chamber groups worldwide.

The awards were presented by noted pianist Frederic Chiu, a competition winner in 1986, who served as Honorary Chairman for the competition, and CAM Artistic Director Doris Goltzer. The \$5,000 first prize was awarded to Yue Chu of China; second prize of \$2,500 to Zhenni Li, also of China; and the third prize of \$1,500 to Korean-born Esther Park. Honorable mention awards of \$500 each were given to Silvie Cheng, of Japan, and Soveon Park and Sejoon Park, both of Korea.

The prizes, totaling \$10,000 were provided by The Artur and Heida Hermanns Holde Foundation, Nancy and Roger M. Sachs, Allen and Claudine Siegel, Fred Bering, John and Cindy Vaccaro, and Joe and Marion Wertheim. This year, a new special award was donated by Kristen Foster to bring back the first-prize winner to perform in a concert for the community to be held at Westport's Steinway Gallery. This free concert, featuring first-prize winner Yue Che, will be announced in the spring.

Heida Hermanns, a 40-year Westport resident, was a celebrated concert pianist and premier music lover and promoter. In 1973, she founded the competition, which has since been named in her honor. Prominent past winners of the competitions, along with Frederic Chiu, include pianists Andrew Armstrong, Max Levinson, and Christopher O'Reilly; clarinetists Igor Begelman, Charles Neidich and Todd Palmer, and saxophonist Otis Murphy.



The 2011 winners seated from left: Zhenni Li, and Silvie Cheng; back row: Sejoon Park, Esther Park, Soveon Park, and Yue Chu. Photo by Dave Matlow