

Winner in First Concerto, Aria Competition to Perform

By Edie Stern

Hopkins Symphony Orchestra

Two juniors in the Krieger School of Arts and Sciences, bassoonist Katie FitzGibbon, of Rockville, Md., and pianist Ji Hea Hwang, a native of Cheong-ju, Korea, have won the first Hopkins Concerto and Aria Competition.

Their prize is a performance with the Hopkins Symphony Chamber Orchestra at 7:30 p.m. on Sunday, April 6, in Homewood's Shriver Hall. FitzGibbon will play Carl Maria von Weber's Concerto for Bassoon and Orchestra in F Major, Opus 75. Hwang will play Camille Saint-Saens' Piano Concerto No. 2 in G Minor, Opus 22. Vladimir Lande will conduct.

The Hopkins Concerto and Aria Competition was the brainchild of senior Hernan del Aguila, who wanted to give Homewood students a chance "to further their musical studies, gain experience in auditioning for professional musicians and receive public recognition for their work."

The competition was open to undergraduate and graduate students not pursuing a degree in music. Del Aguila consulted with fellow students, staff and faculty about his idea; created a business plan for the competition; and obtained funding through an Arts Innovation Grant, a university initiative overseen by Winston Tabb, vice provost for the arts, and Eileen Soskin, associate vice provost for the arts. He built a Web site, supervised the applications and auditions, and is training another student to take over the competition next season.

The winners were chosen from an original field of 21 contestants, based on an application and audition. The judges were HSO music director Jed Gaylin and HSO timpanist and musicologist Max Derrickson.

FitzGibbon, a neuroscience major, has played in the HSO since 2006 and is also a member of the Peabody Wind Ensemble. She has performed with the National Festival Orchestra and National High School Wind Ensemble at Carnegie Hall, and has recorded with the Peabody Wind Ensemble and with the Columbia Union College's New England Youth Ensemble and Columbia Collegiate Choir. In 2004, she was a finalist in the Landon Competition for Young Woodwind Performers and a semifinalist in the Maryland Distinguished Talent-in-the-Arts Competition. She has studied bassoon with retired National Symphony Orchestra bassoonist Linda Harwell and Baltimore



Hernan del Aguila, who conceived the competition, with winners Katie FitzGibbon and Ji Hea Hwang. All three will perform at the Hopkins Symphony Chamber Orchestra concert on April 6. Photo by David Friedlander

Symphony Orchestra principal bassoonist Phillip Kolker.

Hwang, an East Asia studies major, was born in Korea, where she began studying piano at the age of 3. Since turning 5, she has won grand prizes in the Hyundai National Music Competition and Cheong-ju City Music Association Competition, and first prize in the Korea Times Competition. At age 9, she performed as a soloist with Cheong-ju Youth Orchestra. In 1998, she moved to the United States and entered the Juilliard Pre-College, where she studied with Frank Levy and was a recipient of the Relson Family Scholarship in piano. She won first prize in the Ithaca College Piano Competition, concerto division, and second prize in the solo division. She has given solo recitals and chamber music concerts at the Paul Recital Hall, Morse Recital Hall and Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall. In 2005, she performed as a soloist with the Ithaca College Chamber Orchestra. She currently studies piano with Peabody faculty member Corey McVicar.

Hernan del Aguila, who was born in Lima, Peru, grew up in Hurley, N.Y. At Johns Hopkins, he has played oboe in the HSO and its chamber orchestra, as well as in the Johns Hopkins Wind Ensemble and the pit orchestra for the Barnstormers theater troupe. He sang in the Vocal Chords and served as its music director. He also was a drum major for the Capital Regiment Drum and Bugle Corps in the 2006 Drum Corps International Summer Music Games and is now a music and visual consultant for several high school marching bands. He will graduate from Johns Hopkins in May with a degree in international relations, earned in three years. Then he will pursue a second bachelor's degree, in music education, at Towson University. He has just been awarded the Johns Hopkins University 2008 President's Commendation for Achievement in the Arts. At the April 6 chamber concert, he will play Saint-Saens' Oboe Sonata.

Tickets for the April 6 concert are free for Johns Hopkins students; \$6 for Johns Hopkins staff, faculty and alumni, other students and seniors (60+); and \$8 general admission.

For more about the competition winners, the April 6 performance and all HSO programs, call 410-516-6542, write to hso@jhu.edu or go to www.jhu.edu/jhso.

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