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NEWS RELEASE

Purse valued at more than \$20,000 awarded to Young musicians at the 2016 National Arts Centre Orchestra Bursary Competition

May 22, 2016

OTTAWA, May 22, 2016 — On May 22, at 2:00 p.m. Music students aged 16-24, from the National Capital Region competed for a chance to win prizes worth more than \$20,000 in the 26th annual National Arts Centre Orchestra's 2016 Bursary Competition.

This year's winners are:

- 2016 NAC Orchestra Bursary (\$7,000) – **Bryan Cheng**, cello (age 18)
- Crabtree Foundation Award (\$5,000) – Jaeyoung Chong, cello (age 21)
- Friends of the NAC Orchestra Award (\$3,000) – Ethan Balakrishnan, violin (age 17)

- The NAC Orchestra Vic Pomer Award (\$2,000) – Carmen Bruno, cello (age 24)
- The Sturdevant Orchestral Excerpts Prize (\$1,500) – Jaeyoung Chong, cello (age 21)
- The Piccolo Prix (\$1,000) – Jaewon Seo, violin (age 19)

- Honourable mentions (\$250 each) – Daniel Wade, cello (age 17), Sarah Veber, harp (age 20), Aiden Russell, cello (age 19)

The winner, Bryan Cheng, had this to say: "I'd like to thank my teacher in Berlin, Jens Peter Maintz, for helping me to prepare for the Bursary, my sister and duo partner, Silvie Cheng, for being the best one-woman orchestra, and my parents for supporting me unconditionally. I felt great after the performance, and the NAC Orchestra Bursary competition jury members also made me feel at home when they spoke to me after the award ceremony. They were so encouraging and supportive. I plan to use the prize to record Cheng² Duo's second album and to commission new Canadian works for our 2017 project. I look forward to being back in Ottawa much more in the future to collaborate with the Orchestra and perform at the NAC!"

Roderick Bell, Chairman of the NAC Orchestra Bursary Committee, has this to say: “The NAC Orchestra Bursary competition aims to recognize not just a level of musicianship achieved but, equally important, to encourage future potential. The level of the string playing at this year’s competition was exceptionally heartening. To hear young musicians of 17 and 18 years of age already playing at this impressive level is truly encouraging for the future of our orchestras.”

Winners were chosen based on their skill at performing short orchestral excerpts and movements from a concerto or sonata for their instrument.

The 2016 Bursary competition was open to students of string instruments, including the violin, viola, cello, double bass and harp as the second year in a two-year rotation format inaugurated last year. In 2015, students studying wind, brass and percussion instruments competed.

Students were selected from closed preliminary auditions held on May 20th and 21st at the National Arts Centre.

The jury comprised of Chair Roderick Bell (non-voting), five NAC Orchestra musicians, Ross Francis of the Friends of the NAC Orchestra (non-voting) and two special guest jurors Angela Schwarzkopf, from Toronto and André Massicotte, former Radio-Canada producer deliberated to select this year’s award winners.

Among the prizes is the newly titled Sturdevant Prize for Orchestral Excerpts named after Douglas (Pace) Sturdevant who recently retired from the NAC after a long and devoted career of music and education.

The Friends of the NAC Orchestra supports the **Young Musician Performance Award** of \$500 that is presented to the Bursary Prize winner at the annual Bursary Benefit concert the following year.

ABOUT THE BURSARY AWARD

The National Arts Centre Orchestra Bursary Competition was first held in 1981. The prime objective of the competition is to encourage the pursuit of excellence on the part of young instrumentalists aspiring to orchestral careers. Each year, a jury identifies deserving recipients through audition and competition.

The Bursary was created in 1979 by members of the NAC Orchestra as a gesture of appreciation to the audiences who had been so supportive of it during its first decade. It is meant to provide recognition and financial support to help further the development of young musicians who have connections to the National Capital Region (NCR). Funding for the award came originally from two sources: the NAC Orchestra Bursary Fund created in 1979 by the members of the National Arts Centre Orchestra and the NAC Orchestra Trust (originally the Capital Trust founded in 1932 to benefit the Ottawa Philharmonic Society which on its demise in 1970 transferred the income to the NAC). It is now known as the NAC Orchestra Trust Fund.

In 1981, one prize of \$1,000 – the NAC Orchestra Bursary – was awarded. In subsequent years, thanks to the growth of the Fund as well as the generosity of private organizations and individuals, prizes now total more than \$20,000.