

Chloe Chua, 11, surprised by Menuhin Competition win

Singaporean violinist shares the first prize in the junior division with Australian Christian Li, 10

Yip Wai Yee

Eleven-year-old Singaporean violinist Chloe Chua, who won the first prize in the junior division of the Menuhin Competition last Friday, told The Straits Times via e-mail that she was "surprised" by her win.

She said: "Although I enjoyed myself on the stage and felt that I have done my best, I was still very surprised and excited when I heard that I was awarded first prize, due to the high standard of performance given by so many other contestants."

Dubbed the Olympics of the Violin, the Menuhin Competition is the world's leading competition for young musicians under the age of 22.

Founded by legendary violinist Yehudi Menuhin in 1983, the competition is held every two years in a different city around the world.

Chloe shares the win with 10-year-old Australian boy Christian Li. This is the first time in the competition's history that the first prize in the junior division is being shared.

The results of the competition were announced in Geneva, Switzerland, last Friday.

Along with the winning title, Chloe and Christian will each receive 10,000 Swiss francs (S\$13,500) and a one-year loan of a fine old Italian violin by Florian Leonhard Fine Violins.

At the junior final round last Friday, Chloe played Self In Mind by Jaehyuck Choi and Vivaldi's The Four Seasons: Winter.

She will be celebrating with a three-week vacation travelling around Britain with her parents. Her father works in the food-and-beverage sector and her mother is a piano teacher. She is an only child.

Chloe joined the **Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts' School Of Young Talents' Gifted Young Violinist Preparatory Course** when she was four.

Even before winning the Menuhin Competition, she had already amassed a slew of music awards, including first prize at the Andrea Postacchini International Violin Competition last year and the Thailand International String Competition in 2015.

President Halimah Yacob congratulated Chloe on Facebook last Saturday, saying that her "journey to success is an inspiration to many Singaporeans".

Minister for Culture, Community and Youth Grace Fu also congratulated her on her win. She wrote on Facebook: "Wishing you all the best Chloe, and hoping that everything will fall into place for you in your music journey!"

Other Singaporeans have won prizes at the Menuhin Competition before.

Gabriel Ng won the Bach Prize at the competition held in Beijing in 2012, while Ning Kam won first prize in the junior division at Folkestone, England, in 1991.

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Chloe Chua will receive \$13,500 and a one-year loan of a fine old Italian violin by Florian Leonhard Fine Violins as her prize. PHOTO: NANYANG ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS