

Press Release



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For immediate release

21 year-old 'cellist Michael Petrov wins the European Suggia Prize in Porto, Portugal

- Guilhermina Suggia, the Portuguese 'cellist 1885 – 1950, left legacies for 'cellists in her home town, Porto, Portugal and in the UK. The UK Suggia Gift is administered by the Musicians Benevolent Fund
- The winner of the 2010 UK Gift was Michael Petrov, a 21 year old undergraduate at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. He was nominated to compete at the International Suggia Prize at Casa da Música, Porto
- Last week on Friday 8 July, Petrov won the Suggia Prize at the Casa da Música in Porto competing against other outstanding European talent. He won €10,000, the use of Suggia's Montagnana 'cello for two years and a solo performance with Orchestra at the Casa da Música

Throughout her career Suggia was a champion of young artists and aimed to advance the education of outstanding young 'cellists. She worked with Casals and was famously painted by Augustus John.

Michael Petrov was born in Bulgaria and began to play the cello at the age of six. He came to England to study at the Menuhin School and was then awarded a scholarship to the Guildhall School of Music and Drama where he now studies with Louise Hopkins. He joins a list of major talents who have previously received the UK Suggia Gift including Jacqueline Du Pré, Steven Isserlis, Robert Cohen, Raphael Wallfisch, Julian Lloyd Webber and Guy Johnston.

Susan Monks, principal 'cello of BBC Symphony Orchestra who helped select Petrov to go to Portugal said *"he is a remarkable and absolutely outstanding talent. Already an artist of exceptional maturity and distinction, his playing is characterised by an intense commitment and passion. In essence, a Suggia prize winner of world class ability. The Fund has played a vital role in his professional development."*

In order to continue to encourage the development of promising younger 'cellists in the UK, the Fund also runs a junior Suggia Gift, offering £1,500 to the best cellist under 18 heard at audition. In 2011 this was awarded to Indira Grier.

The Musicians Benevolent Fund continues to help outstanding young musicians through a range of award schemes. For more information, please visit: helpmusicians.org.uk

Notes to Editors:

About the Musicians Benevolent Fund

The Musicians Benevolent Fund is a unique charity which provides essential help to musicians of all ages across a range of genres. The Fund supports music professionals throughout their working lives when a crisis such as an accident or illness can have a devastating impact and in later life, with the challenges that

disability or growing older can bring. It also supports young aspiring musicians to help them enter the profession with the best chance of success.

About the Guilhermina Suggia Gift

The Guilhermina Suggia Gift is named after Guilhermina Suggia, a Portuguese 'cellist. She was born in Portugal in 1885 and from 1907 to 1913 lived and worked in Paris with Spanish cellist Pablo Casals. Perhaps the most famous depiction of Guilhermina Suggia is the oil painting, entitled Madame Suggia, by Augustus John, which is now part of the Tate Collection. She died in 1950 but throughout her life she enjoyed a spectacular career - touring extensively in Europe. Her last British performance was in 1949 in Bournemouth.

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