



Rachel's Star Performance

Sydney's Rachel Siu has become the youngest musician to win the National Youth Concerto Competition in 33 years.

Eleven-year-old Rachel, a member of the Sydney Conservatorium of Music's Rising Stars program (part of the **Open Academy**), claimed the final of the nation's most significant award for young strings players in Brisbane on Monday night.

She played Haydn's Cello Concerto in C major.

The other two finalists were from Victoria, 17-year-old James Dong (violin) and 15-year-old Adele Xiang (violin). The competition for performers 17 years and under was started in 1976. It has launched the careers of some of Australia's most eminent musicians, including **Richard Tognetti, Zoe Black and Nicholas Milton**.

It is the second year in a row a Con Rising Star has won. Violinist **Emily Sun**, 18, took top honours in 2008. Rachel, a year six student at Haberfield Primary School, lives in Concord.

Her proud mother **Vivian Gu** said Rachel treated the event as "just another performance."

"She didn't believe she would win so she said she would just play. That decision took away a lot of pressure. And she played beautifully."

The Dean and Principal of The Con, **Professor Kim Walker**, said Rachel's achievement was representative of the high level of talent being nurtured through the Rising Stars program.

"The early brilliance of these young students is quite amazing and very inspirational," Professor Walker said.

"Our Rising Stars Coordinator **Joy Lee** spotted Rachel as a future virtuoso when she was just five years old!

"We are finding the talent pool is growing, and the combination of that talent and the fine mentoring by highly experienced lecturers as **Susan Blake** and **Robin Wilson** is proving a magical combination for this program."

Last week Con postgraduate student, **Ji Won Kim**, won the ABC Young Performer of the Year Award.

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