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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
SAN FRANCISCO, May 4, 2010

**SAN FRANCISCO CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC STUDENTS
WIN IN PRESTIGIOUS OSLO COMPETITION**

**2nd Prize in both Junior and Senior Divisions of Yehudi Menuhin International Violin
Competition**

San Francisco Conservatory of Music Preparatory Division student **Stephen Waarts** received 2nd prize in the 2010 Junior Yehudi Menuhin International Violin competition held in Oslo, Norway this past week. This is the leading competition for young violinists in the world. **Nigel Armstrong**, an alumnus of the Conservatory's Preparatory Division, received 2nd prize at the Senior level. Stephen is a current student and Nigel is a former student of **Li Lin**.

Stephen Waarts also studies with Alexander Barantschik, concertmaster of the San Francisco Symphony, and Baroque specialist Elizabeth Blumenstock, concertmaster of Philharmonia Baroque. He has won 1st prize at a number of U.S. music competitions, including both the Palo Alto Philharmonic Concerto Movement Competition and the KDFC Classical Star Search Competition in 2009. In January 2010 Stephen won the Felix Khuner Young Artist Concerto Competition, ages 18 and under, of the Prometheus Symphony Orchestra; the Young Artist Competition (under 23) of the Fremont Symphony Orchestra; and he also received an invitation to perform in the 2010 Junior Bach Festival. He recently performed on the nationally syndicated radio show "From the Top" with pianist Christopher O'Riley, at Vladimir Spivakov's festival in Moscow, at Carnegie Hall and at Festival del Sole in Napa. Solo performances with orchestra include the Saratoga and Silicon Valley symphonies, the Diablo Symphony Orchestra and the San Francisco Chamber Orchestra. Stephen also studies piano and composition. His

program for the competition included music by Bach, Brahms, Chausson, Dvorak, Grieg and legendary Norwegian violinist Ole Bull, whose bicentenary is being celebrated in 2010. Stephen is a student at the School for Independent Learners in Los Altos; in his free time he likes reading, math, drawing, table tennis, and playing with his younger sister and twin brother.

Nigel Armstrong grew up in Sonoma and is currently studying with Robert Lipsett at the Colburn School in Los Angeles, where he is concertmaster of both the Colburn Orchestra and the American Youth Symphony. He was a student at the New England Conservatory, where he studied with Donald Weilerstein, and at the Walnut Hill School for the Arts, where he graduated in June 2007. He has won several prizes at national competitions, including 1st prize at the concerto competitions of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra and the Downey Symphony Orchestra. He received the first annual Young Artists Award from the Berkeley Symphony, as well as the first American Philharmonic Young Artist Award. As a soloist Nigel has performed with the Boston Pops, the Reno Symphony, the Berkeley Symphony Orchestra, the American Philharmonic and the Bozeman Symphony Orchestra, and has been featured on “From the Top.” His program in Oslo featured music by Bach, Beethoven, Mozart, Nordheim and Ravel, as well as the Sibelius *Violin Concerto*. Nigel also enjoys playing and composing jazz and fiddle tunes for violin and piano. He has participated in the Mark O'Connor fiddle camp in Nashville and competed in various fiddle contests. His composition “Song of the Zoonks” was awarded Honorable Mention by the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP) in the 2002 Young Composers Morton Gould Awards.

The Yehudi Menuhin International Violin Competition is the world’s leading competition for violinists under the age of 22. Founded in 1983 by Lord Menuhin, the competition seeks to carry on his legacy and passion by bringing together musicians from all over the world in an exceptional atmosphere of learning and exchange. This year’s festivities included many free education and outreach events, turning the competition into an international festival of the violin. Jurors included such international stars as Renaud Capucon, Pamela Frank, Hu Kun, Kyoko Takezawa, Arve Tellefsen and Erich Gruenberg, who served as chairman. The Competition rounds were streamed live on the internet and will be available for review until the

end of May at <http://www.nmh.no/menuhincompetition2010>. Go to each individual competitor's profile and scroll to the bottom to review their performances.

About San Francisco Conservatory of Music:

Founded in 1917, the San Francisco Conservatory of Music is the oldest conservatory in the American West and has earned an international reputation for producing musicians of the highest caliber. Notable alumni include Yehudi Menuhin, Isaac Stern, Jeffrey Kahane and Aaron Jay Kernis, among others. The Conservatory offers its more than 400 collegiate and graduate students fully accredited bachelor's and master's degree programs in composition and instrumental and vocal performance. Its Preparatory Division provides exceptionally high standards of musical excellence and personal attention to more than 550 younger students. The Conservatory's faculty and students give more than 400 public performances each year, most of which are offered to the public at no charge. Formerly located at 19th Avenue and Ortega Street in San Francisco's Sunset District, the Conservatory moved to its new home in the heart of San Francisco's Civic Center in 2006. The new school is an architectural and acoustical masterwork for the Conservatory's second century. Its Caroline H. Hume Concert Hall was lauded by the *New York Times* as the "most enticing classical-music setting" in the San Francisco Bay Area. For more information, visit www.sfc.edu.

