

Feature**A conversation with Cleveland Arts Prize
Emerging Artist winner, violinist Chad Hoopes**

by Mike Telin



As the oldest award of its kind in the United States, the [Cleveland Arts Prize](#) was established to “support and encourage artists, and to promote public awareness of artistic creativity in Northeast Ohio through the work of Arts Prize recipients.” Each year prizes are awarded to “creative artists whose original work has made Northeast Ohio a more exciting place to live...” On June 27 the 2013 Cleveland Arts Prize winners were honored at a ceremony held at the Cleveland Museum of Art. This year's winner of the Emerging Artist Award (music and dance) was 19-year old violinist Chad Hoopes.

Hoopes first burst onto the international music scene after winning the Young Artists Division of the Yehudi Menuhin International Violin Competition. Since that time he has gone on to perform with many of the world's distinguished orchestras. During the 2011-12 season, Hoopes served as Artist-in-Residence for Classical Minnesota Public Radio during which he played concerts throughout the greater Minneapolis/St. Paul area as well as participating in and leading educational activities at local schools. This past spring Hoopes graduated from University School as well as completing his studies at the Cleveland Institute of Music's Young Artist Program.

A truly engaging and thoughtful conversationalist, Chad Hoopes recently spoke to us by telephone from Staunton, Virginia where he was serving as Artist-in-Residence at the Heifetz International Music Institute. During the conversation he spoke about the important role his family plays in keeping him grounded, how winning the Cleveland Arts Prize will help to further his career and how he feels obliged and honored to be an ambassador for the city of Cleveland as well as for classical music. We began by asking him what his duties are as Artist-in-Residence.

Chad Hoopes: For the most part being an example for the students — inspiring young people is my passion. I'm also preparing some projects for the upcoming Verbier Festival in Switzerland. And my sister, who is also a violinist, is here, so I'm getting to spend some time with her as well, which is really nice.

Mike Telin: It sounds like fun and I imagine you don't get to spend a lot of time with your sisters anymore?

CH: Exactly, and I take every opportunity that I can to be with them. We're all such good friends that it is great when we can all be together.

MT: Congratulations on spending time together and on winning the Cleveland Arts Prize Emerging Artist Award.

CH: Thank you so much!

MT: What was your reaction when you found out you had won?

CH: You know, I was quite shocked and humbled to have been awarded such a wonderful prize and to represent the City of Cleveland. I really have enjoyed being in Cleveland. It has afforded me many opportunities and it is an honor to be associated with such a great city.

MT: I can't think of a better ambassador for the city. And the award comes with a very nice cash prize; do you have immediate plans for the money?

CH: Actually I going to put it in the bank tomorrow and pay my publicist. [The prize money] is not being used for myself but for my career, so it is very helpful.

MT: I'm sure that it is, and you bring up an interesting point. The last time we spoke you had just started working with your publicist and I don't think a lot of people realize how important it is for an artist to have a publicist. And, you do have to pay them.

CH: Yes, that is true and the things that Amanda Sweet does for me are wonderful. In fact, I am recording a CD in November and to have her support to really push it once it is released is great. Like you said, a publicist is an important component to a successful career like the launching of a CD and other promotional needs.

MT: And although you are the one who is practicing four to six hours a day, it does take a team to launch a young artist's career.

CH: That is so true, it takes a village. Between my parents, my sisters, my teachers, my school, my manger, my publicist and my friends, I have so much support. I honestly couldn't do it without those important people helping me and I am very thankful for that.

MT: You've just graduated from University School and I understand you have chosen to enter a very interesting program in Germany as an alternative to a traditional conservatory?

CH: I'll be studying at the Kronberg Academy near Frankfurt. It's a very small academy that is [designed] for young people who have careers and recording contracts or touring schedules where people like myself can go to school and get a degree, and study with some of the world's greatest teachers but also maintain a career. So I am excited for the

opportunity and to get to experience a new country and a new culture and language. I think it will be beneficial for my career.

MT: It does sound like a great opportunity, but you do a lot of international travel already; is that something you enjoy?

CH: I do, I have really enjoyed it and the people that I've met as well. My colleagues and friends and even those who are older than me and more seasoned, it's just so wonderful to be surrounded by such incredible artists. Traveling can be fun but being on planes and in airports and not staying in a home can be difficult. But the people who I surround myself with keep me on a good balance and keep me sane.

MT: Staying sane is important. Earlier in this conversation you referred to yourself as ambassador of Cleveland, which you are as well as an ambassador for classical music. I read a number of articles about you; many people ask you how you as a young musician felt about the future of classical music and what you were doing to promote it? Your answers were very well articulated but I couldn't help feeling that we are placing a lot of pressure on you to help save classical music; am I wrong?

CH: Actually I do feel obligated, and first of all being an example to young people; my passion is young people, and being an inspiration to them and introducing them to classical music is something that I really cherish and it is something that I do to give back to the community.

Pressure? I don't necessarily feel that because I think there are more people than just me who are trying to [do the same things]. The way I go about it is just showing young people that I have a passion for classical music, it's something that I love. And the fact that I'm doing something that I love inspires them to find their passions and chase their dreams. Because doing what you love is what's most important. This is a better way to go about it than just saying go listen to classical music. Rather than telling somebody to do something, showing them is more successful.

MT: Very well said. I was just sent the downloadable version of a CD you made when you were Artist-in-Residence at Minnesota Public Radio. It's very nice. Is it for sale?

CH: The CD is not for sale because it was made for the residency. As part of that residency I went into schools and visited with and played for the kids — it was all part of me and my passion for young people — so we gave a copy of the CD to every young person who attended. We probably gave away three or four thousand CDs. But I am recording my debut album in November and it will be available on iTunes, Amazon and in book stores.

MT: Congratulations. Is this the recording of the Mendelssohn and Adams concertos?

CH: Thanks, and yes it is.

MT: How did the recording come about?

CH: I was playing a concert in Salzburg last June and people from the French label Naïve Records were there. My manager had been in contact with them but they approached her and asked if I would want to sign a contract with them.

After my concert we talked and I expressed to them what I wanted, and they told me what they wanted. And, it seemed to be a really good situation, so I signed a contract for three to five CD's — it seems that I will be recording a lot in the next couple of years. They were very passionate about the project and it didn't seem that it was going to be just one of five hundred CDs they would be producing in a year. Or that I would be a little fish in a big pond.

MT: How did you come to decide on the Mendelssohn and the Adams?

CH: There were many discussions about what orchestra I would record with and the repertoire. I was not so keen on recording Adams at first. It's a really big and challenging piece — it's kind of a monster and many people have not played it because it is a very big piece to tackle. I suggested something like the Barber concerto, something that is more well known. But my manager said no, I really want you to do the Adams. So I spent this year digging in and learning it and, I have actually fallen in love with the piece. It is something very special and I am excited to record it with the Leipzig Radio Orchestra and Kristjan Järvi. I'll also be going on tour with them to Russia as well. It's really exciting that it's all happening.

MT: Well again congratulations — another great opportunity to add a jump start to your career, although I'm not sure your career needs a jump start.

CH: No, you're right because it is a jump start and there is much more for me to do and I think many opportunities will come from it.

MT: Well thanks for not being offended, and I'm happy that you decided to tackle the Adams because I think it will work very well with the Mendelssohn.

CH: I think so too. Mendelssohn is something that everybody knows and people buy a CD because they love the piece that is on it. And it's paired with a piece that is great but people don't know as well. And it's American and I'm American and I'm young and the piece is still young and I think it will be an exciting combination of pieces.

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