Young virtuosos to play in parks

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By Hong Xiao in New York |   
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Five young musicians from the Shanghai Orchestra Academy (SOA) are taking part in a special residency with the New York Philharmonic preparing for the philharmonic's concerts in the parks this week.  
The five musicians - violinist Yu Renchao, violist Liu Kuan, flautist Huang Fangyu, clarinetist Chiu Yanru and bassoonist Zhao Sihong - were selected from about 20 candidates after rounds of auditions by a panel of New York Philharmonic musicians held at the SOA in March.  
The finalists are Zarin Mehta Fellows, who won the chance to participate in the New York Philharmonic Global Academy Fellowship Program, where they take lessons with philharmonic musicians and perform with the orchestra.  
Yu, who is not a stranger to the NY Philharmonic, sat for an interview during a break in rehearsals at Lincoln Center on Monday. They were preparing for the four upcoming big events - performing Rimsky-Korsakov's Scheherazade under the baton of James Gaffigan in Van Cortlandt Park in the Bronx on Tuesday, in Central Park on WednesdayCunningham Park in Queens on Thursday and Prospect Park in Brooklyn on Friday.  
"I feel familiar with them and very comfortable performing with them, as we have studied with the principals from NY Philharmonic when they attended the Music in the Summer Air (Music Festival) in Shanghai," said the 24-year-old violinist, who is in his second year of the SOA graduate program.  
Yu added that musicians from the NY Philharmonic visit SOA four times a year to hold workshops with students there.  
The SOA is a two-year post-graduate program designed to address the needs of advanced orchestral training in China. It is a joint effort of the New York Philharmonic and Shanghai Symphony Orchestra in partnership with the Shanghai Conservatory of Music and operates under the leadership of founding President Yu Long.  
Even though the time for rehearsal is very limited, Yu said he felt well-prepared.  
"We have stress but in a positive way," he said. "It helps us be more concentrated and more sensitive in performance.  
"The New Yorkers will surely have a wonderful experience, enjoying the performance given by NY Philharmonic and us," said Yu, who is confident about the upcoming concerts.

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