

Chicago musician wins major competition

By Howard Reich



Trumpeter Marquis Hill performs at The Drake Hotel as part of a new program designed to give young musicians a chance to perform in a club setting. (Terrence Antonio James / Chicago Tribune)

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Marquis Hill, a rising Chicago trumpeter who teaches at the University of Illinois at Chicago, has won one of the most prestigious jazz competitions in the world.

On Sunday evening in Los Angeles Hill took first place in the 2014 Thelonious Monk International Jazz Trumpet Competition, according to the Facebook page of the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz, a leading jazz institution.

The top prize includes a \$25,000 scholarship and “a guaranteed recording contract with Concord Music Group,” according to the Institute. Concord stands as one of the few major record labels in jazz.

Judges for this year's event included Quincy Jones, Arturo Sandoval, Roy Hargrove, Ambrose Akinmusire, Randy Brecker and Jimmy Owens.

Previous winners of the Monk competition, which features a different instrument each year, have included saxophonist Joshua Redman, pianist Marcus Roberts and trumpeter Akinmusire.

Hill, 27, grew up on the South Side of Chicago, graduated from Northern Illinois University in 2009 and received a masters degree in jazz pedagogy from DePaul University, according to his web page. He leads his Blacktet band in clubs across Chicago and appears nationally in ensembles led by alto saxophonist Christopher McBride, bassist Matt Ulery and many others.

This contest win places him on a trajectory for a potentially major career.