

THE WORLD OF PIANO COMPETITIONS



THE WORLD FEDERATION
OF INTERNATIONAL
MUSIC COMPETITIONS

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2023



Anna
Geniushene

*Keys to an
imaginary
world*

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W E L C O M E

Dear friends of music, dear fellow pianists,

this year, too, we are celebrating a Beethoven anniversary in Bonn. And no, this does not refer to the life dates of our greatest son of the city, but it has very directly to do with him: Three years after the celebrations of the 250th birthday, which had to take place in the shadow of the pandemic, we are already celebrating the 10th edition of the International Telekom Beethoven Competition Bonn (ITBCB).

From the very beginning, the Telekom Beethoven Competition has enjoyed great popularity among pianists, chamber music partners, artists, and critics on the jury. The knowledgeable and sympathetic Bonn audience also contributes with respectful listening to a creative concert atmosphere that supports and inspires young artists.

The special repertoire of the ITBCB places Beethoven's works in a cross-epochal context – allowing each applicant to show his or her personal preferences. In this way, the composer is presented on the one hand as the bearer of certain musical traditions, and on the other hand it becomes clear how Beethoven's innovative ideas have shaped music history and culture right up to our own times.

On 17 June the field of participants for this year's ITBCB has been announced and you can find the names of the pianists in this magazine on page 20. Our aim here is not only to select good pianists, but especially good Beethoven interpreters. The intensive and careful preparatory work of the participants will be rewarded with an extensive support programme in the form of non-cash and cash prizes, as well as concert engagements:

For the 10th edition of the Telekom Beethoven Competition, we have not only significantly increased the prize money, but also set up a special, artistically unique support programme: each prize winner can apply for up to 15,000 EUR for a particularly worthy artistic project. In this way, we want to encourage our award winners to continue their artistic development even after their successful participation in the ITBCB.

I invite you, dear readers, to attend the competition from 1–10 December in Bonn or via livestream at telekom-beethoven-competition.de

PROF. PAVEL GILILOV

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR AND CHAIRMAN OF THE JURY



THE WORLD OF PIANO COMPETITIONS

THE WORLD OF PIANO COMPETITIONS

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www.alink-argerich.org



PARTNERS



THE WORLD FEDERATION
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WORLD FEDERATION OF INTERNATIONAL MUSIC COMPETITIONS

The World Federation of International Music Competitions is dedicated to establishing a global network of internationally recognised organisations that discover the most promising young talents through public competition in the great tradition of classical music and to furthering their careers by presenting them before distinguished juries, general audiences, the media, and the wider music community.

The WFIMC is a Member of the International Music Council and some 120 of the world's leading music competitions belong to the Federation. A number of important international music organisations are associate members of the WFIMC.

www.wfimc.org



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Competitions for Youth

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EMCY is a network of national and international music competitions for young people across Europe. We believe that music competitions stimulate passionate musicianship.

For many, they're a first glimpse of performing in public, playing in ensembles, or of breaking out of orthodox repertoire. They foster a sense of healthy self-assessment, can help conquer nerves, and motivate practise. Young people can be inspired by experiencing fresh interpretations and discovering new works and other European cultures. We do not think of competitions as the end of the learning process: for us, they are the beginning.

www.emcy.org



ALINK-ARGERICH FOUNDATION

An independent and objective Information and Service Centre for Musicians and Competitions, founded by Gustav Alink together with Martha Argerich. AAF supports musicians and competition organisers and gives them assistance and advice. AAF focuses specifically on the International Piano Competitions worldwide. More than 175 international piano competitions and organisations are affiliated with AAF as AAF member competitions. They are all included in the annual AAF catalogue. Gustav Alink and also other AAF staff members frequently visit piano competitions, report on them and are constantly available to provide assistance whenever needed to the organisers, jury members and participants.

www.alink-argerich.org



PIANO STREET

Piano Street provides material and services related to classical piano music and aims to facilitate and inspire communication between piano playing people from all over the world. The content of the website mainly consists of downloadable sheet music connected to hand-picked recordings, information about composers and pieces, one of the world's largest discussion forums about piano music (more than 600 000 postings), and the digital magazine section containing piano related news and articles. The popularity of the website is continuously growing, and it currently counts over 6,000 unique visitors daily. Piano Street has been online for over twenty years and operates worldwide from Stockholm in Sweden.

www.pianostreet.com



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*KEYS TO
AN IMAGINARY
WORLD*

Anna Geniushene

In her music-making there is a rare inner tranquillity and with her brilliant and moving performances at the last Van Cliburn International Piano Competition, where she was awarded the second prize, her “role as a competition horse has come to an end,” as she joked in our animated discussion. She previously had strong finishes at the Leeds (laureate and finalist), Tchaikovsky (semi-finalist) Busoni (third prize) and Dublin (semi-finalist) Competitions. Anna Geniushene talks about the challenges and the joy of music.

The Cliburn Competition was a big event for you.

Oh yes. I applied before I knew I was pregnant with my second child and before the war started. It all happened so promptly and harshly, so we could not sort all things out quickly and it meant I literally had no access to a piano before the preliminary round. The war had ruined my own and many others' lives. Our children could not see their grandparents and I lost my beloved job as an Assistant Professor in the Moscow Conservatory. So, the last chance for me was just to find a way to get to Texas and represent myself as a pianist, as a person I have always wanted to be.

I still remember these days full of hesitation, fear, depression and anxiety. Nobody even knew whether Russian pianists would be allowed to take part in the main phase of the competition because of the various sanctions. The Cliburn committee had made their clear statement agreeing to allow all pianists to come and play, and I cannot even imagine how difficult it was to make such a decision. It was truly a gesture of strong support for all of us.

By the time the competition started I was nearly seven-months pregnant, which made my participation even harder. Apart from that, each pianist had to prepare almost 4.5 hours of contrasting repertoire, including three concertos.

The whole event turned into a real music celebration and I still feel so lucky to have performed the whole repertoire I brought in front of the almost sold-out concert venues and people who were really starving for the art of music-making.

You started early with competitions.

I would say it is true the Russian School is supposed to prepare you as an athlete being trained for the Olympic Games. From an early

age you have to present yourself as an iron man making his own way to a victory; you have only two options: either you win or lose. My first experience was in a local competition named after Dimitri Shostakovich. It was a real challenge for me as I simply did not understand the matter of this type of event: I was forced to “battle” with someone rather than playing for my own pleasure, as I was used to do. I remember my teacher saying “You have to push yourself to the limit and make something happen around you!” But eventually, the last thing I cared about was the idea of grabbing the top prize or impressing the jury members or anyone else. That was and still is not my main motivation at all.

And then you had your debut in Berlin at the Philharmonie!

Yes, that was a result of the competition. I need to mention that I come from an objectively “normal” family, both of my parents are engineers, they had no idea about the world of music at that point. I remember the day my teacher told my relatives I would have to travel with her to Berlin and their first reaction was something like “What is the reason you are taking our child away from us!”

They must be over the moon now.

Well, sometimes I still have some odd conversations with my mother: she knows that my main field of work is music but she still believes that I will find a “proper” job in the future.

No musicians in your family?

Just my grandfather who was able to play on various instruments. He passed away when I was nearly four, but I still cherish the sweetest memories of listening to his improvised concerts.



Together with conductor Marin Alsop at the Van Cliburn

When I started attending music school my mother was told she had to take care of my everyday practising on scales, which I certainly hated as much as I still do. I was always on the improvisational side and preferred to make some sound effects on the piano rather than keeping my fingers busy. I imagined myself being a sculptor and making new creations in silence no matter in which circumstances one would be put into.

Cliburn is probably your last competition.

Naturally, the competitions were somewhat of a challenge for me although it has been a wonderful and productive time so far. I believe my role as a “competition horse” has come to its logical end and now I am finally enjoying working as a so-called self-employed musician.

If I may comment on other competitions, I would definitely mention the Leeds Piano Competition. This competition had an interesting scenario: each competitor had to prepare two contrasting programs for each round and the jury would decide which one you would play the day before the performance.

I still remember the nervousness before the Grand Final round: I was so stunned by the architecture of the Leeds Town Hall and its excellent acoustics that I could not simply concentrate on my own performance.

I remember my interview with Andrey Gugin for this magazine, he spoke so openly about his successes but also about the failures, that seems like a good attitude.

I agree, there is absolutely no need to hide your sensitive spots, we all are allowed to have them! Once I had to prepare Rachmaninov’s Second concerto in two weeks. I frequently asked myself: would I be good enough to carry the beauty of this music?

That is the normal life of a concert pianist!

Absolutely, and continuing with the Leeds – that was a good chance to place yourself in the shoes of a regular pianist: we also had to prepare two concertos and be ready to bring it on stage whenever it happened.

“All I wanted was to play with an open heart, to share my vision of beauty.”

Were you happy with the choice of the jury?

I was so much shocked about being admitted to the Finals that I had to write to the organisation committee the following night asking which concerto I have to play as I simply did not catch the juror’s choice.

You were in no way fixed on getting a prize?

I was never the type of competitor whose main aim would be just getting a top place. My main idea is to find my own listener who would find something meaningful in my playing. When it comes to the bigger competitions, you also have this rare occasion to promote your art through online streaming. In this case you would gain worldwide attention and it might be really helpful for your future.

You say you played for yourself and you put family before career. You have two sons, like a friend of mine, a singer, who said with her boys she knows better now why she is a musician. Do you share that feeling?

Absolutely. My music-making has grown and matured after I became a mother and, probably, because of the new challenges I faced at the time: from now on I have to find a balance between being a good parent and searching for my own time to practise alone without disturbance. I also assume my way of practising has also changed a bit.

The prize winners: Anna Geniushene, Yunchan Lim and Dmytro Choni





Born in Moscow on New Year's Day in 1991, Anna Geniushene graduated from the Moscow Tchaikovsky Conservatory in 2015, where she studied with Professor Elena Kuznetsova, and completed her master's with Distinction and Advanced Diploma from the Royal Academy of Music (London) in 2018 under the tutelage of Professor Emeritus Christopher Elton. She currently resides in Lithuania with her husband Lucas Geniušas and their two young sons.

Russian Anna Geniushene embraces her Ukrainian colleague Dmytro Choni.



And your husband is a pianist too!

Of course, it could not be any other way! I cannot imagine myself living with a person who couldn't understand what you are really fond of. Despite our busy schedules we are still able to share fantastic moments of life, even on stage together.

You created a little stir at the Cliburn when you, as the representative from Russia, hugged Ukrainian Dmytro Choni on stage.

Yes, we became friends during the Ferruccio Busoni International Piano Competition in 2017. We both understand the reality and the tragedy of the present day. Music unites us as it is a universal language that does not have any nationality. Equally, when you happen to be on stage you don't really have an identity or gender whatsoever, you are the advocate of yourself, not the country you are representing.

I cannot understand why this simple gesture of happiness turned out to be a real issue for some people. Being awarded top prize at such recognised competition together with Dmytro was nothing else than a huge achievement we both were granted. After playing six rounds of a mixed, contrasting programme, what else could one have done if not giving respect and admiration towards each other?

ERIC SCHOONES

www.annageniushene.com

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AGENDA

WFIMC Piano Competitions | April to December 2023

31 May – 9 June

VALENCIA | SPAIN

International Piano Competition "Iturbi Prize"

5 – 22 July

SYDNEY | AUSTRALIA

Sydney International Piano Competition

24 – 30 July

PORTO | PORTUGAL

Santa Cecilia International Piano Competition

23 August – 3 September

BOLZANO | ITALY

Ferruccio Busoni International Piano Competition

28 August – 15 September

MUNICH | GERMANY

ARD International Music Competition

1 – 10 September

GLASGOW | UNITED KINGDOM

Scottish International Piano Competition

13 – 24 September

VILNIUS | LITHUANIA

International M. K. Ciurlionis Piano and Organ Competition

22 September – 1 October

DORTMUND | GERMANY

*International Schubert Competition Dortmund
Lied Duo*

26 September – 3 October

SEREGNO | ITALY

International Piano Competition Ettore Pozzoli

28 October – 5 November

TONGYEONG | SOUTH KOREA

ISANGYUN Competition

13 – 18 November

LAS ROZAS DE MADRID | SPAIN

International Piano Competition Spanish Composers

27 November – 2 December

MANCHESTER | UNITED KINGDOM

James Mottram International Piano Competition

30 November – 9 December

BONN | GERMANY

International Telekom Beethoven Competition



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Changyong Shin



and Aristo Sham in the Final Round in 2018

2024 Gina Bachauer International Artists Piano Competition

Every few years, the world's most promising pianists convene in Salt Lake City for the prestigious Gina Bachauer International Artists Piano Competition.

Greek concert pianist, Gina Bachauer (1913–1976), was often regarded as the greatest female pianist of the 20th century. A highly sought-after world performer, she developed a close bond with the people of Utah as she frequently performed with the Utah Symphony under the direction of Maurice Abravanel. The legacy of mutual admiration between Gina Bachauer and the Utah community lives on through the Gina Bachauer International Piano Foundation. The Artists Competition returns in June 2024, marking forty-eight years of welcoming the world's most elite pianists to Utah. Pianists ages 19–32 will be invited to perform in one of five international cities as part of the Preliminary Round: Buenos Aires, Hamburg, Hong Kong, New York City, and Salt Lake City. Thirty-six pianists will continue on to Salt Lake City in June 2024 to compete for more than US\$ 105,000 in prizes. Twelve will be

chosen to perform a new composition by acclaimed composer Gabriela Frank in the Semifinal Round.

Three pianists will be invited to compete in the Final Round, each performing twice with the Utah Symphony in two evenings of concerto performances. All eligible pianists are invited to apply! Applications are due September 15, 2023.

Gold Medallists of previous Bachauer competitions include Changyong Shin, Lukas Geniušas, Andrey Gugnin, Stephen Beus, Cedric Pescia, Lori Sims, Nicholas Angelich, Gail Niwa, Sara Davis Buechner, Michael Gurt, Arthur Greene, Christopher Giles, Panayis Lyras, Xiang Dong Kong, and Douglas Humpherys. In the international jury this year: Lydia Artymiw, Bernadene Blaha, Alan Chow, Christopher Elton, James Giles, Douglas Humpherys, Yong-Hi Moon, Zhe Tang, and Dina Yoffe.

SCHEDULE

Application deadline: September 15, 2023
 Preliminary Round in 2023: Buenos Aires (November),
 Hamburg (December), New York City (December)
 and in 2024: Hong Kong and Salt Lake City (January)

June 2024:

17–18 Quarterfinal I
 19–22 Quarterfinal II
 24–25 Semifinal
 28–29 Final with Utah Symphony



Norma Fisher

A lifetime of experience and reflection

After a formidable and long career as a concert pianist, Norma Fisher remains a highly sought-after pedagogue, teaching at the Royal College of Music in London and the Royal Northern College of Music. In 1988 she founded the London Master Classes and she is invited to give master classes throughout the world. She also served on the jury of many international competitions and among her students, to name only a very few, are Anna Fedorova, Pavel Kolesnikov, Murry McLachlan, Luka Okros, and Julia Sigova.

Times have changed in the world of piano competitions.

Oh yes, I remember the time when Gustav Alink published his first book – there were just a handful of competitions compared to our time. Now you find one practically on every street corner and I honestly don't know if I should call it terrifying or incredible.

Too many?

Difficult question, I am not against competitions, they have so much to offer. Already when I was competing myself as a child in local competitions, there was a highly competitive atmosphere, among teachers with their best students and also among proud parents, envious of others. I remember one extraordinary situation in London, where I was disqualified, because the adjudicator, a well-known British pianist, would not accept a young teenager playing Beethoven's last piano sonata, no matter how well, can you imagine anything like that today?

They should have said so in advance.

I was horrified and so quite a few decades later, I still remember the feeling when they announced it at the award ceremony!

But that didn't stop you from entering other competitions.

No, internationally I only did the Busoni and Queen Elisabeth. I went to Brussels twice, but nothing happened. The first time was

in 1960; all the great pianists of the day were there, but none of them passed the first round. It was unbelievable. Busoni was a lovely experience; I got the second prize. Some people saw me as precious, but I just adored to play, I was without any sense of importance. It all came very natural to me – it was part of my being.

I am not a competitive person, and although my father was Russian, I am so glad I didn't go through the Soviet-system, of the Moscow Conservatoire or the Menuhin School. That would have killed me. I say to young people all the time: if you go to win, don't do it. If you are convinced of yourself as a winner, and you fail, the psychological damage can be devastating. Nowadays people tend to show off, even in schools.

Anna Fedorova told me you take a great interest in the personality of the student.

That goes without saying, the two go together. Sometimes I think I am more of a psychoanalyst than a musician. To be able to help someone musically you have to understand the personality, as it's all part of the same thing. And as a juror within two minutes you know. My teacher Iona Kabos used to say: "Convince me darling" and I will remember that till my dying day! You have to keep a completely open mind. I remember Kissin at the very first solo Prom he played Chopin's b minor sonata, in a way I could not ever have conceived myself. I had played that work since I was twelve, knew

*“Sometimes I think
I am more of a psychoanalyst
than a musician.”*

it inside out, and his rendition sounded completely new to me; it was a revelation. One can only admire such a thing, and it has happened once or twice in my lifetime.

Isn't that the beauty of it?

Oh yes, this is what every juror in a competition is waiting for. I had the same experience with Yunchan Lim, who won the Van Cliburn last time. I could not believe it, even in the opening bars of Rachmaninoff's Third Concerto I started to weep and I thought I had never heard it before. He did all the *Transcendental Études* by Liszt. It was the same experience as with Kissin. Yunchan is 18 years old – it's something divine. I mainly follow the competitions where my students take part, like the Paderewski, where López Salas Pedro was awarded the second prize.

You played in the Royal Albert Hall so often, please tell me about your experience.

It's magical, it's like walking into heaven, you really are on cloud nine. Although the acoustics remain difficult, especially with orchestra. The sound gets swallowed up, as much as they tried to improve it, but it was not built with the right sound in mind. At my first Proms, I was worried by the idea of the Prommers standing by your side, but in fact you don't notice them – it's the most amazing audience. The silence and the atmosphere are truly extraordinary.

Are young people at 18 prepared for a career when they win a major prize?

Of course education never stops. When you are 27 you are supposed to be wise enough, to find your wings and move on. And most competitions have a career-developing programs nowadays, which is a very good thing; they act as managers and that of course includes education.

Kevin Chen is another phenomenal talent. He won every competition he entered. Geneva and now recently Arthur Rubinstein. He came to see me with his father, some time ago. He is the unassuming young boy, a bit childlike, but his playing is extraordinary. He was considering whether to study with me, but now the whole world wants him and I don't think he will come to the Royal College. Unlike other pianists he didn't go from teacher to teacher and that can be very confusing. Kevin was with only one remarkable teacher, and that allowed him to find himself.

How do you feel about the repertoire in competitions?

Yes, an important subject. It always had to be a Bach and Beethoven and of course this is so important, but not excelling in this repertoire doesn't make you a lesser artist. I am more interested in the personal voice of an artist, and so I am all in favour of leaving the choice of repertoire open. You impress the most by truly being yourself. Also to me wrong notes don't matter. Many people judge to eliminate and I find that terrible. I am also all for full transparency, publishing all the votes, to take away the mystery.

I always think one of the best moments in piano competitions was when in Brussels Boris Giltburg had a serious memory lapse and still got the first prize.

I could not agree more. I rang him right after that – my heart had stopped! He was 13 years old when we first met. They did the right thing, being note perfect to get a prize is very upsetting. We are humans, not machines.

ERIC SCHOONES



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INTERNATIONAL TELEKOM BEETHOVEN COMPETITION BONN

01.12. – 09.12.2023

Livestream on:
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THE PARTICIPANTS OF THIS YEARS COMPETITION:

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Erleben,
was verbindet.

International Telekom Beethoven Competition



Pavel
Gililov
on Beethoven

DAN HANSEN

This year, from 30 November to 10 December, the International Telekom Beethoven Competition will be held in Bonn for the 10th time, focusing on the work of the city's most famous son. We asked Prof Pavel Gililov, founder, artistic leader, and president of the jury about his thoughts.

Beethoven's music was very modern in his time and so it is today. The energy and density of ideas is unique. The composition process always slow and troubled, but the organic form in his music served as an example for all composers, from Brahms, Schumann, to Prokofiev, Shostakovich, and Stravinsky. Also, precisely because of this special character, his work is a challenge for young pianists and musical or technical flaws at once disrupt the very special architectural structure. Beethoven therefore demands enormous discipline and mental effort; it's the ultimate test and when someone wants to play for me, I always ask for Beethoven. Then you can easily recognise the dedication, temperament, and real love for the music. That is very important in music as well as in life.

Immediately, in the first round, I programme one of the last three sonatas, with that quintessence of Beethoven you can immediately separate the wheat from the chaff. Besides these sonatas, written in a coherent form, in this round there are short character pieces in addition to Bach's polyphony, so you can get a very good overall impression of the participants.

In the second round, I ask a more romantic sonata from Beethoven's middle period combined with works by composers of German Romanticism and by contemporaries and pupils of Beethoven. Here, there is also a variety of works, enabling the pianist to show yet other qualities. The Diabelli variations are indispensable and it is notable that those who chose this work in previous editions won the competition: Filippo Gorini, Jingge Yan and Hinrich Alpers – all three of them important Beethoven interpreters.

In the third round, there is a smaller, character sonata, but no less demanding. Beethoven requires a serious attitude in everything, even in the humorous moments there is a philosophical depth. In the finale: chamber music, so important in concert life and a piano concerto. And this variety makes the competition attractive as a festival to the audience as well.

The people of Bonn are very proud of the region's greatest son, and without Deutsche Telekom having its headquarters in Bonn, the competition would not be possible. With a whole group of host families, the competition is humanised, which again fits well with Beethoven as a person.

The *Beethovenfest* and the *Beethovenhaus* support the competition with concerts. A visit to the *Beethovenhaus* is always included in the programme anyway, and it is very nice for the candidates to play chamber music in the museum, in a room where Beethoven's manuscripts are kept! That has great symbolic meaning. All finalists can receive another one-off donation from Deutsche Telekom AG to realise a personal project. They will also be offered a tour with the Klassische Philharmonie Bonn, so that they can gain experience and develop further, which is actually worth even more than the prize money.

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All information about the competition:
www.telekom-beethoven-competition.de

INTERNATIONAL SCHIMMELPIANO COMPETITION 2023



**APPLY NOW
UNTIL 25 JUNE 2023!**

The International Schimmel Piano Competition is organized by the Wilhelm Schimmel Pianofortefabrik GmbH in Germany and will be held in its third edition from **22 to 24 September 2023**.

The competition is for pianists aged 18 to 32 who are currently undergoing or have completed professional musical training. In addition to the quality of the performance, the focus of the competition lies in the conception of the presented programme, which must follow a theme chosen by the participants.

More information on the International Schimmel Piano Competition can be found under:
www.schimmel-klavierwettbewerb.de





Johannes Obermeier (1st Prize)



SCHIMMEL PIANOS

Tsuzumi Namikawa (2nd Prize)

International Schimmel Piano Competition

The International Schimmel Piano Competition is organized by the Wilhelm Schimmel Piano-fortefabrik GmbH in Germany and will hold its third edition from 22 to 24 September, 2023. The competition is for pianists aged 18 to 32 who are currently undergoing or have completed professional musical training. In addition to the quality of the performance, the focus of the competition lies in the conception of the presented programme, which must follow a theme chosen by the participants.

In the first round, the participants present a 20 to 30-minute programme of their own design to the jury and the audience. Participants must also explain their programme idea to the jury in an oral presentation (German or English) lasting maximally two minutes before the start of the competition. The six participants with the highest number of points will reach the final round. There the participants will present a second programme of their own design with a duration of 30–50 minutes.

The distinctive feature of the Schimmel Piano Competition is that the programme to be performed must be independently conceived and follow a thematic idea. The result should be an attractive concert programme in which the concept of the programme is ideally already understood from its title and the chosen works without further oral or written explanations. Thus, in addition to the pianistic-artistic quality, the attractiveness and originality of the submitted concert programmes will also be evaluated.

The programme concept can deal with the connections as well as with contrasts and breaks between the individual works, and thus show references beyond the boundaries of epochs and genres. Improvisations and compositional interventions are permitted if the concept convincingly demands them. A curious immersion in the abundance of piano literature is strongly recommended!

Public competition rounds 22–23 September 2023

Public final & prize-winners concert 24 September 2023

Location: Braunschweig, Germany

Apply by June 25, 2023, with a video and your written programme conception to participate in the competition 2023.

New this year: Instead of the prize money, one of the three laureates will be offered a concert tour in China.

www.schimmel-klavierwettbewerb.de/competition



YOEL LEVY

Another victory for Kevin Chen

Kevin Chen has just been announced as 1st prize winner. Far-left: jury chairperson Arie Vardi, in the middle vice-chairperson Yoheved Kaplinsky, at the right Yukine Kuroki (3rd) and Giorgi Gigashvili (2nd).

The 17th Arthur Rubinstein International Piano Master Competition

This year, from 15 to 30 April, 2023, the 17th Arthur Rubinstein International Piano Master Competition was held in Tel Aviv. It is one of the major international piano competitions around the world and has a rich history.

It started with Jan Jacob Bistrizky, who had previously been the director of the Chopin Institute and the Chopin Competition in Warsaw. In the early 1970s, he moved from Poland to Israel and founded the Arthur Rubinstein Competition. He was a close friend of Arthur Rubinstein, who did not like competitions, but Bistrizky persuaded him to give his name to this new piano master competition. Pablo Picasso once made several portraits of Arthur Rubinstein and Rubinstein handed over three different sketches by Picasso that were used for the design of the medals to be awarded to the top three prize winners.

The very first Arthur Rubinstein Competition was scheduled to be held in Jerusalem, December 1973, but was postponed because of

the Arab-Israeli war in October. The next year (September 1974), the competition took place in Tel Aviv. Arthur Rubinstein himself was on the jury, together with Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli and eleven other personalities from the Music World. This first competition was won by Emanuel Ax. After 1974, the competition was held every three years, except for the 11th edition, which was postponed from 2004 to 2005. In 2020, the competition could not be held because of the corona pandemic, resulting in a hybrid edition in 2021.

Each edition of the Arthur Rubinstein Competition had 10–15 jury members, including famous musicians such as Martha Argerich, Nikita Magaloff, Pnina Salzman, Maria Tipo and many others. The



All six finalists at the award ceremony: Giorgi Gigashvili, Kevin Chen, Yukine Kuroki, Elia Cecino, Chaeyoung Park and Alberto Ferro

last three editions counted 11 jury members. The competition has a solid reputation. After Emanuel Ax, there have been more winners who went on to have great careers, such as Gerhard Oppitz, Alexander Gavrylyuk, Daniil Trifonov, Szymon Nehring and Juan Pérez Floristán, to mention a few. Looking at the 2nd, 3rd prize winners and further rankings*, we can see the names of many other pianists who were also excellent musicians, such as Eugen Indjic, Arnaldo Cohen, Boris Bloch, Igor Levitt, Katia Buniatishvili, Boris Giltburg, Seongjin Cho, and Bruce Liu! This clearly shows that the level of performances at the Arthur Rubinstein Competition has always been very high. It is no surprise that many pianists want to take part in it. For this year's 17th edition, around 200 applications were received. After a preselection, thirty-nine pianists were invited to take part in Tel Aviv. Nearly all of them had already won prizes at other important competitions. Seven pianists were unable to come and one withdrew, but another could step in from the reserve list, so eventually thirty-two performed in the first round. The grand pianos on stage were from Steinway and Fazioli and all contestants also had practice facilities in their hotel rooms.

The competition is very demanding: it lasts almost three weeks and comprises five rounds. After the first solo round (up to 40 minutes), sixteen pianists passed to the 2nd round, in which they were to play another solo recital (up to one hour). The choice of repertoire was quite free, as long as it included one of three Israeli compositions. A wide variety of wonderful piano works could thus be heard at the Recanati Auditorium of the Tel Aviv Museum of Art, from Rameau to Shostakovich and many other great composers. One of the contestants (Talon Smith, USA) even performed his own 24 Preludes, Op. 1.

* Interestingly, in 1977 and 1980, a ranking from 1 to 12 was announced (like in Brussels), and until 2011, there were six main prize winners.



Yukine Kuroki together with Steinway representative Ann-Paulin Steigerwald

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2nd prize winner Giorgi Gigashvili

Actually all participants in this competition delivered interesting and impressive performances. The expectations were high regarding J J Jun Li Bui from Canada (18), who was the youngest finalist and 6th prize winner of the 2021 Chopin Competition in Warsaw. Nikolay Khozyainov (Russia, 30) had already been a finalist in Warsaw in 2010 and had taken part in Tel Aviv in 2014. A decade ago, he won top prizes at the competitions in Dublin and Sydney. The jury, chaired by Arie Vardi (who has been involved since the very beginning of the Arthur Rubinstein Competition), admitted six pianists to the final round, which in itself consisted of three stages: Chamber Music, a classical piano concerto, and a romantic piano concerto.

When an international piano competition includes Chamber Music, it is usually a traditional piano trio, quartet, or quintet with string players. However, at this year's Arthur Rubinstein Competition, the finalists had to prepare a trio or quintet for piano and wind instruments by Beethoven, Mozart, Ries, Brahms or Rimsky-Korsakov. It was a true delight to hear these works, although someone remarked that the range of styles and diversity of instruments made it more difficult to distinguish and compare the qualities of the pianists. Moreover, the choice of classical concertos was a bit wider than usual by the addition of Hummel to Mozart and Beethoven. The youngest finalist was Kevin Chen (Canada, 18), who had already won first prizes at the 2021 Liszt Competition in Budapest and at the 2022 Geneva Competition. Giorgi Gigashvili (Georgia, 22) received prizes at the competitions in Tbilisi, Vigo (Spain) and the Busoni Competition. He also took part in Tel Aviv in 2021. Yukine Kuroki (Japan, 24) won the Dublin IPC as well as the Liszt Utrecht (both in 2022).

At the end of the second evening of romantic piano concertos with the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, the verdict by the jury was announced: third prize went to Yukine, second to Giorgi, and Kevin Chen was declared first prize winner of this 17th edition of the Arthur Rubinstein Competition. Understandably, this announcement caused disappointment for the other three finalists: Alberto Ferro (Italy, 28), who had already won prizes in the Beethoven

Competition in Bonn, the Busoni, and Queen Elisabeth Competition, Chaeyoung Park (Korea, 25) and Elia Cecino (Italy, 21), who had already collected more than 30 prizes in many different international piano competitions.

The prizes in Tel Aviv are high: the winner receives US\$ 40,000 plus US\$ 10,000 towards a career advancement fund, but equally important are the many engagements: a concert tour throughout Israel for two weeks right after the competition followed by concerts worldwide. Second prize winner Giorgi Gigashvili received many of the special prizes, including the audience prize and the prize of the junior jury.

At the award ceremony, the President of Israel came on stage and the top three prize winners performed their classical concerto once again with the Israel Camerata Jerusalem. Just before, this orchestra also played the Israeli national anthem, while the entire audience stood up and sang: a beautiful, warm, glowing performance that was deeply touching.

Special events included the opening concert, in which all four piano concertos by Rachmaninoff and his Paganini Rhapsody were performed, and a recital was given by Evgeny Kissin.

GUSTAV ALINK

The competition provided an excellent live webcast of each stage. All performances can still be viewed and heard through links on the competition website: www.arims.org.il and on the competition's YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/@arthurrubinstein



Winner Kevin Chen being congratulated by Janina Fialkowska.



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2021 winner
Martín García García

Cleveland International Piano Competition

The 2024 CIPC redefines what “success” traditionally looks like in a competition by cultivating unique musical expression and creative artistic vision within and beyond the competition stage. Contestants can showcase their artistry and creative programming in ways not traditionally supported within a competition through innovative rounds like two-piano transcriptions, salon performances, and increased repertoire flexibility at each stage. In addition, contestants will have several opportunities to share their career development goals and artistic vision with the jury and audience.

The new structure will allow for an expanded First Round of fifty to sixty pianists held in Paris at Salle Cortot and in Cleveland at Baldwin-Wallace Conservatory of Music, with sixteen Quarter-Finalists making the trip to Cleveland in July. The expanded reach allows the chance for jury members to hear more artists live in addition to giving the organization the opportunity to invest in more contestants than ever before.

In the jury we meet among others: Melvin Chen (chair, professor in the Practice of Piano and Deputy Dean, Yale School of Music), Lydia Connolly (Head of Artist Management, Harrison Parrot), Hyung-ki Joo (pianist, part of the music comedy duo Igudesman and Joo), Francesco Lecce-Chong (Music Director, Eugene and Santa Rosa Symphony Orchestras), Awadagin Pratt (Founder and Artistic Director, the Art of the Piano), Matan Porat (international concert pianist and composer), Mūza Rubackytė (founder and artistic director Vilnius international Piano Festival) and Kathleen Van

Bergen (CEO and president, Artis-Naples, Florida). Last but not least: Lang Lang is the Honorary CIPC Ambassador.

For the first time in CIPC’s history, three separate juries will adjudicate the different stages of the competition. In addition, there are dedicated slots within the First Round for contestants from under-represented backgrounds, ensuring that all qualified pianists, regardless of country or ethnicity of origin, have a chance to participate in one of the world’s top international piano competitions.

Piano Cleveland has designed prizes to better impact today’s artists, including an Artist Development Program, which provides unique opportunities for contestants to gain specific skills necessary for building a career, in addition to the significant monetary prizes and the exceptional package for the Mixon First Prize Winner (US\$75,000, a Carnegie Hall Debut Recital, a recital at Tonhalle Zürich, Professional Management Services and Mentorship provided by Arabella Arts and Piano Cleveland, plus a recording by Steinway & Sons, New York).

The Artist Development Program Prizes are open to the sixteen Quarter-Finalists and include: Residencies at northeast Ohio universities, including Cleveland Institute of Music and the University of Akron; mentorship opportunities with leading pianists, faculty, and innovators in the classical music world including Jonathan Biss and Angela Hewitt; short courses in personal branding and social media, fundraising, art finances and similar topics, offered in partnership with Young Concert Artists; and workshops on how to build new programming and audience engagement.

Applications are open now and must be received by December 15, 2023. Participants will be selected in January 2024. For information on audition requirements, competition repertoire, prizes, and how to apply, visit pianocleveland.org

*“It’s not
about pianos,
it’s about
people.”*



The Elephant in the Room
by Pianodrome.org

Fiona Sinclair

Focus on the future

After the era of its founder Fanny Waterman (1920–2020), an iconic personality in the world of piano competitions, the Leeds is now in transition, carrying her legacy forward whilst evolving at the leading edge of music competitions. The Leeds wants to be a trailblazer for change, exploring innovations that will shape the musical experience now and in the future, and championing issues such as gender equality and care for the environment. And all this is done in the spirit of having maximum impact on pianists, audiences, and communities. We talked to CEO Fiona Sinclair.

Working for the competition had always been a dream job for her for as long as she could remember. As a child she watched The Leeds on television with her parents, and playing the piano from age four she grew up with the books of Fanny Waterman, the founder of the competition.

Leeds was probably the first major competition to drop the term “competition”.

Yes, and it was great to see others following that example. We are more than “just” a competition – we aim to connect audiences and artists with the piano in amazing ways, inspiring them through our search for excellence and developing young talent.

You are doing the name of your organisation justice, as you reach out to the world, but in between competitions you have a lot to offer to the city.

The piano brings people together in Leeds, not only during the competition. We recently put 20 pianos into 20 schools, and created piano projects that help connect kids in a fun way with other subjects, including maths, science, and climate change. We grow our audience in between competitions through The Leeds International Piano Series with recitals featuring pianists that inspire us, some of whom will be on the next jury. But the biggest success has been the Leeds Piano Trail. In 2021, we commissioned an iconic set of sculptures created entirely from recycled old pianos by Piano-

drome, an Edinburgh-based artist collective whose practice is all about the environment and sustainability. The sculptures were placed alongside playable instruments decorated by artists and communities, and over the space of two weeks more than 206,000 people experienced the piano through events and hundreds of free piano lessons. The pianos are now permanent in Leeds and people from all walks of life turn up and play them every day – we honestly had no idea so many people in Leeds were amazing pianists! One morning, we found a note at one of the pianos: “Absolutely brilliant guys – keep up the good work, from all the homeless.” To reach this group of usually forgotten and ignored people who are also part of our city – that’s really what the Leeds Piano Trail is about. It’s not about pianos, it’s about people. With this project we won one of the classical music industry’s highest honours, a Royal Philharmonic Society Award and 1.8 million people will hear and play our pianos in 2023.

You have been very outspoken about gender equality.

We had an all-male final in our last competition, which felt deeply uncomfortable. The jury, who vote in secret with no discussion, stayed up until two in the morning in Imogen Cooper’s hotel room trying to come to terms with what happened and there were some brutal comments on social media. But it’s not just us. Since then, I have been on a mission to understand why there is a significant gender gap in piano competition finalists and winners. In the UK,



LIPC / NABIN MAHARJAN

Floating Pianos by Pianodrome.org – Like life-rafts on a rising sea, the pianos are symbols of hope in adversity.

lot on at Leeds and our Competitor+ programme aims to support pianists no matter how far their competition journey takes them. Young people need guidance and help more than ever to navigate a fast-changing world.

You feel a responsibility towards the next generation.

Yes of course! We try to anticipate what challenges young pianists face now and in the future. International travel is damaging our environment, yet competitions are not addressing their contribution to the problem. For instance, how long can we really continue to fly around the world for a 30 minute recital, then send the competitor back home? We have made a pledge, which I hope will see us become the first carbon-neutral piano competition in 2024. We are measuring our impact in areas such our venues and our streaming, as well as artist travel, accommodation and even the carbon footprint of their meals. We cannot prevent all flights, but in 2021 we already made a massive reduction by inviting people to come by train and hosting a digital first round and the reaction was overwhelmingly encouraging. Now we want to be more ambitious and show that more solutions can be found. We don't pretend to have all the answers yet, but we can't ignore the fact that this climate crisis will affect us all in unimaginable ways. This is also good business and your partners, funders, audiences, and artists will see you are a progressive, caring organisation that they will want to be associated with. That's a reason our competition is staffed with young volunteers and interns – they are the future and classical music is in great hands – we must let them shape it.

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it seems there are more women studying piano in school and at conservatoires – so there's much more we need to do to understand why women are not gaining major awards and sustaining careers. We need to stop losing these unique musical voices.

What can you do?

It's a multi-layered problem but setting the right tone is important. Do you have mostly men on your jury? Could you introduce some more diverse composers and have fewer of the big macho concerti? Do you show a balance of women's faces in your marketing? And are women's voices heard in the organisation and in public? These things send a powerful message to women that your competition may not be for them. We're looking at how unconscious bias negatively affect juries and are creating a training session for our 2024 jury as well as giving them the facts and data, to create a deeper awareness of the problems we're trying to solve. Interestingly, research has shown that women are far more likely to leave the competition circuit after a set-back, but if they keep persevering, they are just as likely to win a prize as a man. This shows us that we must encourage and support more women to stay in the competition system so they can reap the rewards too. It's something we focus a

Fiona Sinclair & Adam Gatehouse from The Leeds (centre), with Matt Wright (left) and Tim Vincent-Smith (right) from Pianodrome, win at the Royal Philharmonic Society Awards.



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ogy, you can not only play and have played, but additionally record, play back, and edit your own piano playing in great detail. “A grand piano is largely made of wood, a material that our employees process with the utmost respect. With our selected veneers, we not only want to emphasise the beauty of our instruments, but also to reveal their inner treasure – the inimitable Steinway sound. The Masterpiece 8x8 collection values 8 exceptional woods in a

very special way and once again expresses the attention to detail, passion, and experience with which all our grand and upright pianos are created,” says Guido Zimmermann, President Steinway & Sons Europe.

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First-Round Video Submissions

The Crucial Step

In recent years, piano competitions have successively introduced first-round video submissions and it has now become a regular standard. But do video submissions offer the contestant a fair chance to be correctly evaluated? Everybody knows that video submissions cannot fully capture the essence of a live, in-person performance. Moving out to this format means a new setting for a competitor, demanding a different web of conditions which will be considered in the overall evaluation of the performance. The questions go deeper than whether you will record your performance in your living room or have the means to rent a concert hall.

First-round video submissions make piano competitions more accessible. It allows a larger number of entrants to participate, leading to greater diversity of contestants to be exposed to audiences and thus enjoy the opportunity to receive critique and constructive pedagogical feedback. It also cuts competition producers' logistical expenses for renting venues, hiring pianos and live administration. In recent years, many piano competitions have also become eco-conscious to reduce their carbon footprint. Incorporating these measures into piano competitions is a positive step towards sustainability and to take part in the collective ecological efforts.

Differing Conditions

In order to create a fair video submission arena, the very largest competitions have the capacity and do offer high-end recording venues set up in different international locations, securing an equal technical level for all competitors. Some competitions also offer financial support enabling the contestant's video recording. More commonly though, contestants themselves must provide a recording in accordance with more or less rigorous technical requirements stated by the competition. These can include lighting,

camera angle, body placement and posture, microphone positioning, and sound & video quality formats, including suggested camera devices. Furthermore, there is advice on appropriate hall/acoustic characteristics and dress codes, where often a formal or semi-formal attire is suggested. Some competitions allow works recorded on different occasions, others that all pieces should be recorded in one place and at one time. A risk in the judges' evaluation is the bias factor. This means contestants who submit professionally edited and recorded videos may be favoured over those who submit videos taken on simpler devices. Moreover, the way a contestant dresses and favourable lighting in the video could impact the judges' decisions.

High or Low Quality

Technical issues are one of the trickiest challenges. Sound and video quality play a crucial role in the evaluation process. Poor sound or visual glitches can negatively affect the judges' evaluation, even if the performance is excellent. Besides that, the lack of a good quality instrument can adversely affect the quality of a submission. A bad quality piano or inadequate tuning can negatively



GERRIT GLAVER

impact the sound quality, leading to unclear sound, distortion, background noise or an incorrect soundscape, and therefore create an inaccurate image of the contestant's skill level. Another possible challenge, in terms of technique, can be the judges' re-play devices i. e. computer quality, amplifier (or lack thereof) and the status of their loudspeakers/earphones.

Although editing videos is not allowed, the format enables the technically skilled to post-edit the performance and soundscape to improve the overall recording. In a world with increasing technical possibilities, the question arises how competitions can control skilfully manipulated video submissions.

Live vs. Recording

Musical performance involves interacting with an audience, adjusting to the acoustics of the venue, and dealing with the pressure of performing in front of a crowd. First-round video submissions are able to show technical skills but cannot reflect the psychological and acoustical complexity of a performance or the interplay of what an audience expects from an accomplished pianist. The live performance is happening now, whereas a recording can be done

multiple times and the best take can be the contestants' final choice for submission. Furthermore, the recording situation allows more than the contestant to be present in the room. This can for instance include the contestant's teacher or coach being able to provide support and evaluation between takes and during the acts of performance.

To summarize: with a world and music industry becoming more and more involved in digital solutions, we must recognize the rules for these new ways and the conditions for such an interplay, which are expected to form our future. This fact requires a two-way effort on behalf of piano competitions and contestants. Competitions need to consider various angles when evaluating the technical quality of video submissions to ensure fairness and transparency. At the same time, contestants should be aware and recognize the importance of how to manage performance and technical quality aspects of their video production. With reference to the mentioned issues, both parties must acknowledge the limitations of this format and understand that in-person performances are crucial to fully showcase the artistry of a performing pianist.

PATRICK JOVEL

PianoStreet.com



First prize winner Simon Haje during his performance in the finals

Aarhus International Piano Competition



The jury in Aarhus, from left to right: Caroline Hong (USA), Gabriel Kwok (Hong Kong), Anne Queffélec (France), Markus Schirmer (Austria), Søren Rastogi (chair, Denmark), Tuija Makkila (Finland), Zlata Chochieva (Russia)

From 4 to 11 March, 2023, the 6th Aarhus International Piano Competition took place in Århus (Denmark). This is a competition for young pianists in two age categories: 11–15 and 16–21. Worldwide, there are quite a few competitions that focus specifically on (very) young piano talents. Some of them (such as the one in Ettlingen, Germany) are well-known. The competition in Århus has excellent character as well and has already gained a great reputation.

The history of this competition goes back to the year 2008, when pianist Anne Øland travelled from Denmark to the Netherlands together with quite a large group of piano students, to support several of them who were taking part in the piano competition in Enschede. Their main aim was to experience such an international event. They came back to Denmark enthusiastically with much inspiration and a lot of innovative ideas to create a new international competition of their own for young pianists in Århus. Together with her piano students and Dominik Falenski, Anne Øland organised everything. The necessary funds were raised and the first Aarhus International Piano Competition was launched in 2011. In reference to the main sponsor and the cooperation with the Royal Academy of Music Aarhus, it was called the Bang&Olufsen PianoRAMA Competition. The total amount of 44,500 Euros for prizes was very high for a youth competition. It had a great start: 148 pianists applied!

It was a memorable year: 1st prize in the older category went to Beatrice Rana who went on to win the Montreal Competition and received 2nd prize as well as the audience prize at the 2013 Van Cliburn Competition! Also the runners-up in Århus did very well and continued their successes: Leonardo Colafelice won ten 1st prizes at other international competitions in the following years.

From the second competition in 2013 onwards, pianists Rune Maahn Christensen and Christian Skovgaard Flarup took over the management from Dominik Falenski and have been further developing the competition in Århus. It has been held every two years, with

the exception of 2021, due to the corona pandemic. (The nature of this competition is such that it was not an option to organise it as an online competition.)

Anne Øland was always an admirer and keen ambassador of the music of Carl Nielsen. It became a requirement that all the contestants must perform one of his pieces in the first round. The rest of the repertoire is free. There is a special Carl Nielsen award in both categories for the best interpretation of his music, which is quite substantial: 3,500 Euros. This year, the 1st prize in the higher age category increased to 15,000 Euros, bringing the total amount of prizes to more than 58,000 Euros.

It is not only the considerable prize money that makes this competition attractive. Thanks to the cooperation with the Aarhus Symphony Orchestra, the finalists can perform with this outstanding orchestra. Another aspect that Anne Øland and her piano students found very important is the availability of substantial practicing facilities, which the Royal Academy of Music Aarhus can indeed provide. To make the competition more personal, there is also a lounge where the participants can meet and have a snack. It is also wonderful that several groups of school children regularly visit the competition, so that they can hear some of the performances during the first round. They receive clear instructions, get their seats in the back of the hall, and they behave very well while enjoying the music and watching the young performers. This is another nice educational facet of the competition.



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Artistic leader Michail Markov



Jury member
Anne Queffélec gives
Yuri Yasui the 3rd prize.

All prizewinners together.
Second from left: Simon Haje (1st in cat. B),
third from right: Kai Rong Tony Tan (1st in cat. A)

Each year, the competition attracted many pianists who want to take part. For the 6th competition in 2023, a new record of 214 applications was received from 48 different countries. Competitions with so many applications need to make a preselection and it is not always clear to the contestants which procedures are followed for such preselections. Generally speaking, the preselection phase of competitions is not very transparent. However, in Århus, this is also conducted with utmost care: an international panel of three jury members comes together in Århus and listens to all the recordings, checked by a person from the organisation, and the members give their votes independently from each other, without discussion.

Usually, twenty pianists are selected for each of the two age categories. This year, a total of forty-two young piano talents were admitted to the competition in Århus. Three of them were unable to come and the organisers succeeded in contacting three other pianists from the reserve list, who could still make it to Århus. Amazingly, one of them could even come over all the way from Japan, although it was only at one week's notice!

The wonderful aim of this competition in Århus is that all participants leave with happy memories. And indeed, they receive much

more than just the opportunity to perform in the competition. The notion of “the winner takes it all” does not apply here. Those who do not advance to the next round can perform again in special concerts that are specially arranged for them in collaboration with music societies in several other cities. The competition staff accompanies the pianists to these concert venues and covers all transportation costs. Another specialty of the competition in Århus is that each participant can have a professional photo session with photographer Tom McKenzie, after which they receive a high-quality photo portfolio as a gift, which is very useful for future promotion and publicity. During the entire competition all the contestants are accommodated with host families.

This year, the top category was won by Simon Haje (Germany) who happened to have his 18th birthday precisely on the last day of the competition! He had prepared Chopin's 1st piano concerto for the finals. In the younger category, there were several stunning performances, for example by winner Kai Rong Tony Tan (Singapore) and the youngest contestant Yuri Yasui (Japan), only 12 years old, who looks tiny when she appears on stage, but performs very impressively, which brought her the 3rd prize.

GUSTAV ALINK

Full audience at the Symphonic Hall, just before the start of the finals.



The jury included great pianists such as Anne Queffélec and Zlata Chochieva, and well-known Gabriel Kwok from Hong Kong. The entire competition had an excellent live webcast. All performances can still be watched: www.youtube.com/aarhuscompetition. There is total transparency as the voting procedures are precisely explained and all the votes by the jury were published on the competition website after the competition finished. <https://pianocompetition.dk>

Save
the date!



11th International FRANZ LISZT Competition Weimar-Bayreuth | Piano

22 October – 1 November 2024

Application deadline: 15 June 2024
www.hfm-weimar.de/liszt





THOMAS MÜLLER

The 21-year-old Japanese Shota Kaya won the second prize in 2021, the first was not awarded.

International Franz Liszt Competition Weimar – Bayreuth | Piano

The Liszt connection

A peaceful competition at the highest level in the spirit of Franz Liszt: this is the self-image of the International Franz Liszt Competition | Piano, which was founded twenty-seven years ago by the Weimar Academy of Music. Now the Liszt cities of Weimar and Bayreuth are jointly organising this major event for the 6th time from 22 October to 1 November, 2024.

It is more than just a competition – it unites two cities from the former two Germanys, both of which are very closely associated with Franz Liszt: In Weimar, after his time as a restlessly traveling virtuoso, he found concentration for further compositions but also much more: he functioned there for decades as a teacher, court conductor, music writer and cultural politician. As a celebrated “pop star,” he made Weimar an important site of German musical life and his magnum opus was written during this period. In Bayreuth, Liszt spent much time of his last years, right next to the Villa Wahnfried, the home of his daughter Cosima with Richard Wagner. He had a special relationship there with the piano manufacturer Steingraeber & Söhne – the founder Eduard Steingraeber was his concert technician in earlier years. Liszt played in Bayreuth in the rococo hall of the Steingraeber House with his friends and colleagues and also gave public concerts there. The participants in the International Franz Liszt Competition in Bayreuth also play on Steingraeber pianos.

After Weimar stopped as the exclusive financier, the Weimar pianist and former competition director Rolf-Dieter Arens and the piano manufacturer Udo Schmidt-Steingraeber initiated the cooperation

in 2006–2008. With the help of the Neue Liszt Stiftung of the university, the State of Thuringia, the city of Bayreuth, the Oberfrankenstiftung and the Steingraeber manufactory, the joint project is now entering its 6th round in 2024.

Franz Liszt, the patron saint as it were of the competition, as well as the organising Hochschule für Musik in Weimar, have always felt committed to promoting young artists. In the meantime, the competition has been enriched by the cooperation with Liszt-Utrecht: the European Liszt Night takes place as a tour of three prize winners from three cities (including Budapest). The international jury will decide to award prizes worth a total of 25,000 Euros to the greatest talents. The required competition repertoire places a clear focus on the piano works of Franz Liszt in all rounds. While the first round will be held in the Wagner-city, the competition will move to Weimar for the other rounds. Bayreuth will also create a Liszt Week between the competition rounds in the new concert hall Friedrichsforum.

www.hfm-weimar.de/liszt



Winners, jury and organisers

The Horowitz Competition finds refuge in Geneva

As the ongoing conflict in Ukraine made it impossible for the Horowitz Competition to take place at its home base in Kyiv, Ukraine, the World Federation of Intl. Music Competitions decided to support and assist the Horowitz Competition to hold its 2023 edition in Geneva. Endorsed by the Ukrainian Minister of Culture and Information Policy, Oleksandr Tkachenko, and the Mayor of Kyiv, Vitali Klitschko, the competition was held from 13–21 April, 2023 at the Geneva Conservatory, with the final on 21 April at Victoria Hall. The final round was accompanied by the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande and a number of guest players from the National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine.

The competition was open to anyone, regardless of their nationality. In particular, it was the intention of the World Federation to bring artists from both sides of the war together, to highlight common values, common ideas, and the same love of music rather than to give in to hatred, animosity, and polarization.

In order to avoid instrumentalization of artists based on their nationality, the Horowitz Competition Kyiv-Geneva implemented the WFIMC guidelines of denationalization. In line with these guidelines, any mention of nationality or national symbols, such as flags or national colours, was avoided. Instead, artists were named together with their city of birth, place of residence, and place of study.

Furthermore, to avoid political involvement and abuse of the competition as a means to communicate political ideas or ideologies, all participants of the event had to sign a “statement of conduct” effectively banning all activities that could related contempt or disrespect to the Horowitz Competition, especially with respect to the ongoing war in Ukraine.

Following the press release announcing the competition on 21 November, 2022, a record number of 303 pianists from 161 different cities all over the world sent their applications – quite extraordinary considering the short application period of a mere two months.

Evaluation was performed by a jury of nine, namely by Kirill Karabits (Paris), Michel Béroff (Paris), Tisa Ho (Hong Kong), Rico Gulda (Vienna), Sisi Ye (Guangzhou), Maria Murawska (Bydgoszcz), Piers Lane (London), Alexei Gorlatch (Frankfurt) and Giuseppe Albanese (Bologna). The jury decided on a number of prizes worth more than CHF 65,000, most importantly the following:

First Prize (CHF 20,000): Roman Fediurko, 18 (Kyiv)

Second Prize (CHF 15,000): Julian Trevelyan, 24 (London)

Third Prize (CHF 10,000): Kyoungsun Park, 30 (Seoul)

In order to gain relevance and international media presence, the Horowitz Competition was also supported by a number of *Ambassadors*. These included Evgeny Kissin, Mischa Maisky, Midori, Yefim Bronfman, Michael Haefliger, Matthias Naske, Michele dall’Ongaro and Laurens Langevoort.

FLORIAN RIEM

“Music is unquestionably the most powerful language in the world, innately understood by all. Its emotional force is the fabric that unifies and binds humanity. I salute the organization for going forward with the wonderful and important Horowitz-Kyiv-Geneva Competition in this challenging time.”

YEFIM BRONFMAN



Roman Fedirko

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Carl Bechstein Competition for Children and Young People

Since 2014, music-loving young people have met every year in the Kulturstall of Schloss Britz in Berlin for the Carl Bechstein Competition for Children and Young People. Britz is also the home of the Musikschule Paul Hindemith Neukölln.

With the competition, the Carl Bechstein Foundation aims to convey the joy of making music, to promote young musicians in the long term, and to reward exceptional achievements by young people. Making music together is an enormously enriching experience, it's particularly enjoyable and it broadens the musical horizon of young musicians.

In 2023, the competition is welcoming young piano duos for the third time (this time at one piano). The competition is alternating between solo piano, jazz piano, and chamber music ensembles. Especially the experience of developing a programme together is a vital lesson for young artists. Also the intensive joint rehearsal work and later the joint performance in concert or competition is not only an enormous enrichment for young musicians but is often much more fun than always sitting alone at the piano.

A competition is a great additional motivation to try out playing together and perhaps make new friends as well as learning new works. The choice of repertoire is free but must comprise at least two contrasting works from different periods.

President of the jury is Wolfgang Manz, who has a special way with youngster and knows how to motivate. Further jury members are Götz Schumacher, Alina Shalamova and Silvan Silber, all highly accomplished in the piano duo, and Wei Chen, a well-known soloist. Young musicians who have not yet reached the age of 18 by the deadline (20 October 2023) and who have been permanently resident in Germany for at least six months can take part. The prize money totals more than 10,000 Euros and there is a special Hindemith prize being awarded too this year.

For all further information check:
www.carl-bechstein-stiftung.de



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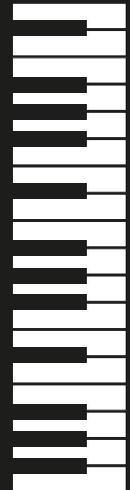
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UNISA



The Unisa Music Foundation will host the 15th Unisa International Piano Competition from 22 January, 2024 until 3 February, 2024 in Pretoria, South Africa. The competition will feature two categories: jazz and classical pianists who will be adjudicated by an international jury. Our past winners include pianists such as Marc-André Hamelin, Lukáš Vondráček, Daniel Ciobanu (classical), and Addison Frei and Lex Kortzen (jazz) and many others.

UNISA INTERNATIONAL PIANO COMPETITION

Established in 1990, the Unisa Music Foundation's mission is to promote music in all its forms and expressions at the University of South Africa, as well as in South and Southern Africa. To achieve this goal, the Music Foundation is responsible for organizing and presenting national and international music competitions, concerts, master classes and music tuition projects.

The Music Foundation is one of the premier organizations in South Africa that has a stellar record of hosting competitions, concerts and collaborating with international festivals and institutions through the various embassies based in Pretoria. In addition to hosting live events, the Music Foundation has built an impressive collection of CD and live DVD recordings. Recent recordings include *Dance of the Indentured* and *Ancestral Home* by the Director of the Music Foundation, Prof Karendera Devroop.

The Unisa Music Competition serves as the benchmark for music competitions in South Africa and across the continent. As a long-standing member of the prestigious World Federation of Interna-

tional Music Competitions, Unisa music competitions are held to the highest possible international standards. This is evident from their impressive list of laureates and jury members.

The first International Music Competition (for piano) was held at Unisa in Pretoria in 1982. The winner of this event was Canadian pianist Marc-André Hamelin, who is now one of the leading international pianists. Other prize winners at Unisa include sopranos René Flemming and Sumi Jo, tenors Johan Botha and Kobie van Rensburg, cellists Alexander Knasyer, and Jérôme Pernoo, violinists Benjamin Schmidt, Dmitri Makhatine. Famous judges include Guido Agosti, Georgy Sandor, Marie Claire Alain, Maria Kliegel, Martina Arroyo, John O'Connor, and Sergey Dovensky. In 2016, the piano competitions were expanded to include both classical and jazz categories.

For all information please check:
www.unisa.ac.za/musicfoundation

UNISA INTERNATIONAL PIANO COMPETITION



PIANIST

is a unique three-monthly magazine, published in seven countries in two special editions with different contents: one in German for Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Luxemburg and Liechtenstein and one in Dutch for the Netherlands and Belgium. The magazine is also distributed in controlled circulation in Eastern Europe with other European countries planned for the future.

Each issue includes interviews with leading pianists and rising talent, news, features, analysis, reviews and comment. We also publish in-depth articles on piano recordings and repertoire, piano brands, retailers, master classes on piano technique and interpretation, reports from festivals, competitions, and so on.

Our German edition was launched in 2017 at the request of the Ruhr Piano Festival, and we maintain a close cooperation with the festival.

Upcoming edition of The World of Piano Competitions is published: November 2023
For all inquiries please contact: h.bruger@pianist-magazin.de

www.pianistmagazine.nl  www.pianist-magazin.de

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2023

KAYSERBURG

INTERNATIONAL YOUTH PIANO COMPETITION

40TH ANNIVERSARY

COMPETITION PROFILE

Forty
Years
and
Going
Strong

KAYSERBURG INTERNATIONAL YOUTH PIANO COMPETITION

Since its inaugural year in 1983, the Kayserburg International Youth Piano Competition has earned widespread recognition around the world as the springboard for artists who have gone on to much acclaim as performers and educators. Originally held in Guangzhou, China, the competition has grown to include regional events in the United States, Canada, Philippines, Singapore, Australia, Indonesia, Vietnam, Ecuador, Poland, Malaysia, Switzerland, and Thailand, all competing for a top prize of an all-expenses-paid trip to the finals.

Pearl River Piano Group, the world's leading piano manufacturer, launched the competition to pave the way for the higher development of deserving young talents and to expand the influence of piano education globally. Today, the competition has grown to the world's largest with over 100,000 participants.

The competition features two categories: the Student Group for ages 13 to 16 and the Open Group for pianists from the age of 17 to 32.

For this 40th anniversary competition, the Open category first prize winners will receive a certificate, trophy, and a Kayserburg Artist Series KA160 5' 3" grand piano. In the Student category, the first prize will be a certificate, trophy, and a Kayserburg Excellent Series Vertical piano. Second and third prize winners in both categories will be awarded a cash prize, certificate, and trophy. Pianists interested in participating in this year's competition are encouraged to visit their local Kayserburg retailer for entry information.

"Over the last 40 years, the Kayserburg International Youth Piano Competition has received tremendous support from teachers, students, and regional dealers all over the world," said Pearl River's Global Director of Sales & Marketing Leng Tshua. "Looking ahead, we are excited about the possibilities of expanding the influence of piano education globally."

Established in 1956, Pearl River Piano Group has become the largest piano manufacturer in the world with a global market share of over 30%, producing over 150,000 pianos a year under the Pearl River, Ritmüller, and Kayserburg names.





First prize winner
Byeyong-ju Yu in 2021

Les Rencontres Internationales des Jeunes Pianistes

This is a biennial high level competition for young pianists with four age categories, maximum age is 24. This 16th edition will take place from 21st to 26th November 2023 in Grez-Doiceau, a charming small town near Brussels.

Since the starting year 2000, more than a thousand young pianists coming from all over the world have played for an enthusiastic audience. For many of the contestants it has been a great experience leading them to enter successfully more important competitions like the Queen Elisabeth competition in Brussels, Hamamatsu-Japan, Busoni etc. The program is very eclectic including compositions from the 21st century. The candidates can meet international teachers and jury members in free master classes during the competition. The opening concert will be given by all first prize winners in their category: Raffaelo Giannini (Italy), Ildiko Rozsonitz (Hungary), Zoé Masset (Belgium) and Byeyong-ju Yu (South Korea). Concerts are organized for laureates the following concert season. Some hosting families will be available.

www.epta-belgium.be

EPTA BELGIUM

Young Musicians in Enschede

The International Piano Competition for Young Musicians in Enschede has been held every two years since 2001. In 2022, for the first time, an orchestra final (3rd round) for Group B was added to the programme of the competition. Due to its great success, the 3rd round is again planned for the coming competition in cooperation with Phion, Orchestra of Gelderland & Overijssel.

In its more than 20-year history, the International Piano Competition for Young Musicians has earned a good reputation thanks to objective judging, a friendly atmosphere, host families, an independent press jury, and is therefore now well known around the world, with participants countries, such as Thailand, Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia, and New Zealand. The jury has always been composed of several renowned musicians, such as D. Andersen, R-D. Arens, A. Bonatta, J. Dvarionas, N. Fisher, A. Frölich, E. Kolodin, I. Roma, B. Szokolay, P. Waas, and others.

The competition has become a “stepping stone” for young pianists, who after their success in Enschede have also won prizes at the “big” competitions. The international concert stages are now regularly entered by former winners in Enschede: D. Onyshchenko, E. Kunz, Ph. Kopachevsky, Ch. Kuyvenhoven, A. Sychev, S. Vashe-ruk, T. Ritter, I. Krpan, S. H. Lee, S. Haje, and others.

www.pianocompetition.com



Winners and Jury in 2022

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