

# THE WORLD OF PIANO COMPETITIONS

2

2020

Yang  
Yang  
Cai

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WELCOME

*Dear readers,*

*"An epidemic isn't a thing made to man's measure; therefore, we tell ourselves that the plague is a mere boggy of the mind, a bad dream that will pass away. But it doesn't always pass away and, from one bad dream to another, it is men who pass away..."*

\*\*\*

*"How should they have given a thought to anything like plague, which rules out any future, cancels journeys, silences the exchange of views. They fancied themselves free, but no one will ever be free so long as there are epidemics..."*

While Covid-19 seems to be lasting forever, almost the same way as the *Plague*, much has changed since Albert Camus wrote his famous book in 1947, and what he calls the impossible "exchange of views" is certainly no longer an impossible thing to do in times of virtual reality. Or is it?

Online meetings, video conferences and webinars have taken over much of the way we communicate with others. The performing arts have embraced these means of communication, and even a number of international competitions have enthusiastically presented all-online versions for the first time. Other competitions have changed formats, have extended online evaluations to include everything up to their semi-finals, and have provided recording facilities around the world so that competitors have equal chances even on an all-digital platform.

But all through this pandemic one thing has become clearer than ever: while our technical means have changed a great deal and enable us to communicate in ways unimaginable seventy years ago, none of our digital resources and accomplishments can replace the interaction between performer and audience, the emotions of the listener, or the sensations and perceptions of the artist who needs to feel the presence of a human being in the same room. The tension in the hall of a competition final simply cannot be recreated digitally, nor can virtual reality replace the charisma of a world-class performer. And to return to the words of Albert Camus: *"Man cannot do without beauty, and this is what our era pretends to want to disregard."*

We do need beauty, and we do need live music, now, more than ever.

**FLORIAN RIEM**

SECRETARY GENERAL

WORLD FEDERATION OF INTERNATIONAL MUSIC COMPETITIONS



## THE WORLD OF PIANO COMPETITIONS

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For upcoming application deadlines etc. check:

**Alink-Argerich Foundation**  
www.alink-argerich.org



THE WORLD FEDERATION  
OF INTERNATIONAL  
MUSIC COMPETITIONS

#### 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 further their careers by presenting them before distinguished juries, general audiences, the media, and the rest of the music community. The WFIMC is a Member of the International Music Council and some 122 of the world's leading music competitions belong to the Federation. A number of important international music organisations are associate members of the WFIMC.

[wfimc-fmcim.org](http://wfimc-fmcim.org)



European Union of Music  
Competitions for Youth

#### EUROPEAN UNION OF MUSIC COMPETITONS FOR YOUTH

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](http://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 190 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](http://www.alink-argerich.org)

#### PIANO STREET

PianoStreet.com operates worldwide from Stockholm in Sweden and was formed from the administrative base of Piano Forum, the world's largest discussion forum on piano playing on the Internet (more than 600 000 postings). The resource is Internet based and provides a sheet music library, all pieces in the digital library are connected to recordings in Naxos Music Library. There also are pedagogical materials. Members can also enjoy e-books, autograph manuscripts, mobile sheet music, the Audio Visual Study Tool (AST), a music dictionary, practice tips, etc. Piano Street has over 200 000 members worldwide.

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# Let the music guide you

As a Dutch pianist of Chinese descent, winner of the Young Pianist Foundation Piano Competition Grand Prix Yuri Egorov in 2019, Yang Yang Cai shares her views on the often less than ideal marriage between music making and competitions.

**Your playing has a special quality that reminds me of what Maria João Pires once described as being awake, open and responsive to what is happening around you. Watching you play I get the same impression. She laughs. Typical you noticed that. You have to do what you believe in, 100 percent. I try to go where the music takes me.**

**You don't do silly things.**

*Hmm, I'm curious to know what you mean!*

**Well you know the Lang Lang type of mannerism, exaggerated movements and rubatoes, which don't do the interpretation much good anyway. You make it look effortless and natural. Is that the result of ten years studying with Jan Wijn?**

*Ah, yes, he was a major influence on my playing. He inspired us all by showing how beautiful the music is. He was always very straightforward on how we should not play.*

**In a competition, don't you have to do something special to get noticed?**

*There is a very thin line between doing too much and doing too little. Finding that equilibrium - that is the real art. I once read Seong-Jin Cho saying in competitions he was afraid to show his personality. I would play very badly if I tried that.*

**But you must be aware of the jury, perhaps trying to please them sub-consciously?**

*That's a good question. With the last competition I tried to see every round as an important concert. And the competition prepared the candidates in a good way, saying the jury members exactly know and understand best, what we go through, because they have been in that situation themselves. Still, your attitude and goals are very decisive. Every candidate has thoughts, dreams if you will, about winning and having a career. But as your main focus it won't be very helpful. Also, apart from the help I got especially in the YPF competition, you can't do something like this without the support of the people around you.*

**You started very early; I saw the video of you playing at the International Steinway Festival Hamburg in 2008. You were the youngest of all.**

*That is a really long time ago. I was nine years old and it was a big event. Taking the train to Hamburg with my parents, I was accompanied by Marrigje de Jong of the Steinway Competition. It was fantastic*

*to be able to play in such a beautiful hall as the Laeiszhalle. I remember I couldn't wait to play: I had so much adrenaline and I was just running around backstage just minutes before I had to perform. Now looking at that video I think: Wow, is that really me? The second competition was about four years later but it still felt the same. At that time, I was already studying with Jan Wijn and I mostly remember how much I wanted to play the Sonatine by Ravel in the finals.*

**Are you planning to do new competitions?**

*It is quite difficult to plan anything now. I am focusing on what is in front of me and what is possible. Starting from this fall I will continue studying at the Imola Piano Academy with Enrico Pace, concerts with my piano trio and also solo recitals in the MCO and Concertgebouw. I hope they will not get cancelled. I am lucky to have enough concerts after YPF. That keeps me going and their support means a lot to me. They opened many doors for me and it had a big impact not only on my musical development but also personal development. I'm grateful for the many, many opportunities I received as part of the prizes.*

**No idea of winning?**

*How could you know this!*

**Well you won practically every competition you did.**

*I just give it my best, prepare the best I can. The result is a 'lottery', as my teacher Jan Wijn used to say: there are too many pianists and we all want to play concerts. But a competition is a very unnatural thing; music is not sports! It is good to participate in a competition in a sense that you have to prepare lots of repertoire. That is in itself a challenge. Participating in the competition has allowed me to push myself to the max. It is a scary idea to play for an international jury of great pianists, but what's the fun in being comfortable?*

**Suppose Carnegie Hall asks you to step in for a famous colleague?**

*How much time would I have, and what repertoire?*

**Let's just say it would be doable.**

*You don't give me enough info! But anyway, I would only do it if I were able to perform well. You owe that to music.*

ERIC SCHOONES



## Yang Yang Cai

STEINWAY CRAFTSMANSHIP  
PASSION AND LOVE TO DETAIL

*Queen  
Elisabeth*



Three laureats of the 2016 edition Lukáš Vondráček, Henry Kramer and Alexander Beyer together with Brussels Philharmonic and conductor Stéphane Denève.

The Queen Elisabeth Piano Competition was originally scheduled to take place in May 2020. Everything was set when the pandemic halted this momentum: candidates and jury members selected, orchestras and their respective conductors appointed, concert halls reserved, venues sold out, media all set to go ...

This has been a shock to all of us, and we are infinitely grateful to all those who are making our competition possible, who have been very flexible and supportive and have adapted their schedules to postpone the public rounds to May 2021, when they will take place on the dates initially set for the Cello competition. The candidates for the 2021 Piano competition will be those who had been selected for the 2020 competition. The postponement of the Piano competition by one year has meant that we have had to make changes to all subsequent editions of the competition in consequence. The Cello competition will take place in 2022, the Voice competition in 2023, the Violin competition in 2024, and so on. The age limit for candidates has been raised by one year for the four upcoming competitions in order not to disadvantage those musicians who had planned to participate and

who might no longer have been eligible, due to the postponement. During this period while we are on hold, we believe that it is essential that we continue to support artists and keep alive the links with our audience and friends. We have, therefore, added a number of our laureates' projects to our new website, and we have turned the spotlight on some of the magnificent material in the Competition's archives, via the website and social media. This pandemic is changing our lives considerably, but it is important to keep doing everything that is in our power to support talented young musicians. We look forward to welcoming them to Brussels in the best conditions, in order to celebrate music again in the presence of the widest audience possible.

[www.queenelisabethcompetition.be](http://www.queenelisabethcompetition.be)



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[eu.steinway.com](http://eu.steinway.com)



WFIMC Secretary General Florian Riem, together with President Didier Schnohr and Vice President Peter Paul Kainrath, in Harbin, January 2020.

# WFIMC Piano Competitions on five continents

There are hundreds of music competitions around the world, and for young artists it is often difficult to choose. All of them have different rules, different repertoires, different procedures, different prizes and opportunities. When WFIMC, the World Federation of International Music Competitions, was founded in 1957, the idea was to set a worldwide standard that would apply to all its members: an international level of artistic excellence, flawless organization, fairness and integrity. Among the federation's 120 members today, there are some of the world's most important piano competitions, such as the Busoni Competition in Bolzano, the Chopin Competition in Warsaw, the Munich ARD Competition, Geneva Music Competition, Franz Liszt Piano Competition in Utrecht or the Tchaikovsky, Rubinstein and Van Cliburn Competitions. At WFIMC we build relationships and we learn from each other.

New members benefit from the experienced ones, while the big competitions learn from new ones doing some extraordinary things. We provide many benefits such as consultancy, networking, and strategic partnerships, but we are not a commercial organisation: we are a group of people who believe in the highest possible artistic standard. In many countries – especially in Asia – the WFIMC is a standard that performers and schools relate to. In certain countries this can even mean that if you win a major prize in a WFIMC competition, you are exempt from military service to allow you to further your career. During this past year, most of our members postponed their competitions, extended deadlines, eased restrictions and waived application fees. The following is an overview of WFIMC's Piano Competitions around the world, and their upcoming competition dates.

## Upcoming WFIMC Piano Competitions

**CITY**  
 Competition Name  
 Competition dates | Application deadline

Please check [wfimc-fmcim.org](http://wfimc-fmcim.org) for individual competition information and websites! All information is subject to change.

- BARCELONA**  
*Maria Canals Intl. Music Competition*  
 3.13.–3.25.2021 | past
- BELGRADE**  
*International Jeunesses Musicales Competition*  
 next piano competition date tbc
- BERGEN**  
*International Edvard Grieg Piano Competition*  
 9.17.–9.25.2021 | 4.20.2021
- BOLZANO**  
*Ferruccio Busoni International Piano Competition*  
 8.25.–9.3.2021 | past
- BONN**  
*International Telekom Beethoven Competition*  
 12.2.–12.11.2021 | 5.14.2021
- BRATISLAVA**  
*Intl. Johann Nepomuk Hummel Piano Competition*  
 9.6.–9.12.2021 | 5.31.2021
- BRUSSELS**  
*Queen Elisabeth Competition*  
 5.3.–5.29.2021 | past
- BUCHAREST**  
*George Enescu Intl. Competition, Piano Section*  
 5.21.–5.23.2021 | past
- BUDAPEST**  
*Liszt Ferenc International Piano Competition*  
 9.12.–9.19.2021 | tba
- BYDGOSZCZ**  
*Paderewski International Piano Competition*  
 11.6.–11.20.2022
- CALGARY**  
*Honens International Piano Competition*  
 10.14.–10.22.2021 | past
- CLEVELAND**  
*Cleveland International Piano Competition*  
 7.25.–8.8.2021 | past
- DORTMUND**  
*International Schubert Competition Dortmund*  
 9.24.–10.3.2021 | 5.9.2021
- DUBLIN**  
*Dublin International Piano Competition*  
 5.13.–5.24.2022 | tba
- EPINAL**  
*Epinal International Piano Competition*  
 3.19.–3.28.2021 | 2.15.2021
- FORT WORTH**  
*Van Cliburn International Piano Competition*  
 6.2.–6.18.2022 | 10.14.2021
- GENEVA**  
*Geneva International Music Competition (Piano)*  
 Autumn 2022 | Spring 2022 dates tba
- GLASGOW**  
*Scottish International Piano Competition*  
 dates tba
- GRAZ**  
*Intl. Chamber Music Competition "Franz Schubert and Modern Music"*  
 2.5.–2.14.2022 | 10.12.2021
- HAMAMATSU**  
*Hamamatsu Intl. Piano Competition*  
 11.12.–11.29.2021 | 3.31.2021
- HELSINKI**  
*International Maj Lind Piano Competition*  
 10.14.–10.27.2022 | tba
- HONG KONG**  
*Hong Kong International Piano Competition*  
 10.10.–10.27.2022 | tba
- ISTANBUL**  
*International Piano Competition Istanbul Orchestra 'Sion*  
 11.12.–11.19.2022 | tba
- JAÉN**  
*International Piano Competition Prize Jaén*  
 4.8.–4.17.2021 | 2.18.2021
- KATRINEHOLM**  
*Swedish International Duo Competition*  
 8.19.–8.21.2022 | tba
- KYIV**  
*Intl. Competition for Young Pianists in Memory of Vladimir Horowitz*  
 4.26.–5.5.2022 (intermediate group) | tba

# WORLD FEDERATION OF INTERNATIONAL MUSIC COMPETITIONS

The keys to success.

## LEEDS

Leeds International Piano Competition  
9.8.–9.18.2021 | past

## LEIPZIG

International Johann Sebastian Bach Competition  
7.11.–7.23.2022 | tba

## MANCHESTER

RNCM James Mottram International Piano Competition  
11.29.–12.4.2021

## MONTREAL

Concours Musical International de Montréal  
5.25.–6.2.2021 | past

## MONZA

Rina Sala Gallo International Piano Competition  
9.24.–10.1.2022 | tba

## MOSCOW

International Tchaikovsky Competition  
2023 dates tba

## MUNICH

ARD International Music Competition  
8.30.–9.8.2021 (Piano Duo)  
2022 (Piano) dates tba

## NAKHON PATHOM

Thailand International Piano Competition  
2021 tba

## ORLÉANS

Orléans International Piano Competition  
2022 dates tba

## PARIS

Concours Long-Thibaud-Crespin  
Nov. 2023 dates tba

## PRAGUE

Prague Spring International Music Competition  
5.6.–5.15.2021 | 12.1.2020

## PRETORIA

Unisa International Piano Competition  
1.22.–2.3.2024 | tba

## SALZBURG

International Mozart Competition Salzburg  
2022 dates tba

## SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

The Gurwitz  
2024 dates tba

## SANTANDER

Paloma O'Shea Santander International Piano Competition  
2022 dates tba

## SENDAI

Sendai International Music Competition  
5.19.–6.26.2022 | tba

## SEOUL

Seoul International Music Competition (Piano)  
2021 (tba) | past

## SYDNEY

Sydney International Piano Competition  
2021 | past

## TAKAMATSU

Takamatsu International Piano Competition  
3.15.–3.28.2022 | 9.20.2021

## TBLISI

Tbilisi International Piano Competition  
10.1.–10.11.2022 | tba

## TEL AVIV

Arthur Rubinstein International Piano Master Competition  
4.18.–5.3.2021 | past

## TONGYEONG

ISANGYUN Competition (Piano)  
10.28.–11.5.2023

## TROMSO

Tromso Top of the World International Piano Competition  
Next dates tba

## UTRECHT

International Franz Liszt Piano Competition  
9.22.–10.1.2022 | 8.31.2021

## VALENCIA

International Piano Competition Iturbi Prize  
6.23.–7.2.2021 | 1.14.2021

## VIENNA

International Beethoven Piano Competition Vienna  
4.19.–4.28.2021 | past

## VILNIUS

International M. K. Ciurlionis Piano and Organ Competition  
2023 dates tba

## VINA DEL MAR

International Musical Competition Dr. Luis Sigall  
2022 dates tba

## WARSAW

Fryderyk Chopin International Piano Competition  
10.2.–10.23.2021 | past

## WEIMAR

International Franz Liszt Piano Competition  
10.27.–11.7.2021 | 6.1.2021

## YEREVAN

Aram Khachaturian International Competition (Piano)  
6.6.–6.14.2023 | tba

## ZURICH

Géza Anda International Piano Competition  
5.27.–6.5.2021 | 1.31.2021

## ZWICKAU

International Robert Schumann Contest for Pianists and Singers  
2021 tba | past

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SUSANNE DIESNER

The award ceremony in 2019 at the Robert Schumann Saal in Düsseldorf

## The Robert Schumann Competition for Young Pianists

The Robert Schumann Competition for young pianists under the age of 20 will be organised for the third time this year. The previous two editions took place in 2017 and 2019. Despite the Corona crisis, there is an immense interest from young pianists and the musical audience in Düsseldorf. However, the pandemic has forced the organisation to make some adjustments to the procedure for the competition.

The first round, with usually around 60 participants, shall now be taking place online. The participants admitted to the competition, will be contacted in person and will record a live performance during an individual time slot, allocated by the directorship of the competition. In this way the competition guarantees fair competing terms to every participant. The video recordings will be assembled and presented to the jury members. The members of the jury will watch and listen to the recordings simultaneously and will give their votes directly afterwards; as in the case of a live competition. The video recordings of the participants will be available online for worldwide audiences on 19th and 20th of December, 2020. After the closure of the online round and the jury evaluation, 18 participants will be admitted to the second round in Düsseldorf, which will be taking place on 25th and 26th of February, 2021 in front of a live audience at the concert hall of the Robert Schumann Music Academy. Because of the Corona crisis, the final round on 27th of February, 2021 will be a chamber music performance, unlike

the previous edition when the competitors performed a concerto movement with an orchestra. The first round will be taking place no matter what. However, the invitations to the second and third round depend on the development of the current situation, especially on the travel restrictions of the competitors. The international nature of the competition should be sustained, with participants from more than 30 countries, like the previous editions of the competition. The jury of the competition consists of Barbara Szczepanska, Germany (chair); Michael Becker, Germany; Pavel Gililov, Austria; Peiyu Huang, China; Wolfgang Manz, Germany; Eric Le Sage, France; Natalia Trull, Russia; and Manfred Trojahn – composer, who will be a part of the jury in the second round when his work is to be performed.

[www.schumann-competition.com](http://www.schumann-competition.com)



An impression of the open air prizewinners' concert after this year's online competition in Ettlingen (Germany)

But then, the Corona virus came... The grave situation in the world and the lockdowns created awful dilemmas. Especially the uncertainty how long the problems and travel restrictions would last made it almost impossible to plan. Most of the organisers decided to cancel the competition. Some of them postponed the event several months, hoping for some improvements, but then had to cancel again. If life had been normal, the year 2020 would have been full of major piano competitions: Brussels (Queen Elisabeth), Tel Aviv (Arthur Rubinstein), Vienna (Beethoven), Utrecht (Liszt), Montreal, Sydney, Cleveland and, last but not least, the famous Chopin Competition in Warsaw. Altogether, more than 150(!) international piano competitions were cancelled in 2020. Most of them were postponed to the next year, but some organisers have also given up on 2021 already, and hope that 2022 will bring some relief. To cancel or postpone a competition has, of course, major consequences. The jury and all pianists who already applied, must immediately be informed. Most competitions would then also pay back the application fees that had already been received, but some organisers held to the (common) rule that the application fee is non-refundable and stated that the paid amount will automatically be valid for next year, ignoring the possibility that the pianist might have different plans. Understandably, this has caused mixed feelings and also quite some frustration.

### Online competitions

Quite a few organisers decided to let the competition continue by having it as an online event this year: the pianists can take part by submitting a video recording and do not need to travel. The jury members do not need to travel either: they can judge by watching the recorded performances from their own homes.

It is good that organisers are looking for a solution in these difficult times, but there are a few setbacks in having a music competition online:

- The absence of an audience
- Missing the inspiration and opportunity to perform on stage in a beautiful concert hall
- No opportunity to experience, learn and adjust to the different acoustics and a good concert grand piano
- The lack of contact and immediate reactions from people in the audience and no chance to meet the jury members
- The big difference in quality of the submitted recordings and unequal circumstances and conditions.

Apart from this, the pianists will wonder:

- Who are on the jury?
- When and how do the jury members judge?
- Will all the jury members listen to each recording from the beginning until the end?
- Which rules for the jury are applied to aggregate the votes and to establish a verdict and the results?
- Does the competition organiser have some control: is the proper commitment of each jury member checked?

# More and more Online Competitions

The year 2020 will long be remembered.

The Corona virus had an enormous impact on the lives of millions of people all over the world.

Not only their social lives were hugely affected, but also many activities had to be adjusted and restricted.

Especially musicians and all those who have their work and occupation in the field of performing arts have been suffering a lot. Not only the musicians themselves, but also the impresarios, organisers of music series and directors of concert halls have experienced great difficulties and must see how to survive. Let us take a closer look at how the organisers of international piano competitions have been trying to cope with the situation.

Organising an international piano competition requires much preparation. It needs to be announced well in advance, in order to inform pianists in various countries, to get their attention and then to allow them enough time to consider participation, finalise the application and, of course, to choose and study the repertoire to be performed in the competition. At the same time, the competition organiser must bring together a good jury. It has been generally adopted that an international music competition should have at least seven jury members of whom a majority should have a different nationality than the country where the event is organised. If the competition already has a good reputation, it will attract many applications and a preselection of candidates has to be made. It takes at least one year to organise a major competition properly.



# CONCOURS GEZA-ANDA

15<sup>TH</sup> INTERNATIONAL PIANO COMPETITION  
**ZURICH 27 MAY > 5 JUNE 2021**

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### PRIZES

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**GEZA-ANDA.CH**

INFORMATION  
& APPLICATION  
from 1 December 2020  
to 31 January 2021

GEZA-ANDA FOUNDATION © MIMIKDESIGN 2020

A screenshot of one of the video streaming sessions of the StayHome Int'l Piano Competition, showing the jury members while they are all simultaneously listening to the recorded performances.



And then, there are the organisational aspects and timelines that are very important for the participants. It should be stipulated when and how the recording has to be made. At most competitions, the competition repertoire is more or less specified. Naturally, one would expect that the contestant will make a recording of these pieces. But especially when the required repertoire is quite common or even entirely free, the contestant may very well consider submitting an earlier recording. (It might be a recording that he/she already made for another competition, or an excellent recording made at an earlier live competition). The contestant is allowed to do so if there are no specific restrictions regarding the time frame of the recording. The rules may also be more or less strict with respect to the number of takes of the recording: at some competitions, contestants may submit several separate recordings of the various pieces, while other competitions require that the entire programme is recorded in one performance, similar as to when the contestant would go on stage to perform his pieces during the competition. Most online competitions request that the submitted video recordings be unedited. This does not prevent a pianist from making ten recordings and submitting the one that is considered the best. Now that the format for these online competitions is being explored more and more, we can see several interesting refinements:

- To ensure that the recording was not made earlier, the organisers send the contestant a unique code or phrase that has to be said or shown at the start of the recording;

- To give the contestants an opportunity to produce a high-quality video recording under more equal circumstances, a few competitions have arranged studios at different sites in the world, where a fine instrument is available and a professional recording can be made. (For example, the Virtu(al)oso Competition and the Busoni Competition, in collaboration with Steinway & Sons. Most fittingly, the Busoni Competition came up with the term "Glocal Piano Project," a contraction of global and local.)
- A few competitions announced a specific period during which all the videos are being streamed and during which the jury members will watch and judge. The StayHome Competition and the Vigo IPC even showed in real-time all the jury members in different windows on the screen, so that everybody can see that they are indeed listening to the pianist during his entire performance.

Naturally, we all hope that the situation in the world will get better and that our lives will become more normal again. It will be wonderful when all the musicians can travel and give concerts again in full halls. The sound of a recording is never the same as in a hall.

GUSTAV ALINK

27.09. – 03.10.2021

# BRAHMS PIANO COMPETITION DETMOLD

**NEW:** Open to competitors from all countries  
(age limit: 35)

**Patron:** Paul Badura-Skoda (†)

**Prizes:** 11,000 € + CD production and concert engagements

**Concerto final with** Nordwestdeutsche Philharmonie

**Registration deadline:** 30.04.2021

**Information | Registration:** [www.brahmscompetition-detmold.de](http://www.brahmscompetition-detmold.de)



In collaboration with

*Blüthner*  
ALFRED REINHOLD STIFTUNG

The Brahms Piano Competition Detmold is kindly supported by  
Klaus Kühn | Dr. Arend Oetker | Professor Dr. Rudolf Schmid

**HfM Detmold**  
HOCHSCHULE FÜR MUSIK

Prizewinners Rie Kibayashi  
and Fuko Ishii together with  
Dr. Ingbert Blüthner-Haessler  
and jury members for the finals  
Andreas Boyde, Mamiko Suda,  
Andrea Bonatta, Konrad Elser,  
Lutz Rademacher and  
Jacob Leuschner



COMPETITION PROFILE

## Brahms Piano Competition

Detmold University of Music is planning the third edition of its Brahms Piano Competition in cooperation with the Alfred Reinhold Foundation and Julius Blüthner Pianofortefabrik next year. The profile of the competition has once again been expanded: after the university had introduced an orchestra finale last year, the competition is now organised at an international level.

The former restriction to students from German, Austrian and Swiss music colleges no longer applies. "We are delighted that after the successful first two editions, we can now hold an international competition and accept registrations from pianists of all nationalities thanks to further increased support," says Jacob Leuschner, Artistic Director and piano professor at HfM Detmold.

The third edition of the competition will be held from 27 September to 3 October, 2021, under the patronage of one of the 20th century's greatest pianists, Paul Badura-Skoda, who died last year. The registration deadline for applicants who must be 35 or younger is 30 April, 2021. The Nordwestdeutsche Philharmonie under the baton of Florian Ludwig could be won for the first time for the finale, where the finalists will have the opportunity to demonstrate their skills with one of Brahms' piano concertos. A total of € 11,000 in prize money will be awarded. Numerous follow-up engagements as well as the production of a CD by the Erich Thienhaus Institute have again been secured. Live broadcasting over the internet is also to be repeated.

The third edition of the competition will have an international jury. It will comprise renowned professors from international music colleges: Young-Lan Han (Seoul), Ivan Klánský (Prague), Einar Steen-Nøkleberg (Oslo), Catherine Vickers (Essen/Frankfurt), Jacob Leuschner (Detmold) as well as conductor and Detmold

university professor Florian Ludwig, who will complete the jury in the finale.

Each of the four rounds of the competition will include a substantial piano work by Brahms, with participants having to explore both his bold early works (sonatas, ballads and variations) and his significant late cycles. In addition, the competition places great emphasis on the composers Schönberg, Berg, Webern, Reger, Bartók and Hindemith, who were directly influenced by Brahms – a special prize will be awarded for the interpretation of one of their works. Brahms is closely connected to Detmold – he had his first appointment at the court of the then residential city from 1857 to 1859.

Brahms Piano Competition Detmold is now open to pianists from around the world. The former restriction to music colleges from Germany, Austria and Switzerland no longer applies. Registration deadline for international pianists is 30 April, 2021.

More information about the competition  
and how to register for it can be found at:  
[www.brahmscompetition-detmold.de](http://www.brahmscompetition-detmold.de)

# Artists of today

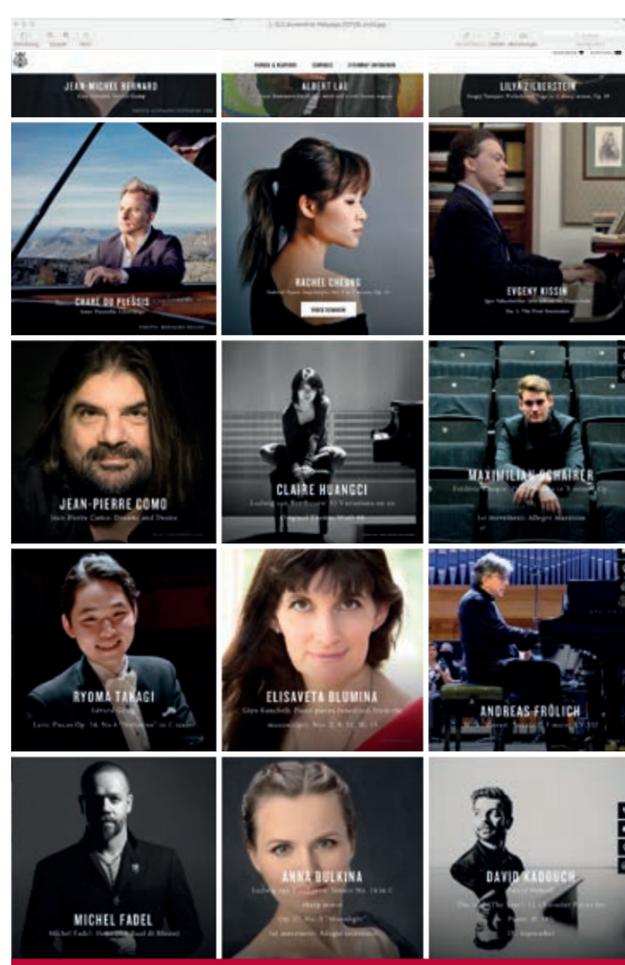
Among the many concerts that had to be cancelled were of course many within the *Steinway Prizewinner Concerts Network* too. Wherever possible, efforts were made not to call them off but to postpone them. In some cases, it worked out already, like in the case of the recital of Eric Lu (winner Leeds 2018) at the Hamburg Elbphilharmonie. It was meant to conclude the SPC-season 2019/20. But there was no chance in April! He eventually played it in September, as the opening concert of the new series 2020/21.

## Steinway's Lunch Concerts

In a spontaneous response to the lockdowns, we invented a new exclusive platform on our website, which enables pianists to stay connected with the audience: *Steinway's Lunch Concerts* ([eu.steinway.com/de/manufaktur/steinway-lunch-concerts](http://eu.steinway.com/de/manufaktur/steinway-lunch-concerts)). More than 100 pianists from all five continents made recordings themselves at home with their own equipment such as smartphones or tablet computers. Every day from April 1 to June 30, at 1:00 p.m. – lunch time – we released new videos; a surprising mix of any genre, nationality, age, popularity, etc.

Much like the artists, the piano technicians also had to stay at home, of course. It was impossible for them to come by quickly for tuning, so not all pianos were in top condition as is usual for recordings. Actually, it did not really matter here. One had to take life just as it was! In these situations, it was just about the spirit, for the artists and the listeners as well. The depth of music and emotion counted more than perfection! The appreciation was great – and many of the approximately 300,000 visitors of the Steinway website may have reconsidered what the true essence of music is ...

Side by side with celebrities like Christoph Eschenbach and Lilya Zilberstein, Evgeny Kissin and Helmut Deutsch, Gianna Nannini and Jacob Karlzon and many more, numerous young pianists had their place here as well. As many as 16 international piano competitions were represented by 22 prizewinners. This was the most unusual stage of the *Steinway Prizewinner Concerts Network* so far ... Not only concerts had to be cancelled or at least postponed this year. The world of competitions also came to a standstill, but not completely! Some organizers would not give in and still went on in 2020. They developed amazing alternatives on stage as well as on the internet and asked Steinway to team up. We happily did!



Website Steinway's Lunch Concerts



Recording for Cleveland Virtu(al)oso at Steinway Hamburg, Jonas Aumiller, Lemuel Grave

Cleveland Virtu(al)oso, the masked recording team at Steinway Hamburg



Optimism, flexibility, creativity and courage were perfect virtues in 2020 for standing against the Corona challenges. Steinway used them to find solutions together with our partners. Gerrit Glaner tells the story.

## Virtu(al)oso

Being all of a sudden without income, was – and still is – a horrible experience for all artists! Especially the young generation has suffered extremely.

Piano Cleveland, after shifting their regular piano competition to 2021, set a standard by inventing an online version called *Virtu(al)oso* ([www.pianocleveland.org/competitions/virtualoso-global-piano-competition](http://www.pianocleveland.org/competitions/virtualoso-global-piano-competition)) for thirty selected pianists. Here, the prize money was not shared just between the three winners but between all participants. Additionally, the online audience was invited to donate.

Each pianist had to play two rounds in the same session in front of cameras and microphones. Steinway, as artistic partner, turned five Steinway Halls in Cleveland, New York, London, Hamburg and Beijing into recording studios, strictly following the Corona regulations. With those videos, this competition was virtually and successfully held on the internet.

## Glocal Piano Project

The first inquiry to Steinway, to cooperate in a virtual piano competition came from the *Concorso Busoni*, shortly after the lockdowns. Its preliminary stages were originally scheduled to take place this summer in Bolzano, Italy, but Covid-19 jeopardized it. The competition's response was as creative as courageous: "If the participants are prevented from travelling to us in Bolzano, let's meet them where they are! Even if it is in 19 countries worldwide!" As a long-standing partner of The Busoni, and having globally all the facilities needed, Steinway was happy to join forces. It was the start of the "Glocal Piano Project" ([www.busoni-mahler.eu/en/pagina-busoni-en](http://www.busoni-mahler.eu/en/pagina-busoni-en)). A big task. In November 2020, 97 young pianists from 28 nations got the opportunity to play at their country of residence on the D-models of Steinway showrooms, called *Glocal Hotspots@Steinway*, in 23 cities around the globe. It is worth it to name them all: Los Angeles, Houston, Cleveland, New York, Toronto, Barcelona, London, Paris, Bern, Hamburg, Munich, Verona, Vienna, Budapest, Warsaw, Helsinki, Moscow, Seoul, Tokyo, Hong Kong, Taipei, Beijing and Sydney.

All recitals were planned to take place in front of live audiences in order to have a concert atmosphere. However, Covid-19 jeopardized this again: New lockdowns prevented that in many countries.



Glocal Piano Project, Banner



Glocal Hotspot at Steinway Paris, Nour Ayadi



Glocal Hotspot at Steinway New York, Wanfeng Han

Glocal Hotspot at Steinway Munich, José Navarro



# 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 five years ago 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: April 2021  
For all inquiries please contact: [h.bruger@pianist-magazin.de](mailto:h.bruger@pianist-magazin.de)

[www.pianistmagazine.nl](http://www.pianistmagazine.nl)  [www.pianist-magazin.de](http://www.pianist-magazin.de)

*“PIANIST is a quality magazine of great value to our branch. It is a true asset!”*

**GUIDO ZIMMERMANN**  
PRESIDENT STEINWAY & SONS EUROPE



Glocal Hotspot at Steinway Seoul, Jihyung Yoon



Glocal Hotspot at Steinway: worldwide map

Nevertheless, it could not stop the project. The recordings of the auditions will be available online on various platforms, including Steinway's course. There they will be judged by an international jury and also by an online audience. They will remain accessible until the final stages in August 2021. The recitals of the selected finalists will also be broadcast by the media partners Amadeus.TV and Takt1.

### Orléans Concours International

Against all odds, there were also analogue activities this year that took place live on stage. The *Orléans Concours International* ([www.oci-piano.com](http://www.oci-piano.com)), which focuses on music of the 20th and 21st century, was not willing to postpone its concours to the next year. They condensed the first rounds to a DVD audition, from which they selected seven semi-finalists to play live on stage. It worked out: all of them arrived in Orléans in time and performed as always on two Steinway D-grands with one for the “regular” repertoire and one for works requiring special preparations. And there again, flexibility was a helpful tool: When a new shutdown became likely, they spontaneously played the final concert two days earlier – timely before the announcement!

### Cyprus, Great Pianists of the 21st Century

The winners of the competitions mentioned received several invitations for *Steinway Prizewinner Concerts* at international concert venues. One is a brand-new concert series in Nicosia, Cyprus, which just recently started in November with three concerts: Emanuel Ivanov (Concorso Busoni 2019), Martin James Bartlett (Cleveland Virtu(al)oso 2020) and Cunmo Yin (Beethoven Bonn, 2019). It was created just in order to be a member of the Network and to become a partner of international piano competitions. In highest respect for the young artists, the organizers call it “Great Pianists of the 21st Century”. This title perfectly reflects the spirit Steinway is convinced of to be true: The so-called “artists of tomorrow” are indeed already “artists of today”. Stimulated by the enormous success in Cyprus, the organizing *Avantgarde Cultural Foundation* has already pencilled dates for more prizewinners in November 2021. Corona cannot stop them, they will continue. So will Steinway.



Concours International de piano de Orléans, Salle de l'Institut – Conservatoire d'Orléans, Chico Miyagawa

After the Steinway Prizewinner Concert in Nicosia: Cunmo Yin, Stavros Kyriakides



GERRIT GLANER

# Liszt Utrecht

Piano Competition



Minkyu Kim  
South Korea



Matyáš Novák  
Czech Republic



Viktoria Baskakova  
Russia



Irina Chistiakova  
Russia



Asagi Nakata  
Japan



Priscila Navarro  
Peru



Leonardo Pierdomenico  
Italy

# LISZTEN UP!

One of these fourteen pianists would have been the new winner of the Liszt Competition 2020. Even though this event was cancelled, each of them still deserves your attention. Discover them, and let us know who would have been your winner.



Nicola Pantani  
Italy



Ivan Vihor  
Croatia



Andrew Yiangou  
United Kingdom



Tamta Magradze  
Georgia



Anton Yashkin  
Russia



Hang Zhong  
China

A prize winner at major competitions himself, Jacques Rouvier enjoys an international career as a brilliant pianist, but now teaching is his main occupation. After 35 years at the Conservatory of Paris, he also accepted professorships in the last decade at the University of the Arts in Berlin, the Mozarteum in Salzburg, and Musica Mundi in Waterloo. He talks about his concerns regarding competitions.



Jacques Rouvier

## A question of character

Piano competitions have become an industry. There are simply too many; it's like a virus. When I started there were only a few and nowadays the moment students enter the school, they immediately want to go to a competition. But that is impossible!

In order to participate in a competition you have to become a good musician first. I mean not only a technician, or perhaps I should say a mechanic, because technique is so much more: sound, phrasing, expression. So I ask them: do you want to have a career or do you want to become a good musician? I don't pretend to have the solution, but I think we need more discipline.

The student should sit down with a teacher and make a plan. Are you ready to participate? Which competition is good for you and what repertoire will you choose? More importantly, don't try a different competition every three months. A real danger is that the student keeps on playing the same repertoire for years, which is a real pity because when we are young the music is imprinted in our minds and muscles, in our blood.

Some don't have a career as a result of a big prize. Arcadi Volodos never did a competition. He was my student, or should I say I was

his student? I don't know. Hélène Grimaud only did the Tchaikovsky competition and that didn't launch her career as a pianist either.

I did my first competition when I was 16 because my teacher said it would be good to try. I had no idea. I was still in the conservatory in Paris, but I went and got the first prize.

Perhaps the best example I can give is Frank Braley. He was a bit like me. He was in my class and had a brilliant mind, with an interest in every form of art: he took up astrophysics studies, getting up at six every morning to travel to the university. He once played Rachmaninoff's *Corelli Variations* for me. It would have made a perfect recording but when I told him he thought I was crazy. I really had to urge him to do a competition. After a few failed applications, he was accepted for the Queen Elisabeth at the last moment. He didn't take it too seriously travelling back home between rounds to teach his students. It was his first competition and he got the first prize.

ERIC SCHOONES

Go to [www.liszt.nl/favourite](http://www.liszt.nl/favourite)

## Entering the Liszt Competition

# Labour of love

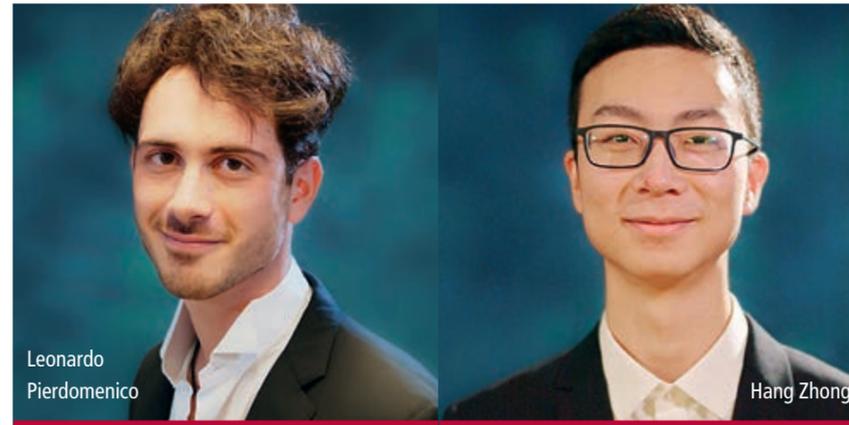
The Utrecht Liszt Competition is one of the most demanding; preparing for such a tour de force is a big event for any young pianist. A good result in the pre-selections raised the hopes of 14 candidates, but unfortunately the corona crisis left director Rob Hilberink with no other option than to cancel the event completely. Why do young pianists want to undertake this labour of love and devote themselves for months to learning and mastering thousands of notes? Where do they find the determination and stamina? And what would they ask their idol?

### Leonardo Pierdomenico | 1992, Italy

I want to be on stage because I practiced a lot to try to convey the message of what I feel. A highlight in my piano career was the 2017 Van Cliburn Piano Competition. That was a dream. If not a musician, I would probably be an art professor or a painter, perhaps even an athlete. My question for Franz Liszt: How can you always be so balanced and so nice to people?

### Irina Christiakova | 1990, Russia

I want to be on stage because it's not my profession, it's my life. It's so important to feel the emotion from the public coming back to you. One highlight was my recital in Het Concertgebouw in Amsterdam: an amazing experience. My mother told me not to try to be like someone else. If not a musician, I would be a figure skater. In the future I hope I will be a better version of myself.



Leonardo Pierdomenico

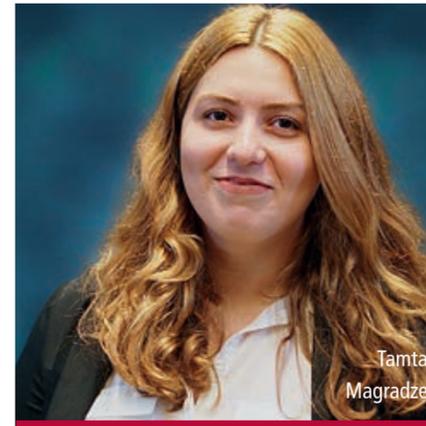
Hang Zhong



Irina Christiakova



Ivan Vihor



Tamta Magradze

### Ivan Vihor | 1997, Croatia

I want to be on stage because I feel free trying to enjoy the flow of the emotions shared with the audience. A highlight was winning several competitions. I also hold the title of FIDE master in chess; I can play for hours, sometimes it's excessive. I also love red wine. My question for Liszt: which woman was his favourite. I am serious. If not a musician, I would be in arts: a writer or an architect.

### Tamta Magradze | 1995, Georgia

I want to be on stage because I just love it. It's my life and my only wish from childhood. Every concert is a celebration for me, a really big thing. A highlight was when I got the DAAD stipend to study in Germany. My family told me to be kind and honest, strong and hard working. I love fairy tales! If not a musician, I could be a psychologist. I like to be happy; this is the main thing.

### Hang Zhong | 1999, China

I want to be on stage because I want to share my music with other people, because playing by yourself is sort of lonely. If other people can understand what I'm trying to say with my music, I would be very happy. A highlight was when, in a competition, I realised the best music could only come from myself. So, I started to take it seriously. If not a musician, I would be a computer science worker.

### Nicola Pantani | 1995, Italy

I want to be on stage to play for the public and not for myself. A highlight was to play in Teatro La Fenice in Venezia or the Fazioli Concert Hall in Sacile. I would ask Liszt for advice about the Sonata. My guilty pleasure is to improvise on well-known pieces. My mother always told me not to practice too much and go out with friends. If not a musician, I'd probably be a painter or a writer, who knows!

### Minkyu Kim | 1995, South Korea

I want to be on stage because I want to play and share my music with the audience. A highlight was playing all transcendental etudes in my graduation recital. I would have tons of questions for Liszt. If not a musician, I would be a botanist. In the future I hope not only to be a musician, but also a scholar, like Leslie Howard.

### Andrew Yiangou | 1992, United Kingdom

I want to be on stage to share music that at a young age reduced me to tears, gave energy, hope, and expressed everything I would like to give to other people. My highlight would be to see how music affects people. I would love to listen to Liszt playing everything he ever played and learn from him. Never to try to be what someone else wants you to be.



Nicola Pantani



Minkyu Kim



Andrew Yiangou



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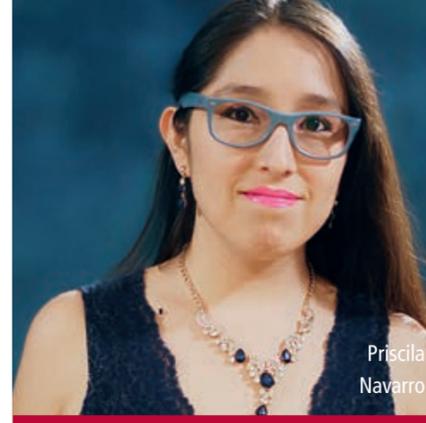
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Priscila Navarro

**Priscila Navarro | 1994, Peru**

I want to be on the stage because I love connecting with people through my music. Especially people of different cultures who might react to music in the same way I do. A highlight in my career was my recital debut at Carnegie Hall in 2013. The best advice for me was to trust in my own talent and love for the music and not to worry about all these career and pianistic things that we have to deal with.



Yeon-Min Park

**Yeon-Min Park | 1990, South Korea**

I want to be on stage because I feel alive on the stage. When I look at the audience, I feel like I should be here. I hoped this present competition would have been a highlight in my career. I just keep going always. Nothing can stop me. I like to do something new and challenging. There are many things I like. If not a musician, I would be the person who loves music. I just want to be a better person, as a musician and as a person.



Anton Yashkin

**Anton Yashkin | 1998, Russia**

I want to be on stage because I love music and I love to play on stage. A highlight in my career was winning the Franz Liszt Piano Competition in Weimar. If not a musician, I love chess and auto mechanics. My mother always told me just love music. In my future I will be a professional pianist and professor at Moscow Conservatory, and I'll play concerts!

**Asagi Nakata | 1995, Japan**

I want to be on stage because I have so many things to say! I feel this huge responsibility to play to the very best, and to express all my emotions. A highlight in my career was this competition three years ago. I learned so much and it has remained in my heart. A question for Liszt? Just one question? My mother told me always keep smiling, especially on stage. If not in music, I would be a master chef.

**Matyáš Novák | 1998, Czech Republic**

I want to be on stage because I love Liszt. I always play Liszt. Highlight in my career were some international competitions. I don't come from a musical family and my parents told me I can do anything I want, but that I have to do it with love, and you have to try to be best. If not a musician, my biggest hobby is to breeding hens and chickens. Music is not the only thing in my life.

**Viktorija Baskakova | 1997, Russia**

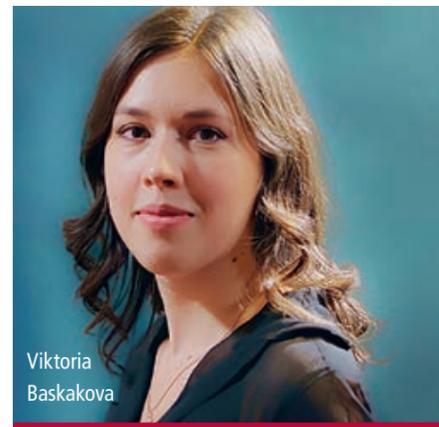
I want to be on stage, because I really like to play and make an introduction for myself. A highlight in my career is one performance I had with an orchestra. It was amazing. My mother always told me I should be a good person, and if I would like to reach excellent results, I should work and work. If not a musician, maybe I would be a doctor. But music is the important thing to me, and I would like to do this all my life.



Asagi Nakata



Matyáš Novák



Viktorija Baskakova



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WALLONIE - BRUXELLES

EUROPEAN  
PIANO TEACHERS  
ASSOCIATION

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## COMPETITION PROFILE

Yang Yang Cai is awarded the first prize in 2019, on the left Siewert Verster (chairman of jury) and on the right Thomas Beijer, the new artistic director.

Over two decades the Young Pianist Foundation (YPF) has worked tirelessly to assist talented young pianists in the Netherlands. Seven times the YPF has created an important and inspiring stage for young talents to shine, and for exciting careers to be launched. Known for its impressive panel of international jury members and for the variety and difficulty of the required repertoire, it goes without saying that young top talent sees participation in the YPF Competition as a very useful stimulus and a stepping stone towards the major competitions, such as the Queen Elisabeth Competition in Brussels.

## Young Pianist Foundation

Now, after twenty years, the need for internationalisation of the competition as a logical and necessary continuation of YPF's work has become self evident; therefore, the next YPF Piano Competition/Grand Prix Youri Egorov – which will be held in February 2022 in Amsterdam – will be open to applicants from abroad, more specifically for students with a European passport or studying at a Dutch Conservatory. It will be a major step forward for piano pedagogy in the Netherlands since Dutch pianists, both teachers and educational programmes within the conservatories then must actually measure themselves against their “peers” from Europe. Responsible Talent Development is the basic idea of the YPF; like the original one, the new YPF European Piano Competition Grand Prix Youri Egorov, as the competition is now officially called, will also be set up from this pedagogical ethos, which means that laureates will not be “left alone” but will be guided on their way to the top. The repertoire for the Competition 2022 will be rather free; however, the most important style periods will be requested. Prior to the competition, potential candidates will be selected by means

of YouTube submissions; the semi-final and final will take place in an important venue in Amsterdam: the Muziekgebouw aan 't IJ and YPF will offer its laureates great opportunities for concerts, masterclasses and a high standard of prize money. Ramon van Engelenhoven, winner of the first prize and Grand Prix Youri Egorov 2015, commented: “The competition was a national event, but in terms of repertoire more difficult than many international piano competitions. And the international jury makes it so educational, not to mention the prospect of performing under Valery Gergiev. What other competition gives you such an opportunity?” Unfortunately the year 2020 has shown us the dramatic impact of a worldwide pandemic, not only regarding the health of so many people but also culture; YPF strongly believes that it is now of crucial importance to create a little bit of “light” at the end of the tunnel, a long-term goal for which participants can prepare at least a year and focus on everything that has to do with the competition.

www.ypf.nl



MARCO BORGREVE

Besides a remarkable international career as a truly unique artist, Nelson Goerner is also in demand as a pedagogue, ever since he took over Maria Tipo's class at the Geneva Conservatory. He also briefly took a professorship in Berlin at the Barenboim-Said Akademie. Being on the jury of competitions, he is also very selective: last year he was at the Tucuman International Piano Competition in Argentina; this year he will be in Brussels at the Queen Elisabeth Competition and in Warsaw at the Chopin Competition. Apart from that, he will only be in the Bach Competition in Leipzig and the George Enescu in Bucharest, both in 2022. "I don't take many juries; it's a huge responsibility and you cannot do that every month."

Nelson Goerner

## The long way

When I am on the jury of a competition, instead of following my personal preferences too much, I try to understand a pianist's interpretation, as there are many ways to play music as it is so universal. Of course, you feel more attracted to something that is more congenial to your own views, and that is the danger. In general, we are all fallible, but you are not on the jury to find your own conception through someone else. But rather you should be trying to understand other ideas: when it's musically convincing it can win you over. You can even expand your horizon on a piece or a phrase. That's a wonderful thing. However, for that you need to be openminded; otherwise the work on a competition is not for you. I am very conscious of this because I know it's a trap. We all react instinctively to what we like.

You also need to surpass some limitations when you are in a competition that is, for example, exclusively devoted to the works of one composer and you hear one Ballade of Chopin forty times – that can be very difficult. The last candidate deserves all your attention; you have to be there completely and that is a big challenge you can learn from. A competition can be very well organised, but this mostly depends on your own state of mind, not so much on external circumstances. Sometimes only one phrase played in a wonderful way can make the whole day valuable. That is why I do it.

I am always ready to interact with candidates who didn't make it. Sometimes it's not easy to say what you think, but it depends on the person in front of you. If the feedback is really wanted it can be helpful. This kind of interaction should always exist. A candidate must be prepared not to conquer every juror's heart, and that goes also for the jury too: not every member thinks the way you do.

The best system allows jurors their independence, and I am always very aware of that. I didn't have any problems so far. Even with colleagues' pupils in a competition, you must focus on the opportunity a candidate will have to establish himself or herself in the musical world.

After winning the Geneva Competition, I was not exposed to big cities like London or Paris. I only could do my best, and I had to build on my success in every concert, and those were few; it was a long road. I was able to replace Maria Tipo in a recital in Milano, she gave it to me, and she came to the concert, she supported me. That meant a lot, although she was my teacher and liked me very much, it is still a very uncommon thing to do.

In addition, the Chopin Competition in Warsaw, which I entered after Geneva, was very important for me. Although I did not go to the finals, I was invited to play and now I go there very often. I cherish my long association with the Chopin Institute and I am on their Advisory Committee. This association also developed into a wonderful contact with the audiences in Poland, which I would not have had without the competition.

So, winning a competition is not everything and it can never open all doors. You will open the doors yourself when you have the capacity to grow as a musician. You need time to find new insights, to rework pieces, not to jump from one plane to another. Although this is not easy, it turns out to be rewarding: people you count on will notice you have developed regarding what is essential. You need to follow what you believe, your natural qualities, and that takes time. You can't do that when you suddenly have 80 concerts after a competition. My way was much slower and you may doubt sometimes whether you can make it. You can say I was lucky.

**ERIC SCHOONES**

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# ARD International Music Competition



JeungBeum Sohn  
1st prize piano 2017



Prizewinners  
piano duo 2015



Aoi Trio  
1st prize piano trio 2018

August 30 to September 8, 2021  
Piano duo  
First prize 12,000 €

September 3 to 11, 2022  
Piano solo  
First prize 10,000 €

September 1 to 9, 2023  
Piano trio  
First prize 18,000 €

[www.ard-musikwettbewerb.de](http://www.ard-musikwettbewerb.de)



Jury and prizewinners in 2015, from left to right: Andreas Grau (jury member), Yaara Tal (jury member), Arie Vardi (jury member), Clara Mijung Shin (2nd prize), Samuel Sangwook Park (2nd prize), Alina Shalamova (1st prize), Hans-Peter Stenzl (jury member), Paul Badura-Skoda (jury member), Nikolay Shalamov (1st prize), Ivo Haag (jury member), Begona Uriarte (jury member), Nia Sulkhaniashvili (2nd prize), Lok Ping (3rd prize), Ani Sulkhaniashvili (2nd prize), Lok Ting Chau (3rd prize)

## ARD International Music Competition

The next piano duo competition will take place from August 30 to September 8, 2021. The jury members are Andreas Groethuysen, Claire Désert, Joseph Paratore, Güher Pekinel, Roberto Prosseda, Götz Schumacher and Begona Uriarte.

Vassos Nicolau is composing a commissioned piece. The premiere will take place at the semifinals on September 5. The participants will receive their score after the pre-selection, with the invitation to take part in the competition.

Every participating piano duo has to present a huge and interesting repertory during the four competition rounds – works for two pianos as well as those for piano four hands. From Beethoven in the first round, Schubert and the 20th century in the second round, to the concertos by Bach in the semifinals and Mozart in the final round. The very prestigious Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra will accompany the competition at the finals.

The 70th ARD International Music Competition 2021 in Munich is open for the following categories: Piano Duo, Voice, Horn and Violin. It will take place from August 30 to September 17, 2021 (including the prize-winners' concerts). **Deadline for registration: March 31, 2021**

The competition, because of its scale and prestige, offers a unique opportunity for participants to test their musical mettle against other world-class players, and also offers networking opportunities, the chance to meet agents and music executives looking to sign up the next big talent.

In Munich, the competition is the first major event of the new concert season. From the first round, almost every place in the concert halls is occupied. It creates a great concert atmosphere and makes it a little more comfortable for the participants.

The winners will be invited to take part in the chamber music tour – the Festival of ARD Prize-Winners, which was established in 2001 and communicates the desire of the ARD International Music Competition's administration to transform the obvious confrontational situation, at least at the end of the event, into the experience of making music together. With the Festival of ARD Prizewinner, a concert series has been developed, at which musicians (former prizewinners) from all over the world join forces to rehearse and perform chamber music works in a number of different places. Many of the former prizewinners found long-term chamber music partners in this way.

[www.br.de/ard-musikwettbewerb](http://www.br.de/ard-musikwettbewerb)

The ARD International Music Competition takes place every year with four changing categories: the piano competition is every three years (2011, 2014, 2017, 2022, 2025) and the piano duo competition is every five to six years (2000, 2005, 2010, 2015).

200  
years  
of  
innovation



White Salon

# Steingraeber anniversary

## Sordino: the rediscovery of an authentic sound

In the first third of the 19th century, a sordino function was a standard feature of grand pianos from Graf (Vienna) and Érard (Paris). Today Steingraeber offers this feature again as an additional function in the middle pedal at the suggestion and development of the pianist Jura Margulis. A very fine felt slides horizontally between the hammer and the string and thus allows various tone changes, as if one suddenly had a second set of softer hammer heads available. The 'Sordino Pedal' has nothing to do with the modern damper function that is nowadays built into pianos as a device not to disturb your neighbours. Famous artists are enthusiastic about the Sordino. Martha Argerich says, for example: "... the sound of the piano is increased in colour and volume — a wish of every pianist." Jura Margulis, the German-American pianist of Russian descent who forms a duo with Martha Argerich, was the artistic trigger for Steingraeber to take up this idea from the late 18th century and incorporate it into the modern D-232 grand piano. Margulis: "The Margulis-Steingraeber-Sordino-Pedal is a quantum leap in the dynamics and sound colour range of expression of the modern concert grand".

Margulis was strongly influenced by Paul Badura-Skoda, with whom he had a close friendship for decades. "He was one of the last living representatives of the Viennese School, with his unique flair and charm as well as understatement: nothing artificial or sentimental. Serious and yet playful. Of course, Beethoven is about life and death, but with a Viennese flair. I talked to Paul about my pedal many times. Between about 1780 and 1830 almost all instruments had this type of device, but there was no universal standard for pedals. When I once asked Paul why the composers didn't indicate the use of this pedal, he countered: 'Why? Schubert prescribes it 37 times in his piano works!' That was an essential insight, and where Schubert writes ppp, he means this pedal. For me that is intuitively correct, even if it cannot be proven. It's a sound like from another world. Even when I didn't have the pedal, I was always looking for exactly that in my sound conception, a pianissimo that sounds from afar. In the 'small sonata in A minor' Schubert writes in the second movement 'sordini' and ppp as a 'voice from the hereafter' in dialogue with a lovely melody in p. The Sordino effect allows an expression that Schubert was familiar with.

This year we celebrate the 200th anniversary of the Steingraeber company. When asked what he would like to talk about most, director Udo Steingraeber replies: "The next 200 years." Steingraeber has been characterized by innovations throughout its history, following the motto: "Serving the new without sacrificing the old". We take a look at the three innovations that catch the eye the most: the Margulis-Sordino pedal, the Mozart-Rail and the transducer. Pianists Jura Margulis and Martin Stadtfeld and composer Robert HP Platz tell the story.

For me personally this pedal gave me a lot of new insights and thus you can rediscover a lot of the repertoire for yourself. Where do you use the pedal and where shouldn't you? Besides that, for the interpretation of the form, this pedal offers strategically and tactically exciting new discoveries.



Sordino



Jura Margulis

## Mozart-Rail: Playing like in the days of the fortepiano

The key depth evolved and developed over three centuries, from less than 5 mm in Mozart's time to over 10 mm today - a real challenge for pianists. Today, the Mozart-Zug enables authentic playing like on a fortepiano. The key depth on grand pianos is reduced to 8 mm, while the distance between hammer and string is shortened to 36 mm, which enables even quieter pppp playing and faster repetition. The instrument becomes more Mozart-like, i.e. the tone becomes small and silvery. Steingraeber's Mozart-Zug is now available as a toggle lever (during performance) or as a hand lever (for prior determination of any dimension between 8 and 10 mm). George Steingraeber developed this device as a left pedal as early as 1894, including for Engelbert Humperdinck among others. Martin Stadtfeld came into contact with Steingraeber a few years ago. "Of course I knew the brand, and I was delighted when Udo Steingraeber, who had heard that I was very open to innovations, invited me to come to Bayreuth. I was very enthusiastic, all the more because I had often put a strip of felt under the keys when the key depth was too great for me. The downside was that you can only do that before the concert starts. With the Steingraeber



Steingraeber museum



Construction workshop



Mozart rail



Martin Stadtfeld

MARCO BORGREVE

you can adjust the key depth while playing. That's incredible. If the keys go too deep, the way to generate the tone is too long. It is very nice to have the feeling of a fortepiano, or even that of a clavichord, the illusion that the fingertip creates the sound and not the mechanical, the machine-like. Being close to the sound is my ideal. I am always very happy when others have the same ideas and can offer very practical solutions."

**Paradox**

Stadtfeld also expresses himself enthusiastically about the Sordino pedal: "Like Margulis, I often want to create a mood that something seems to come from far away, which works very well in romantic music. But you have to use it with taste and discretion. And in order to give the impression that something is coming from afar, you have to press the keys with more force, otherwise the sound will not respond. It's a strange, paradoxical feeling." Stadtfeld is also an inspired composer and improviser: "I used the Sordino in my *Homage to Bach*, in the piece *Echo*, which can also be heard clearly on the recording. A nice example of how a technical idea can inspire musically creative feelings and thoughts. It's

fun; it's nice experimenting with sound. Suddenly a new dimension opens up." He is happy about these new ideas. "I welcome these innovations; the liveliness is something beautiful. One should take a look at the correspondence between Mozart and Anton Walter, this exchange is a little forgotten today. I also used the pedal when I played Beethoven's first piano concerto at the Elbphilharmonie. Especially there, in such a large hall, it worked fantastically. It was difficult to hear exactly where the sound was coming from, a magical effect."

With this sound expansion, Margulis recorded his Schubert CD, which he and Steingraeber presented for the first time at Musikmesse Frankfurt 2014 and he also wants to record the last Beethoven sonatas on the MSP D-232 Steingraeber. Martin Stadtfeld released his CD "Chopin +" on Sony in November 2016. He makes use of the MSP Sordino for numerous works on it.

**Transducer on the soundboard**

**Piano of the future**

When electronics come into play in the piano, it almost never has anything to do with artistic aspects; mostly it is about muting, self-playing or light music for entertainment. Musical enrichment? Not at all! And yet there is a multitude of professional uses in this area, including live electronics that can be heard directly from the piano without speakers.

This development was accompanied artistically by the composer and conductor Robert HP Platz, who teaches at the University of Music in Würzburg, and the Beethoven Institute of the Vienna University of Music. Robert HP Platz reports: "It all started for me when I received a commission for a piano piece from IRCAM in Paris and was looking for a way to not let the electronic-synthetic sounds come from speakers distributed in the hall, but directly from the piano. After a long search, I landed at Steingraeber through the president of the Würzburg Music Academy. Udo Steingraeber linked my wishes with a request from a professor

from Tehran who wanted to display Arabic tone scales on the piano. I am extremely grateful to him and his team that this instrument is now available. I can still see today the face of the pianist Nicolas Hodges when he discovered during the first rehearsal in Paris that the electronics were following him and not the other way around! He was completely overwhelmed; the system works with real interaction. The pianist can use all agogic freedoms. That is really very good, but unfortunately also very complicated. At the moment,

it, and my composition *Branenwelten 6* is one of my most frequently played piano pieces." Platz started his apprenticeship with Karlheinz Stockhausen. What would he have said about these developments? "I haven't asked myself that question. Perhaps he would be proud to have one of his students taking his ideas further. I once played his *Mixtur* for orchestra and electronic sounds. He accompanied the rehearsals for ten hours, and I learned a lot about live electronics. I'm sure that he would be very impressed, and if not: Tant pis! "

Platz greatly admires Steingraeber. "It's really unique that a manufacturer is so close to the composers. They have already built the Parsifal bells for Richard Wagner. Steingraeber was always focused on the future, I don't know of any other company that works like this. We now have a piano of the future. I am quite sure that Franz Liszt would be completely over the moon. And the development isn't stopping. Everyone today has a smartphone with which they can regulate their entire existence from top to bottom. Why should we exclude that from art? To miniaturize the electronics in such a way that the pianist can simply call up all the electronics of my piece from his smartphone: that is my next utopia."

ERIC SCHOONES



Transducer



Robert Platz

BARBRA KLEMM

switching from keyboard to transducer is still done using a switch under the piano. Steingraeber suggested the solution, however, to install a fourth pedal with which one can switch very elegantly. That would be great."

**Stockhausen**

Things are developing. "I'm currently working on a piece in which I can use scales that I have composed myself. We are thus reaching completely new territory. I was a little concerned that it would get too complex and that the electronics would fail. But we managed

STEINGRAEBER BAYREUTH / BÜCHNER



Steingraeber family



FOTO: BAYERISCHE SCHLOSSERVERWALTUNG, ACHIM BUNZ

## A beautiful time machine

Bayreuth – where the Steingraeber instruments have been manufactured for two centuries – can be proud of a long cultural history. One of the most impressive Monuments to this is the city's Markgräfliches Opernhaus, which became part of the Unesco World Heritage List in 2012.

The monumental building, made entirely of wood and one of the most beautiful opera houses of the Baroque era, was inaugurated in 1748. It was commissioned by Margravine Wilhelmine of Prussia, who had an enormous influence on the cultural life of her royal seat in the 18th century. Frederick the Great's favourite sister was a progressive woman. She composed, painted, wrote (including her memoirs), played theatre with Voltaire and invited the best musicians, singers, dancers, actors, architects and painters of her time to Bayreuth. Her architect Joseph Saint-Pierre built not only a glamorous residence for the margrave, the so-called New Palace, but also the theatre within two years.

It's a beautiful time machine. In this theatre with an auditorium 72 meters deep and space for 523 spectators (in its time the house did not shy away from the European comparison with Vienna, Dresden, Paris and Venice) one feels as though one has been transported back a few centuries. At the same time, you can see at a glance that this theatre would have been much too small for Richard Wagner's bold dreams of a "Gesamtkunstwerk". Nevertheless, the composer conducted Beethoven's ninth symphony here on the occasion of the laying of the foundation stone of his festival hall (which incidentally seats 1925).

One can really speak of consecrated ground here.





Sächsisches  
Landesgymnasium  
für Musik Dresden



## Internationaler Wettbewerb für junge Pianisten Carl Maria von Weber International Competition for Young Pianists



06.-11.04.2021

[www.landesmusikgymnasium.sachsen.de](http://www.landesmusikgymnasium.sachsen.de)

### COMPETITION PROFILE

MARKO DJOKOVIC



Mirjana Rajić,  
Artistic director of the competition.

## Carl Maria von Weber

The 2<sup>nd</sup> International Carl Maria von Weber Competition for Young Pianists – organized by Sächsisches Landesgymnasium für Musik Carl Maria von Weber – will be held from April 06–11, 2021, in Dresden.

Pianists up to the age of 24 are invited to participate. The Competition is divided into four age categories. The final round of the category IV will be accompanied by the Orchestra of the Hochschule für Musik Dresden. In addition to the standard repertoire, the focus of the competition program is on the piano works by the namesake of the competition, Carl Maria von Weber. During the competition, prizes worth more than € 20,000 will be awarded. Moreover, there are also concert offers for the prize-winners, the highlight will be the Prizewinners' concert at the Dresden Music Festival on May 30, 2020.

Jury members will be the outstanding pianists and professors: Karl-Heinz Simon, William Fong, Gesa Lücker, Christian Wilm Müller, Georg Steinschaden (Jury for the categories I, II and III) and Michel Dalberto, Matthias Kirschner, Ewa Kupiec, Aleksandar Madzar, Lilya Zilberstein (Jury for the category IV). The application deadline is February 1, 2021.

[www.landesmusikgymnasium.sachsen.de](http://www.landesmusikgymnasium.sachsen.de)



Mirabella Kajenjeri (France)  
Premier Grand, Prix Fonds Baillet-Latour, Prix Pianos Maenecom

## Rencontres Internationales des Jeunes Pianistes 2021



The R.I.J.P, organized by EPTA-Belgium (Wallonie-Bruxelles), aims to bring young people from all horizons and qualifications together through musical performance, but also allowing them to meet international teachers and jury members, during the free master classes that are given during the competition.

This competition has taken place every two years since 2000. Almost a thousand young piano players from all over the world have competed, also including places as far away as Australia, China, Azerbaijan, Brazil, Costa Rica. Many of today's finest young pianists have been prize winners of the R.I.J.P!

Planned for March 2020, the 15<sup>th</sup> edition had to be postponed due to the Corona pandemic. Despite the uncertain circumstances, we are still aiming to offer prospects to young artists, to support their

teachers, and to bring to life artistic education and culture. The 15<sup>th</sup> R.I.J.P. will take place in March 2021, from the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 7<sup>th</sup>. There will be four age categories – the age limit has been extended to 25. Application closes on January 20, 2021. The applications paid for 2020 will be valid for 2021. The competition will be organized in accordance with possible Covid-19 health instructions.

[www.epta-belgium.be](http://www.epta-belgium.be)

[competition@telenet.be](mailto:competition@telenet.be)

Piano competitions give us an amazing opportunity to experience not only the excellence of pianists raised in different traditions of piano playing, but also open up the universe of composers and their vast worlds of sound. For this, we need state-of-the-art built instruments that deliver the intentions of both the creator of music as well as the artist. These areas have always been closely connected; historically, piano manufacturers always kept close contact with the artistic world for development and feedback. Since Beethoven's request for bigger and larger instruments, many a noteworthy performer has put major concern – and even their own money – into instrument development, mirroring the contemporary flow of musical expression.

So, who loves the other the most?

# Pianists and Piano Brands – Mutual Love, Admiration and Fascination

## Alexander Gadjev — Fazioli

You know, the piano is to me like a person, and in a certain way it has to resonate that way. It is an alive being, with its rules and moods and we have to respect them. But above all a piano must to me be a “complex” personality. We have to express an incredible variety of emotions, states of mind and of spirit, ideas, colours, effects and so on with our playing, and this can only be achieved if the piano is ready and willing to help with that. Somehow the piano itself has to have that “genetic code” inside itself (of course the pianist then must be able to speak to it, and to bring it to life). In a piano I look for a long tone, a beautiful warm sound, an infinite variety of touchés and colours possible, powerful basses that can evoke the smell of death, a ringing higher register that leads us to heaven. In a way I would say I am looking for a perfect match with my ideal sound world, and I have to say that in general I do find that happening much more in older pianos than in new ones. A piano, like a person, needs time to develop and become the best version



SHAHRIYAR FARSHID



ATTILA KLEB

of itself and we need to nurture it with passion and dedication, developing its emotional and creative range throughout the years. With Fazioli, I had positive collaborations and I especially like the power of the lower register and the ease with which one can manipulate the sound. I think it fits my expectations, especially when I am playing the repertoire of the 20th century.

## Ilya Shmukler — Shigeru Kawai

Usually, when you are choosing the piano, there are several details and nuances you are looking for. Of course, we can talk about the sound in different acoustics. On the stage you could feel that the piano sounds great but the picture changes radically when you hear it from the auditorium. Some pianists look at the width of keys, they think that different piano brands have their own breadth. The narrower the key, the greater the chance is to miss the note. It is a little bit craziness for me but honestly, I also have to feel comfortable while sitting at the piano. Nothing should distract you from your main work. That's why I also look at the colour inside the piano. In my opinion, it should be as warm as possible. It is more a psychological thing. The depth of the keyboard is a very serious moment. Sometimes it plays a crucial role during the selection. I prefer pianos with a normal depth: not so light and not so deep. However, it always depends on the personal taste of the performer (as all things in our life). But the most important moment during the piano selection is the feeling that you have just found exactly *your* piano; when you feel that it produces the sound you have imagined. In that moment it seems that you can do everything,



EMIL MATVEEV

when both you and the piano are blended and the art begins. That's why I love Shigeru Kawai with all my heart. This brand respects all the things that I listed above. I feel that it matches me and my inner world. And finally, these pianos help to produce the special sound's tone that I planned the instant before I am starting to play. I believe that the sound of Shigeru Kawai pianos has its own strange beauty, which is necessary to create a true art.

## Mariam Batsashvili — Yamaha

When I choose an instrument, there are several aspects to consider. I need its keys to react very fast to the quick repetitions, without effort. The sound should have the quality of a great singer, namely the endless legato and the human warmth. Its registers should offer different shades of colours. Basically, I am looking for an orchestra, singers and perfect mechanics in a piano. My favourite is Yamaha CFX and this became clear to me at the 10th Franz Liszt Piano Competition in Utrecht, when I had to choose from eight different grand pianos. The CFX quickly responded to all of my wishes and has become my best friend ever since.

PATRICK JOVELL

More in our next edition.

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FEST BONN**



DANI HANNEN

Cunmo Yin, first prize winner in 2019

### COMPETITION PROFILE

Preparations for the ninth edition of the International Telekom Beethoven Competition have begun in Bonn. The international piano competition, which takes place every two years in Bonn and is organized by Deutsche Telekom AG, is scheduled to take place next year from December 2nd to December 11th, 2021.

## International Telekom Beethoven Competition Bonn

The competition deliberately wants to set an example, also in the time marked by the Corona pandemic, to continue the encouragement of young blood among talented pianists. The proximity to one of the largest telecommunications groups is a great advantage. "We have already completely digitized the entire application process. All application documents are submitted online. This not only creates transparent and equal conditions for everyone, but also provides an absolutely pandemic-proof procedure," explains Prof. Pavel Gililov, chairman of the jury. In addition to registering via the competition's own homepage, applicants submit video material of a specified repertoire from the preliminary round. A selection committee then decides on the admission of 28 participants to the competition in December. This time the selection committee will include Prof. Pavel Gililov, jury president and artistic director of the competition, Jingge Yan, former first prize winner of the Beethoven Competition and lecturer at the Mozarteum Salzburg, and Jinsang Lee, member of the Beethoven Trio Bonn. For the competition itself, participants can expect a top-class jury with numerous musical personalities: Fumiko Eguchi from Japan, Leslie Howard from Australia, Yoheved Kaplinsky from the USA as well as Daejin Kim (Republic of Korea), Marian Lapšanský (Slovakia) and Jacques Rouvier (France) have confirmed their par-

icipation. The jury will be complemented by Konstantin Scherbakov (Russia) and Yaara Tal (Israel). The competition focuses on works by Beethoven from every phase of his creative life. The picture of the master's music is rounded off with compositions by his predecessors, contemporaries and successors. Along with the compulsory pieces, candidates can each put together a free programme to show the jury their individual artistic potential. The two-part final will make particular demands: Chamber music partners are Mikhail Ovrutsky, violin, and Grigory Alumyan, violoncello, who are both members of the renowned Beethoven Trio Bonn. Together with those two artists, the three finalists will perform one of Beethoven's complete piano trios in the Chamber Music Final. Beethoven's piano concertos will form the thematic centrepiece of the Orchestra Final, accompanied by the Beethoven Orchester Bonn. The application period begins on November 9th and ends on May 14th, 2021. Pianists of all nations as well as stateless persons between the ages of 18 and 32 may apply. Applications are made via the competition's homepage.

[www.telekom-beethoven-competition.de](http://www.telekom-beethoven-competition.de)

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For over three decades the Ruhr Piano Festival has been organising the biggest event around the piano. Even this year, thanks to the loyal support of sponsors and benefactors, a loyal and disciplined public, despite all the restrictions, the Ruhr Piano Festival 2020 attracted around 15,000 visitors. Moreover, 38 of the 53 concerts held were sold out. Another 5 of the 12 cancelled concerts that were to take place until December 2020 were fully booked.



The festival has always supported young talented musicians. In our first edition of The World of Piano Competitions Prof. Franz-Xaver Ohnesorg, Artistic Director of the Ruhr Piano Festival, said: "In our festival we host a series of concerts with prizewinners called Die Besten der Besten. With

major competitions like the Tchaikovsky in Moscow, Chopin in Warsaw and Arthur Rubinstein in Tel Aviv, we have an agreement to engage a prizewinner, but I value our freedom to invite the second prizewinner, for example if we consider that pianist more interesting." In recent years, Ohnesorg has invited many young pianists, including Alexandra Dariescu, Mariam Batsashvili, Giuseppe Guarrera, Ria Jan, Tiffany Poon, Changyong Shin, Vikingur Ólafsson, Sergei Redkin, Amadeus Wiesensse, Jamina Gerl, Inga Fiolia, Mao Fujita and Yekwon Sunwoo, also often giving them the opportunity to make a recording.



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Next  
edition  
April 2021



The inspiring setting for the competition in Cremona

“Find me a contest in the world, where the jurors send a voice message with their judgment, directly to the competitors’ cell phones!” Andrea Vizzini says about the event, organised in cooperation with Giovanni Iannantuoni, Senior Manager of Yamaha Music Europe branch Italy, pianist Roberto Prosseda, Cremona Musica and in a partnership with the Piano Bridges Competition in St. Petersburg and artistic director Nadia Chestnova.

Together with Jeffrey Swan, Alexander Romanovsky, Bruno Monsiegeon and Alberto Nosè, the undersigned was proud to serve on the jury. In the preliminary round, 42 candidates from all over the world presented themselves via YouTube with a repertoire of their choice. And, ultimately, ten finalists came to Cremona or performed on a live-stream connection from California, Florida, Massachusetts and Greece. Andrea Vizzini: “Does anyone still think that music doesn’t unite?” The five prizewinners were Joowon Kim (Indonesia), Carl di Casoli (Florida), Irene Longacre-Whiteside (Texas), Michael Cheung (Canada) and Zachary Weiner (California) who took the top prize. The winners will perform in Milano and St. Petersburg at a later date.

While some candidates impressed with remarkable playing after only a few years of study, most candidates started early in life, winning competitions but then finding themselves in another type of professional career. Irene Longacre-Whiteside commented: “My heart yearned to play again having not played for 17 years, and it took almost two years to recover my dexterity and speed.”

Her full-time job allowed only limited hours of practice but she was “fully dedicated, cancelling all other life commitments to focus on the piano.” In March, she was chosen as a competitor for the 2020 Cliburn International Amateur Competition, only to soon discover it was postponed until 2022. For the PianoLink competition preparations turned out ‘exhilarating’ practicing six hours every day. “The travel ban made going to Cremona impossible, but some of the competitors connected through Facebook, so there still was a sense of comradery.”

For Carl di Casoli, associate director of biostatistics, the greatest challenge was finding repertoire to fit the twelve-minute time limit. He would often record himself on the cell phone to try to make his own critiques, both in terms of technique and conception. “Due to the pandemic, I was also having difficulty finding a venue to record, but thankfully the teacher of my older son found a facility in Cambridge, Massachusetts with practise rooms. I went there on a Sunday afternoon as the only person in the building, which was ideal for proper concentration.” For the finals he managed to find another facility where he could have professional microphones for the live-stream. For him too quarantine upon returning home kept him from going to Cremona.

Michael Cheung (manager) started the piano at a young age as physiotherapy for a malformation on his left hand. “I find it a miracle to still be able play today despite my handicap.” He even won top prizes in many “professional” competitions during his adoles-

After two years of preparations, Andrea Vizzini launched the first edition of the PianoLink International Amateurs Competition. His aim was to establish a more friendly competition that would also encourage those who are just starting and offering amateurs an opportunity to meet and be heard.

## PianoLink International Amateurs Competition

cence, but the pressures to prepare competition “marathons” over many years made him decide to take a complete break from the piano at age 20. ‘Ironically, an international amateur piano competition in Paris brought me back to the piano after a seven-year hiatus.’ During the past decade he has performed in prestigious halls all over Europe, including the Philharmonie Berlin, but now he aims to make music differently, playing mixed genres to a different audience in non-classical venues.

Joowon Kim (Ph.D. candidate in Literature, working on a thesis on Marcel Proust) had the same idea. “I would only give concerts, with calm, lovely and non-competitive pieces.” He had stopped competing in competitions, but for this competition he was tempted to go to Italy and prepared an ambitious program, with Beethoven’s Opus 110 and Liszt’s *La Leggerezza*. After a 16-hour train trip from Germany he enjoyed his time Italy: “The greatest thing in an amateur competition is meeting fellow amateur pianists and sharing our experience and our passion. Every amateur competition offers this rare and wonderful experience, but I believe that the PianoLink’s Cremona competition was particularly memorable in this regard.”

Zachary Weiner, who took the top prize commented: “Thank God I’m not competing for my career because it’s already nerve-racking enough.” Throughout his career he has been troubled by self-doubt. “Recently, I’ve come to terms with another truth: I have imposter syndrome. In my profession, software engineering, we speak often



From left to right:  
Andrea Vizzini (director), Alberto Nosè (jury member),  
Giovanni Iannantuoni (Yamaha) and Roberto Prosseda (advisor)

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PIANOLINK COMPETITION



Zachary Weimer

**COMPETITION REPORT**

about this well-qualified, high-performing individuals who feel like they're not the real deal.”  
Joowon Kim commented that many participants notice a tension between the words “amateur” and “competition” and Zachary Weiner said: “Even though within the piano community, the word ‘amateur’ has lost much of its bite, many of us still feel like we have something to prove – if not to others, then to ourselves. We play the most difficult pieces in the repertoire, as if to say, ‘look, we can play the same music that’s being played in the Real Cliburn Competition, too.’” Professional competition culture can be toxic and counterproductive and he feels the amateur community starts from a much better place. We can take risks without putting our livelihood at stake, and champion underrepresented works and composers without worrying about whether our etude selection will count as “virtuoso” enough. Ultimately, Zachary plays the piano because he believes in music and wants to share it with the world, which holds true for all candidates.

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Since its foundation in 2011, in Frankfurt am Main, Germany, the International Piano Forum has aimed to accompany pianists, who have already achieved extraordinary excellence in their performances. For this purpose, the Forum established the International German Piano Award (IGPA): an international piano competition for outstanding pianists worldwide.

# International German Piano Award

Due to the Corona pandemic the edition of the **10th IGPA** scheduled for March was postponed to December, 2020. All concerts will also be streamed live here on December 13 and 15: [www.ipf-frankfurt.com/live](http://www.ipf-frankfurt.com/live)

The application modalities for the **11th Edition of the IGPA 2021** will be announced here shortly: [www.ipf-frankfurt.com](http://www.ipf-frankfurt.com)

The piano competition will be in three rounds and take place from October 16–19, 2021.

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The International Piano Forum aims to support its prize winners in a sustainable way with deep enthusiasm and innovation. The mission of the Forum is among others to contribute to the conservation of culture and heritage in our society. Furthermore, the International Piano Forum offers classical concerts of the highest standards for its nominees and prize winners. The award ceremony and concerts of the International German Piano Award at the Alte Oper Frankfurt are one of the most coveted classical music events.

The Forum also offers the opportunity to join its artist management: The IPF-MASTERS-Management, which offers the nominees and the winners of the International German Piano Award concerts in Germany and worldwide. The management makes continuous efforts to meet the requirements and expectations of concert organizers, orchestras and festivals throughout the world with the ideal artists for their demanding audiences. IPF-MASTERS-Management stands for artistic excellence.



Palace Erdödy –  
Varaždin School of Music

# Murai.

## Memorijal Jurica Murai & Murai Grand Prix

The fifth edition of the International Piano Competition Memorijal Jurica Murai (Tribute to Jurica Murai) & Murai Grand Prix will be held in April 2021 in the Great Concert Hall of the beautiful Erdödy Palace, which is also the residence of the famous Varaždin School of Music.

Although it was organised in 2015 for the first time, the competition was quickly recognized as a competition that provides young pianists with exceptional conditions. The organizer of the competition, the Varaždin School of Music, is one of the oldest music schools in this part of Europe, whose students have been regularly developing excellent international artistic careers since 1828. The competition is divided into two parts, of which the Memorijal Jurica Murai is intended for pianists up to 19 years of age, who compete in six categories. The Murai Grand Prix is a two-stage competition designed for pianists aged 17 to 32.

Academician Jurica Murai, born in Varaždin, was one of the most prominent Croatian pianists. He completed his education in Zagreb, Budapest, Paris and Siena and studied with eminent pianists such as Svetislav Stančić, Marguerite Long, Guido Agosti and Alfred Cortot. He possessed a refined musicality, tonal palette and an evident knowledge of general culture. His activities included over 800 concerts, 40 foreign tours and collaboration with numerous conductors and orchestras. Premature death in 1999 prevented Murai from being the Croatian member of the jury at the EPTA Svetislav Stančić competition in Zagreb. His place was taken by Dorđe Stanetti, professor at Music Academy in Zagreb and presi-

dent of the jury in the competition on three occasions, while in 2018, Murai's long-time friend and colleague, Vladimir Krpan, took over the presidency. From the very beginning, the competition has been followed by Euro-Unit and Yamaha, who provide special prizes as well as a concert grand piano during the whole competition. In addition to the school's Steinway D, inaugurated by Ivo Pogorelić, young pianists can regularly choose to perform on a Yamaha CFX. Each contestant has the opportunity for a rehearsal in the hall, but also has an own room with a piano. Such professionalism and a friendly atmosphere with encouraging awards, attracts competitors from all over the world.

As Davor Matačić, principal of the Varaždin School of Music and artistic director of the Competition points out: "The decision to organize a piano competition came from the intention to foster more engaging and effective learning. Apart from the basic, educational nature of our programme, we believe that this competitive try-out will encourage pianists to make greater improvements and that the participation in our competition will allow them to make that next step and open new doors in their career."

[www.natjecanje.hr/en/about-competition](http://www.natjecanje.hr/en/about-competition)



MEMORIJAL JURICA MURAI  
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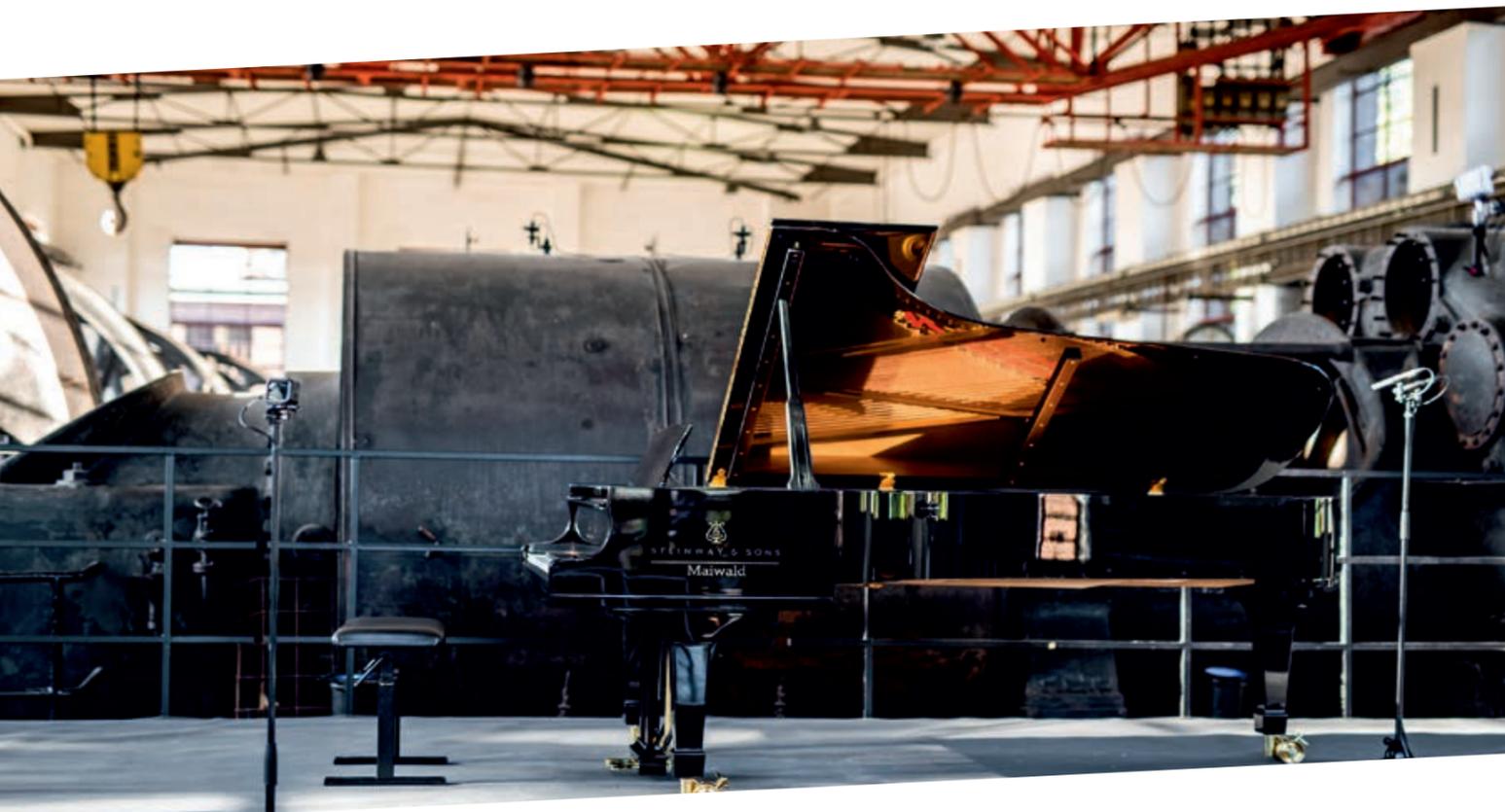
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# The International Schubert-Competition Dortmund

The competition was established in 1987 and has since then been held at the heart of the Ruhr, invariably with great success. Chairman Stefan Heucke – a composer who wrote a large-scale set of Diabelli-variations, inspired by Beethoven but based on Schubert’s original Diabelli-variation – explains the philosophy behind the competition.

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“We believe very strongly that when young artists study the introverted music of Franz Schubert extensively, they will naturally look behind the notes for deeper meaning, and their subsequent interpretations of even the most virtuosic repertoire will benefit from this. With any repertoire, a deeper understanding of the true meaning of music, even if it’s not so easy to recognise it behind perhaps too many notes, is what makes a real artist.

In Schubert you can’t pretend, and it’s fairly easy to hear whether a pianist really understands and feels the music or that they are merely reproducing what they learned, or copied, but not as a result of personal growth. With Liszt that something you can get away with, but Schubert is not like that.

Of course a solid technique is a prerequisite, but the more introspective qualities are desirable as well, so we also ask for etudes and a Liszt transcription of Schubert songs. There is no question you have to fully master



Stefan Heucke

The international Schubert competition in the category of Piano will now take place from September 24th to October 3rd, 2021 in Dortmund and the award-winning concert will be held on October 3rd, 2021 in the compressor hall of the Hansa coking plant as is customary.

the keyboard technically to be able to look deeper.

Apart from that, for everyone present hearing all the great sonatas by Schubert in the third round is a pure delight and we are already looking forward to that very much. However, due to the imponderables regarding the arrival of the international jury members, the musicians, the availability of accommodation with host families, and the uncertainty whether the competition could take place with an audience and with an orchestra in the final round, the competition in the category of Piano can’t take place this year.

The competition will not be cancelled, it will be postponed to next year and we are very happy to have our sponsors and partners on our side in this situation. We are infinitely grateful for that.”

[www.schubert-wettbewerb.de](http://www.schubert-wettbewerb.de)

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IRA YUGAY

## The Power of Visualisation

It takes courage to become the first musician in a family of professional athletes. My innate enthusiasm for music was undeniable and so my parents never pushed me onto a training circuit. Over time, we discovered a great mutual understanding for our craft and till this day we discuss topics that connect the two very similar worlds: professional sport and musicianship. Take for example the importance of visualisation. Athletes know that the very thought of victory during a match can shatter years of preparation. Musicianship requires the same mentality. But if thinking about victory is out of the question, what is supposed to be going through their minds?

Visualisation: “A technique to achieve a particular goal, involving a focus on the combination of two kinds of positive mental images: an aspiration (ambition) and a concrete ability (skills).” The level of thoroughness in a musician’s preparation is the same as an athlete’s. Both worlds visualise similar basic principles: controlled breathing, laser focus and a schedule. Their thinking during the study of new material is also similar: the imagining of a physical state, the structure of a piece and the solution to a difficult technical passage. On top of that, the specifics of a musician’s visualisation involve conveying the message that the piece of music contains by shaping and colouring sound. In a performance-context, it is worth focusing on every inspiring personal accomplishment up to date. Imagine the audience in the concert hall while expressing inner gratitude for them being there. Imagine having warm hands, remembering every detail of the score in succession and having a conversation with the composer while performing. In the end we’re preparing every aspect of our being to perform at the best of our ability.

After completing the preparation for the competition, it starts to be possible to experience every performance as a *Zone of Growth*. This level of readiness can be tested by, for example, visualising all rounds or days of a competition, with all of its separate performances as one whole. With performing then comes a state of enhanced Sense and Touch: the sense of being on stage and connecting with the audience, while physically touching the keys beneath our fingers and having our feet firmly grounded. This dual state of *Sense and Touch* proves to be undefinable, but is often lovingly referred to as “the flow-state,” or “the zone.” However, a small percentage of this final state of *Sense and Touch* will always be left up to fate. For some, this can seem like a lack of control over the situation during a performance. Realise that this is in fact a priceless individual experience, because it determines where we are in our development – for now.

MARIA NIKIFOROV



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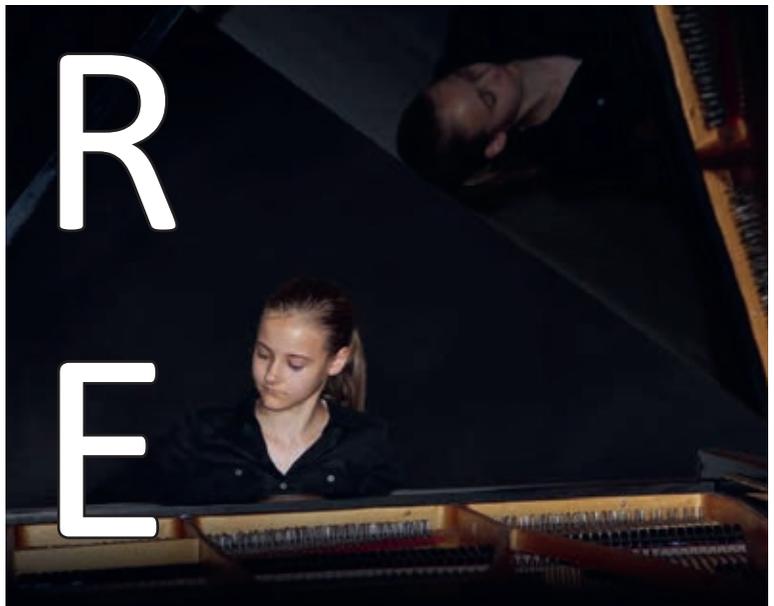




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