

THE WORLD OF PIANO COMPETITIONS



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OF INTERNATIONAL
MUSIC COMPETITIONS

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2023

Kevin Chen

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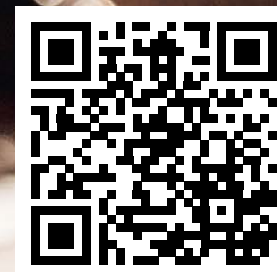
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THE PARTICIPANTS OF THIS YEARS COMPETITION:

Caleb Borricks (USA), Wanting Cheng (China), Kevin Chow (Australia), Dadykina Darya (Ukraine), Andrey Denisenko (Russia), Théotime Gillot (France), Eric Guo (Canada), Jiahao Han (China), Adam Katduński (Poland), Hyunji Kim (South Korea), Beor Lee (South Korea), Minji Lee (South Korea), Khan Nhi Luong (Vietnam), Spartak Margaryan (Armenia), Lovre Marusic (Croatia), Wataru Mashimo (Japan), Mia Pecnik (Croatia), Kiana Reid (Japan/USA), Yokoyama Ruka (Japan), Seth Schultheis (USA), Hanna Schwalbe (Germany), Mikita Shastakou (Belarus), Zhouhui Shen (China), Andrzej Wierciński (Poland), Yonggi Woo (South Korea), Xuanrong Ye (China), Akane Yoshida (Japan) and Re Zhang (China).



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W E L C O M E

Dear readers,

We are happy and proud to present to you our 10th edition of *The World of Piano Competitions*. And the title of this unique magazine was not chosen that badly back in 2019, because piano competitions with their competitors, juries, and many others involved in the background do resemble a very special microcosmos in its own right.

A world of beauty, joy and often bitter disappointment, but mostly a world of motivated and passionate musicians trying to give the younger generations a little nudge in the right direction.

Keeping in mind Béla Bartók's well-known comment that music is not for horses, and the fact that you rarely meet young pianists enjoying competitions, the modern competition is more and more designed as a meeting place, as Janine Fialkowska, noted in this edition: "How else would we get to know all these brilliant young pianists if there were no competitions?" While a high ranking is no longer a guarantee for a brilliant career, at the same time, we only need to think of Ivo Pogorelic, Lucas Debargue and Piotr Anderszewski, who didn't get the first, or any prize at all, but still their careers were launched at a competition.

And let there be some consolation in the fact that a brilliant career, like there seems to be in the stars for Kevin Chen – who is often called a genius, having won five major competitions in a row – is something only for the happy few. At the same time there are so many rewarding ways to serve music and the people around us. The artistry of sharing music, as a message of hope, is not restricted to the spotlight of the international music scene. Far from it. If you only touch one soul in a way only music can do, that is already a most precious thing.

ERIC SCHOONES

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
PIANIST MAGAZINES



THE WORLD OF PIANO COMPETITIONS

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FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

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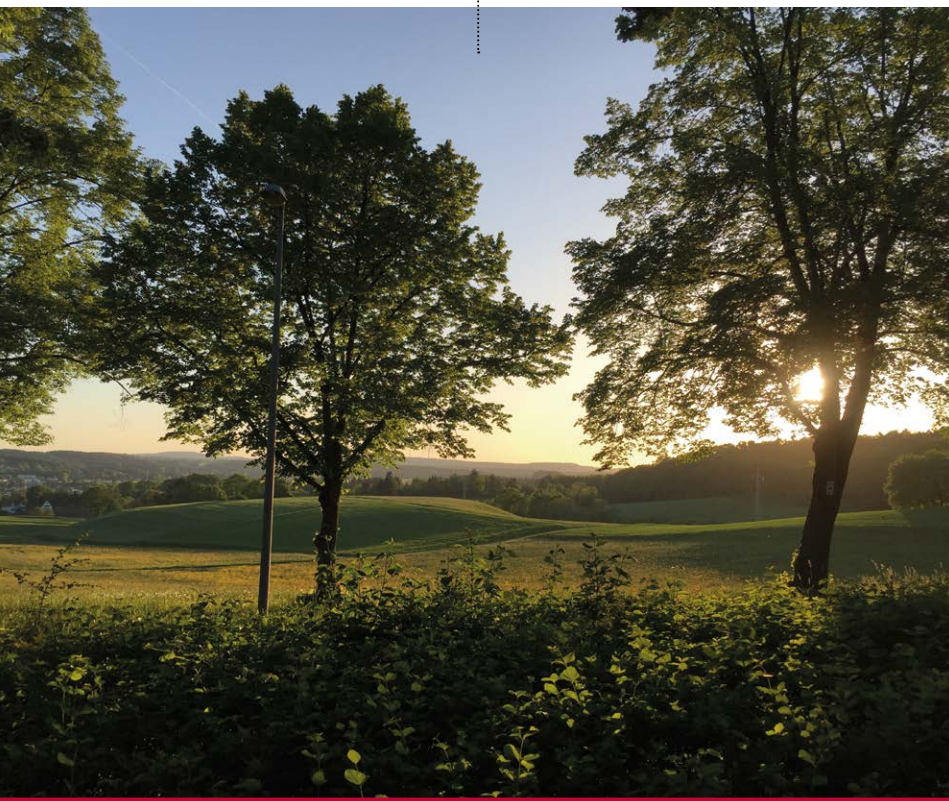


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KEVIN CHEN

BAYREUTH

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

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

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PIANO STREET

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

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Kevin Chen

MEANINGFUL IMPACT

With a string of first prizes to his name, i. e. International Piano-e-Competition (2019), Hilton Head (2020), Franz Liszt Budapest (2021) Geneva (2022) and Rubinstein (2023), Kevin Chen is unique in the world of piano competitions.

Already labelled “a genius”, he currently is studying with Professor Arie Vardi at the Hochschule für Musik, Theater und Medien in Hannover. Despite his busy concert schedule, with a debut in Carnegie Hall, he found the time to answer a few questions.



Between Geneva and Tel Aviv, you played an almost completely different program.

I believe this helped me to be constantly inspired throughout, although it doesn't necessarily mean these different pieces are new! In competitions, if I want to feel more confident and secure, I will probably reuse previously learned repertoire. I like to keep a sense of curiosity, as I find that it's easier to lose the motivation and interest in repeating the same pieces. That also applies to the engagements following the competition: sometimes repeating pieces is good to gain more experience with them, and other times it's nice to play different pieces.

Sometimes you need an overarching theme or meet a specific requirement, which can be challenging, both to choose the repertoire and to perform it. But on the other hand, it's an opportunity to take a break from the familiar.



You are a prolific composer. Does that make it easier for you to understand contemporary music?

It's an interesting subject and it might be relevant to compare it to contemporary art, which can be hard to understand, and often its boundaries are also unclear. So maybe with some contemporary music, there isn't any intended meaning or anything to understand at all. Perhaps a controversial opinion, but there might not be any theoretical or philosophical explanation behind some decisions, especially in the case of contemporary music. It can be an intellectual decision, such as a pattern being constructed following a specific "mathematical" relationship. But these patterns might not be pleasing to listen to in the conventional sense, so in the same way, these kinds of constructions are also not easily understood. So I think my level of understanding of a particular contemporary work depends on its specific characteristics, and in the more com-

plicated cases, it's probably not easier or harder for me than it is for others. It's hard sometimes trying to explain or make sense of some works. I feel that music is a universal language and to speak it, you have to live the experience through which you process the music and assign your own individual meaning to it, in the same way that speech only has meaning once a listener receives and processes it according to their own experiences. And music is one of these experiences that you can walk away from meaningfully impacted, even if it's not comprehensibly explainable.

In Geneva, there was a requirement to propose a personal artistic project.

I had no previous experience with such a project, and I had no idea if I would be successful with it. But the coaches guided me through the entire process, which turned out to be quite fun and was probably one of the most memorable parts of the competition. Its scope

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was very broad, so you could propose all sorts of ideas, which wouldn't necessarily correspond to a "normal" concert life. It could also be something that directly develops the artist's career, such as a CD recording. So I think having this requirement as an integral component of the competition makes it stand out and encourages the competitors to be creative instead of practising the whole time, and importantly, it allows everyone to see all the various possibilities in the musical world. The ideal journey for me is a gradual one with seamless transitions between concertizing, studying, as well as enjoying personal time. Otherwise, too many big changes at once would probably overwhelm me! There hasn't yet been a clear instant in my life when I felt I actively made a decision to become a pianist professionally, for example. These concerts that the Geneva competition has offered me suit my career development plans in that they are also organized in this way and give me opportunities to reach a wider audience.

What is your feeling about competitions in general?

To be honest, I don't like competing. I would much rather play concerts because it removes the pressure of being evaluated by numbers and rankings. On top of all the stress, the aspect of direct comparison and rivalry between one another might even take away the joy if the mind is too focused on these conditions. In some ways, it's as much a psychological competition as it is a musical one. Competitions can be like a test of endurance, challenging both physically and mentally, and many times it must be incredibly difficult for the jury as well.

But one comforting thing about these competitions is that the atmosphere among the participants is relaxed and friendly, no matter how competitive the environment is. Everyone understands that

everyone else is in the same situation. And of course competitions are a great tool to help an artist get noticed and recognized by powerful people. They are also a good excuse to take a vacation to another place. And it is always interesting to witness all the similarities and differences in culture, and how universally music is appreciated, even if it's just to share the joy of music with new audiences.

Competitions are introducing more and more things like chamber music and song accompaniment. Do you like this?

Yes, I love playing chamber music. It can sometimes get lonely playing solo on stage, so sharing the music-making process with others is a great feeling. I appreciate that competitions incorporate this as one of the rounds, because collaboration is a necessary skill that concerns all other settings. For example, there is often inner dialogue between voices in solo works as well. The final round in the Rubinstein competition consisted of three parts: a chamber music round and two concertos, which were all collaboration oriented. And in Geneva, performing with a singer was a great experience for me, since it was insightful to witness how the piano interacts with the voice and how much of it is reflected in lyrical piano writing.

Your plans for the future?

As I prefer to take my journey gradually, I haven't really set a concrete "ultimate goal," because right now, looking that far into the future seems quite scary, and I have no idea what my life will look like at that point. At the moment, I'm mainly focusing on enjoying myself and not rushing into any big decisions. I hope that along the way, my own enjoyment and what comes out of it can equally add some beauty and humanity to the lives of others.

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Unisa International Music Competition

26 January – 4 February 2024
USA | SAN ANTONIO
The Gurwitz International Piano Competition

22 February – 2 March 2024
UNITED KINGDOM | HASTINGS
Hastings International Piano Competition

10 – 21 March 2024
SPAIN | BARCELONA
Maria Canals International Music Competition

30 March – 5 April 2024
TURKEY | ISTANBUL
International Piano Competition Istanbul Orchestra' Sion

4 – 13 April 2024
SPAIN | JAÉN
International Piano Competition Prize Jaén

5 – 16 May 2024
CANADA | MONTREAL
Concours musical international de Montréal

30 May – 8 June 2024
SWITZERLAND | ZÜRICH
Concours Géza Anda

22 – 28 June 2024
PORTUGAL | PORTO
Santa Cecília International Competition

28 July – 10 August 2024
USA | CLEVELAND
Cleveland International Piano Competition

31 August – 22 September 2024
ROMANIA | BUCHAREST
George Enescu International Competition

11 – 24 September 2024
UNITED KINGDOM | LEEDS
Leeds International Piano Competition



HUMILITY AND JOY

Janina Fialkowska

Janina Fialkowska seemed to dominate the world of piano competitions in her own modest way lately, serving on 5 juries in 6 months – Geneva, Arthur Rubinstein, Paderewski, ARD, and Van Cliburn Junior – ‘way too much, covid brought it all together’. High time for a talk, not least about her mentor Arthur Rubinstein, who called her a ‘born Chopin interpreter’ and in laying the foundation for her lifelong identification with this composer shaped the course of her brilliant career.

“I don’t care if I don’t win a prize, but today Arthur Rubinstein told me that my performance of the Liszt Sonata had moved him to tears. And this for me is the greatest thing in the world.”

JANINA FIALKOWSKA, A NOTE IN TIME, P. 91

Gerrit Glaner told me about your moving speech at the recent ARD competition; you sounded like a mother he said.

How nice, but all I said was that the children, (anyone born after 1990 I consider a musical child!), who play in competitions should never be afraid of the jury because the jury desperately wants them to succeed and play their best. We don’t want them to fail, we are on their side, we feel for them.

You know what it’s like.

When I was competing, back in the stone age, I thought of judges as the enemy. And when I would be eliminated I thought they were just being mean. But reality is far from that: it hurts to eliminate kids, it really does.

In the Arthur Rubinstein Competition, one juror was indeed mean to you, giving you zero, in favour of his own student. And, as you wrote in your book: ‘This one jury member had not counted on the determi-

nation of Rubinstein and, apparently, the outrage of many of the other jurors. Rubinstein threatened to resign and withdraw his name for the competition if I were to be eliminated. Two of the jurors, quite understandably, found this to be irregular and equally offensive and so the battle lines were drawn. For hours they fought, but in the end the majority was on my side.’

Yes, that is what happened. Rubinstein himself told me a few months after the competition when I met him in New York. There were fewer competitions at that time and the ones that existed were extremely important; a prize (even a second or third prize) could launch a career, very different from nowadays. There were also not so many safeguards, such as eliminating the highest and lowest marks and of course it is unheard of now to have teachers on the jury with their own students participating. Nowadays it’s all much more transparent: in many competitions the world gets to see all of the votes which actually is very tough on the jury. And frankly in the last 10 years I have never seen a fellow jury member



Janina Fialkowska with Arthur Rubinstein at the Rubinstein Competition, 1974



Janina Fialkowska with Arthur Rubinstein in Marbella, 1977



Arthur Rubinstein with award winners at the Rubinstein Competition, 1974

even attempting to cheat or to try and influence improperly. After all, we are not all supposed to agree: there are always differences of opinion. It's music not Track and Field! The kids who enter the competition have to know that, even if they or their teacher think they play like gods, there will always be someone on the jury who may not appreciate their talent.

Still competitions are a good way to get noticed.

There are so many excellent young musicians, how else could we get to hear them all? Or help them? What I find really good in the new developments of competitions like the Liszt in Utrecht and Honens in Calgary and some others is that they help all their top prize winners to get started with concert tours and giving them all kinds of training on how to build careers.

Although they tend to not call it a competition anymore.

I think that is just funny, we all know it's a competition. Let them do what they want, but let's face it, the world is a competition, everything you watch on the television is a competition, people love competing; I don't, but what can I say?

Arthur Rubinstein was not your first competition?

No, I did Montreal in 1971 and got the 6th prize and then in Leeds in 1972 I was eliminated in the first round. I thought I would never be able to make a living as a pianist and I entered law school. I was devastated. And then Rubinstein changed my life completely two years later when he heard me at the competition in Tel Aviv. By the way, you would be surprised how many young people nowadays go to competitions very unprepared and with seemingly no expectations. Some come completely unprepared for the final concerto round, never thinking they would get so far.

What about the responsibility of the jury?

Oh yes, 20 years ago when I started judging in competitions, I didn't fully realise the responsibility I had: one has a young person's future in one's hands. And if there is a candidate with something special to say, but who is not successful in the competition, then it's the duty of the judge to do everything they can to help this person. That is what Rubinstein did for me, I came third, but he went out of his way to create concerts for me. He had it put in his contract, he would not play if they would not give me a concert also. At the

time, I had never played a professional concert and suddenly I had 44 concerts with London Orchestras, Philadelphia orchestra and so on; it was unbelievable. He helped me in every possible way, when I was down or nervous, he was always there. Now I am not Rubinstein, I don't have that kind of power, but I did run a festival in Bavaria – until covid put a stop to it – where I promoted all these kids who I thought were wonderful, but hadn't yet been able to win first prizes: Bruce Liu, Charles Richard-Hamelin, Alexander Schimpf, *François Dumont*, Alexander Ullman and many others. I hope that I am a modest person, but I think my instinct was correct. I was absolutely right about all those young talents and they all went on to make huge careers. If every jury member gave such encouragement to the people they believe in, it's not so difficult, this would make competitions really worthwhile. I just invited them to my Akademie, I gave them masterclasses, and I made them feel they are fantastic. Imagine you go to a competition and you are crushed, but you know you are good. It doesn't hurt if an older colleague gives you a little lift, and some encouragement to keep on going. If you don't succeed in a competition, it has nothing to do with honesty or cheating, it's just differences of taste, and sometimes pure bad luck. Not everyone is necessarily the competition type of pianist, not everyone has the tough nerves. Playing at your very best for 15 minutes in a first round requires a certain kind of arrogance, and huge self-confidence and a lot of youngsters simply just don't have that.

There is this emphasis nowadays on perfection and much less on personality. We, in our time didn't have that problem.

People always say Rubinstein or Horowitz would not be successful in competitions nowadays.

I know, and I don't want to think about that, it would be too horrible. I like the young people playing now, but the pressure on them to be so perfect so young, every time is enormous. Any concert they play, even playing for a small group will usually be live streamed and appear on YouTube. Nothing is private anymore. They don't have time to develop, to reflect, to make mistakes. We in our days thought about being at our peak of achievement at around 50 or 60, now they have to be at 17 or 18.

What did you learn from Rubinstein?

He made me aware of the importance of communicating, of

channelling your feelings about the composer to the audience. This is something you have to develop. Occasionally a young person already has it. Rubinstein always had a wonderful charisma about him, but I don't think he was particularly loved as a young pianist. I always remember my mother telling me, when she was young and studied in Paris in the thirties, that people liked him, but he was by no means the Rubinstein we knew in the fifties and sixties. He also had to develop his art.

Perhaps Kevin Chen?

He seems to be one of the big exceptions. With him there is no need to worry about not having the repertoire. A few months after the Geneva competition he came to the Rubinstein competition with a completely different set of pieces, and some months later in my festival in Canada, he played completely different repertoire again. I usually don't call performers a genius, that term is reserved for the composers, but Kevin's musical mind comes close.

What was your impression of Rubinstein in concert?

I was fortunate to have heard him many times ... you left one of his concerts uplifted and happy, simply becoming a better human being ... there was such joy in his music. Others I loved almost as much, like Radu Lupu, but he was completely different. With him you had to make an effort to get into his world. It was a strange

fascinating atmosphere he created, he made you see the darker side of composers, with Arthur it was all sunshine, he reached out to you. You joined him on his wonderful, joyous adventure. His sense of style and rhythm was fantastic, when he played French, German, Spanish music, Chopin, everything sounded differently. Now with youngsters, sadly everything sounds a bit the same.

You played for him?

A lot! I stayed in his house in Paris for a while, and two summers I spent in Marbella, in his home there; I would practice every day and in the afternoon I would play for him, it was a wonderful but stressful time.

Because you had to live up to his expectations?

Exactly, not only that, but also to go out and to play the concerts. However all the conductors he persuaded to hire me, were very open and tolerant, even those with a reputation of being tough, like Lorin Maazel. He could not have been nicer. Bernard Haitink was very kind to me; all the conductors gave me a chance. The managers, on the other hand, sometimes gave me a hard time, a young girl with a Polish name, they were more sceptical. I was shy and had to prove myself with my playing. Sometimes Arthur came to my concerts; in Amsterdam he was suddenly sitting in the front row and I loved that, I felt safe, he was a friend, he understood.



“I had never heard playing like this – not only the sound from heaven, the burning emotion, lyricism, divine phrasing, and structural perfection, but the fact that Rubinstein communicated all this incredible beauty to me, so personally. I was transported. That night I wrote succinctly and accurately in my little diary: ‘Thank you Chopin and thank you Arthur Rubinstein.’”

JANINA FIALKOWSKA, A NOTE IN TIME, P. 45

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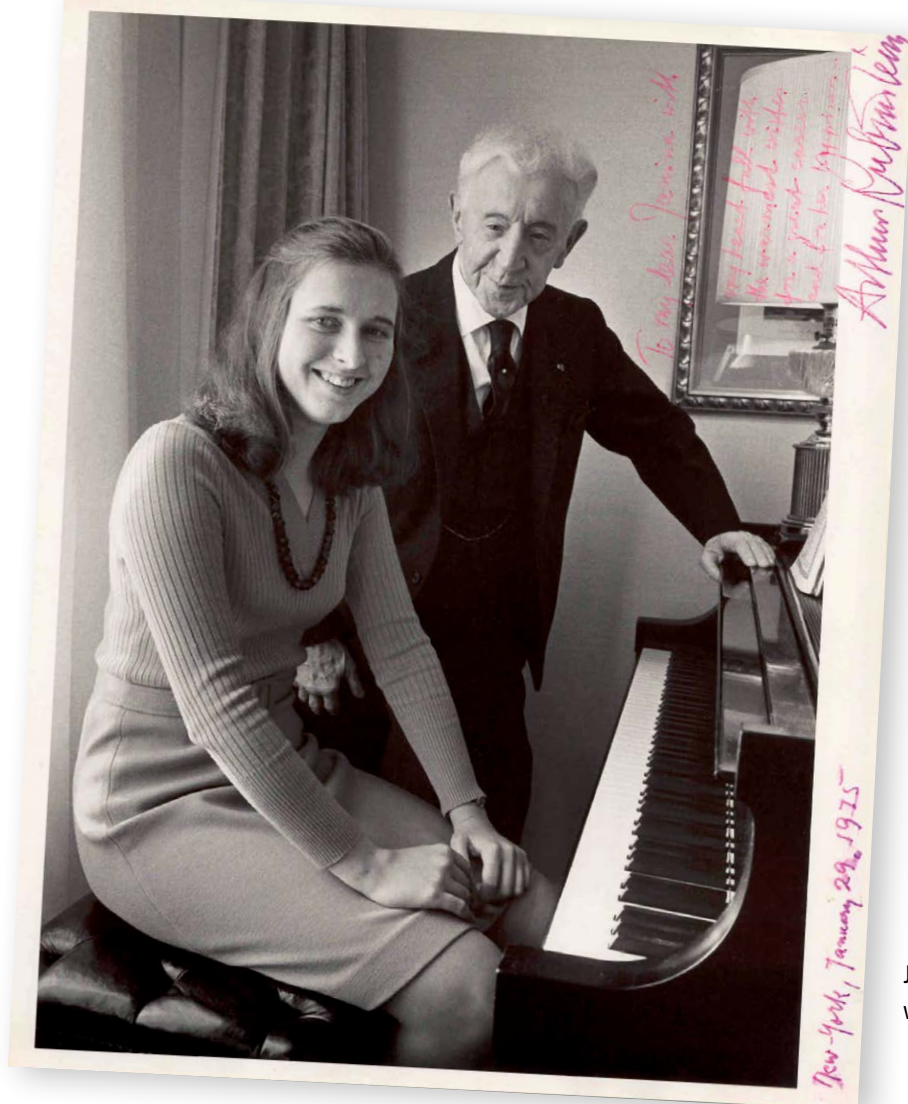
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Janina Fialkowska
with Arthur Rubinstein, 1975

Nelson Goerner told me Maria Tipo gave him her concerts and she would come and sit in the audience.

What a lovely thing to do.

And it's all about the composer, right?

Oh yes, if in a concert I think how great and moving the music is, then the pianist has succeeded. Let's face it, Chopin, Schumann, Mozart, they take you into a world we don't know about: a better more beautiful world. Compared to them, we can only be very humble. If you lose that, you become arrogant, and your playing suffers. It may not be easy to stay humble, and you need people around you who don't tell you how wonderful you are the whole time. I always tell young people the truth, if I don't like it, I will tell them. They understand because they know I care about them.

Your idea about interpretation?

It's a question of control: the more you control everything, the more spontaneous you can be in concerts. Listen to yourself like an outsider, you should really know what you are doing with every note, I mean every note, even in the simplest accompaniment. And then in the performance you can let go.

The same with great conductors, when they had endless rehearsals. I saw Charles Munch conduct once; he hardly moved his hands, he didn't have to, all the work had been done already in the rehearsal. Now people are waving their arms around like madmen, it's ridiculous. Simplicity is the keyword, also for playing Chopin.

He doesn't need all the rubato and the self-indulged expression you hear sometimes. Chopin would be horrified. He wanted to keep it simple.

It's all in the notes.

Right!

ERIC SCHOONES



**Janina Fialkowska –
A Note In Time**

A moving autobiography, full of poignant and sometimes hilarious anecdotes, describes her meeting with the legendary Arthur Rubinstein and many others, as well as her colourful adventures as a young female pianist, Canadian with a Polish name in a male-dominated music world and her final triumph over horrific illness. Novum Publishing 2021

www.janinafialkowska.com



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International Telekom Beethoven Competition

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



BEETHOVENHAUS BONN

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

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

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

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

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

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

ERIC SCHOONES

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



Ann-Paulin Steigerwald with Gerrit Glaner



Piano technician Moritz Knauer

YOEL LEVY / ARTHUR RUBINSTEIN COMPETITION

Ann-Paulin Steigerwald

The heart in the right place

In the world of piano competitions, the piano cannot be missed of course, but Ann-Paulin Steigerwald – who recently took over from Gerrit Glaner as the new Head of Concerts and Artists at Steinway & Sons in Hamburg – even feels the piano technician is the most important person in a competition. We talked about her new job and the presence of Steinway & Sons in the cultural field.

For the last eight years she has been working in artistic planning of the Hamburg Elbphilharmonie and Laeiszhalle, doing everything related to artists and concert operations. “I began in 2014 and was involved in the opening of the new hall in 2017 – a great opportunity to meet many artists and orchestras coming to Hamburg from all over the world. And of course at the venues in Hamburg I was working closely with Steinway, having known Gerrit Glaner and his team for a long time already. I am very happy he is still around as an advisor. He did the job for over 20 years and he is in contact with everyone, connecting them in the best possible way.”

Not a professional pianist herself – she learned violin and piano in school, telling her parents “when I grow up, I want a Steinway!” – she preferred working backstage. “I loved my work and I was planning to stay at the concert hall, but then Steinway offered a whole new perspective in the cultural field and that proved very challenging for me. What I really love about Steinway is the history, the tradition – the Concert and Artist Department was established over 100 years ago – and the company understands its position as part of the cultural field, close to pianists, but also in the living room where so many enjoy a beautiful, instrument with great character as a lifelong partner. I felt Steinway has its heart in the right place, with the musicians at the centre of all our work. Unlike most other instrumentalists, pianists can’t bring their own instrument to the concert, so our goal is to create ideal conditions for each artist we work for. That’s where the music starts! At the same time, we are trying to build the best piano possible and it is also important for me to monitor this as much as possible, to be part of the team. It’s all connected.”

The new job involves a lot of traveling. “Yes, when you’re just starting, there is a lot to get to know, many new impressions. One of them is to represent Steinway at competitions, and I already had a great experience at various competitions, such as the Rubinstein, ARD and the Busoni. I love meeting so many young talents, and we support them because it’s so important to have a reliable partner on stage, but also a safe space to select the best possible instrument, to practice, etc. Ultimately, it’s my job to make people comfortable, understanding their needs and worries with empathy. At the factory there is a selection practically every day, and I try to be there as often as possible. You learn so much, about finding the right sound for every pianist on a personal level.”

Pianos and especially for those used for concerts, need constant care and good storage conditions. “We have technicians worldwide to provide this service, which is something I learned at the concert hall: the technician is the invisible and indispensable partner at the concert. And even more so at competitions where young artists should not have to struggle with the instrument. Yes, in competitions the technician is the most important person.”

And the future? “I want to help maintain tradition and carefully carry it into the future. To make sure we keep the network and the communication alive and up to date. We live in a digital world; communication channels are changing.”

And your own Steinway? “I have my own little secret: I always loved going into the storage room of the Elbphilharmonie at night and playing the instruments there, and now at Steinway, well, you can imagine, it’s paradise!”

A dream job after all. “Indeed.”

ERIC SCHOONES





Consecrated ground

It is hard to imagine a more splendid scenery to open a piano competition. The International Franz Liszt Competition Weimar Bayreuth is at home in two cities that both were so important in the life of Franz Liszt. Bayreuth – where 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; we have shown you this photo before, but it seemed fitting for our 10th edition.

Richard Wagner conducted Beethoven's ninth symphony here on the occasion of the laying of the foundation stone of his festival hall. One really has a sense of consecrated ground here.

Meanwhile the winners of this year's 6th International Franz Liszt Competition for Young Pianists in Weimar have been announced. A total of 37 musicians from more than 20 countries worldwide travelled to Weimar for the three evaluation rounds. The international jury awarded eight main prizes and a whole series of special prizes, and also two prizes from a junior jury. All prizes, totalling more than 22,000 euros, were donated primarily by the Sparkassen-Kulturstiftung Hessen-Thüringen and the Neue Liszt Stiftung.

The lucky prize-winning pianists were Linda Yuan, Theodor Hlouschek, Pei Lin Oisin Pu, Puri Puengpipattrakul, Anna Avramidou, Collins Tanujaya and Ildikó Rozsonits. The international jury chaired by Grigory Gruzman, consisted of Christian Wilm Müller, Milana Chernyavska, Michael Davidov, Irina Decheva, Justas Dvarionas, Asagi Nakata, and Tang Zhe.

July 24 next year Martha Argerich and Jura Margulis will give a recital here, with works of Mozart, Schubert and Mussorsky on two Steingraeber grand pianos.

www.steingraeber.de

BAYERISCHE SCHLOSSERVERWALTUNG / ACHIM BUNZ



Andrey Gugin signing in Sydney

DANIEL BOUD

THE WORLD OF PIANO COMPETITIONS

On the occasion of this 10th edition, we decided to do a little different. Here you find a short portrait of all the competitions we highlighted in our magazine so far. You will notice it's a very broad perspective, every competition with its own characteristics, but a common goal, to help young artists and to further the art of piano playing. You are very welcome to browse through the past editions in the archiv pages on the www.pianist-magazin.de. We want to say thank you to so many who helped us to maintain the high level in our work. First of all the PIANIST team, the designers and the colleagues working in the background. A big thank you to Gustav Alink, he has been called Mr. Piano Competition! I have known Gustav for many years now and his commitment, help and advice have been indispensable in producing this magazine. I also think of my dear friend Patrick Jovell of Pianostreet, and our other partners, the World Federation of International Music Competitions (WFIMC) with its Secretary General Florian Riem, and the European Union of Music Competitions for Youth (EMCY). We thank the many competitions you see listed here and, last but not least the piano manufacturers, Steinway & Sons, C. Bechstein, Bösendorfer, Grotrian-Steinweg, Steingraeber, Schimmel, Chris Maene, Yamaha, Pearl River Piano, Fazioli and also Griffioen Transport. Without their generous support the production of this magazine would not have been possible.

AUSTRIA

GRAZ | The International Competition “Franz Schubert and Modern Music”

This is a chamber music competition launched by the University of Music and Performing Arts Graz in 1989 and has since been offered triennially. It brings young musicians from all over the world to Graz. The audience can enjoy a free-admission, multi-day festival of chamber music.

The FS&MM is not a competition like any other. Right from the start, it was about bringing Schubert’s chamber music into relation with new and newest works for suitable ensembles. In addition, the expansion of the chamber music repertoire is actively pursued with composition competitions and commissioned works. With this competition, the University of Music and Performing Arts Graz is facing up to its responsibility to enable young musicians on their way from university to professionalism.

schubert.kug.ac.at

LINZ | Bechstein Bruckner Competition Linz

Organized by the C. Bechstein Pianoforte AG in cooperation with the Brucknerhaus Linz and is focused on students of Austrian conservatories. Each school may nominate one student at a time, so it will be a very small but very competitive contest. Professor Michel Dalberto (Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse de Paris), Prof. Roland Krüger (Hochschule für Musik, Theater und Medien Hannover) and Prof. Konstantin Lifschitz (Lucerne Academy of Music) guarantee the greatest possible independence as an international jury. The first prize winner may present himself in the new series of C. Bechstein piano recitals at the Brucknerhaus Linz.

www.brucknerhaus.at

SALZBURG | Mozarteum Juries in Competition

The level of technical competence and stylistic knowledge among young pianists has risen in recent decades so that jury decisions in competitions are largely subjective. Therefore in “Juries in Competition” there are three independently voting juries. Every candidate can receive a prize from each jury and a positive evaluation from just one jury will qualify the participant for the next round even if the other two juries were to eliminate him or her. Thanks to the Bösendorfer Enspire System, two grand pianos 280 VC can connect online, meaning that the performance of one candidate can be heard simultaneously on two live pianos in another hall without seeing the participant. In this way three different juries can listen independent to the same playing simultaneously.

www.uni-mozarteum.at/en/kunst/jjc



Jury giving points in Poertschach

GUSTAV ALINK

BELGIUM

BRUSSELS | Merci Maestro

Nataliya Chepurenko was born in Kyiv (Ukraine) into an artistic family of filmmakers and teachers. She started playing the piano at only five years old and soon she was taken to the Lysenko School in her hometown, a special school comparable to the Gnessin State Musical College in Moscow. She finished her studies at the conservatories in Kiev, Liège, and Brussels. With the ballet always close to her heart – the wonderful tradition of the great ballets already instilled in her as a child – she took to accompanying ballet and when she moved to Belgium to start a new life, she became the principle pianist of the Flemish Royal Ballet for example. But for a pedagogue from Ukraine life was not so easy and so she started her own school in the heart of Brussels: the Tchaikovsky Music School, with only 6 students.

www.mercimaestro.be

BRUSSELS | Queen Elisabeth Competition

Established in 1951 on the initiative of Her Majesty Queen Elisabeth of Belgium, as a successor to the Eugène Ysaÿe Competition, the Queen Elisabeth Competition very soon became one of the leading international competitions for violinists, pianists and singers. Laureates of the competition over the past fifty years have included Leon Fleisher, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Jaime Laredo, Gidon Kremer, Mitsuko Uchida, Vadim Repin, Frank Braley, Cristina Gallardo-Domás, Nikolaj Znaider, Baiba Skride, Marie-Nicole Lemieux, Sergey Khachatryan but also, Anna Vinnitskaya, Denis Kozhukhin, Ray Chen, Andrey Baranov, Boris Giltburg, Sumi Hwang, Ji Young Lim, Lukáš Vondráček, Victor Julien-Laferrière and Samuel Hasselhorn.

www.qeimc.be

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BRUSSELS | Rencontres Internationales pour Jeunes Pianistes

The “Rencontres Internationales pour Jeunes Pianistes”, organised by the renowned pedagogue Diane Anderson, president of EPTA Belgium, aim at getting young people from all horizons and qualifications to meet each other through musical performance, but also getting them to meet international teachers and jury members, during the free master classes that are given during the competition. The competition, which also promotes the work of Belgian composers, from 20th and 21st century, is open to all, without distinction of nationality, and has four age categories. www.epta-belgium.be

CHINA

BEIJING | China International Music Competition

Twenty-five years ago, in 1994, the very first international piano competition was organised in Beijing. This was realised thanks to the continuing efforts of one of China’s foremost piano teachers, Mrs. Zhou Guangren (who was herself frequently a jury member as well at many major international piano competitions around the world, such as the Cliburn, Leeds, Tchaikovsky, for example). www.cimcompetition.com

GUANGZHOU | Pearl River – Kayserburg International Youth Piano Competition

The Kayserburg International Youth Piano Competition organized by Kayserburg Music School, Singapore in partnership with Guangzhou Pearl River Piano Group aims to bring talents and enthusiasts together so that they can benefit from the valuable performing experience.

Held every two years since 1983, the competition is currently the world’s largest with over 100.000 participants. Pearl River launched the Kayserburg International Youth Piano Competition to support ongoing development in performing arts in general, and to promote music education in the new era.

www.rs-event.sg/main/2023-kayserburg-international-youth-piano-competition

DENMARK

AARHUS | Aarhus International Piano Competition

The history of this competition goes back to the year 2008, when pianist Anne Øland travelled from Denmark to the Netherlands together with quite a large group of piano students, to support several of them who were taking part in the piano competition in Enschede. Their main aim was to experience such an international

event. They came back to Denmark enthusiastically with much inspiration and a lot of innovative ideas to create a new international competition of their own for young pianists in Aarhus. Together with her piano students and Dominik Falenski, Anne Stampe Øland organised everything. The necessary funds were raised and the first Aarhus International Piano Competition was launched in 2011. In reference to the main sponsor and the cooperation with the Royal Academy of Music Aarhus, it was called the Bang & Olufsen PianoRAMA Competition. The total amount of 44,500 Euros for prizes was very high for a youth competition. It had a great start: 148 pianists applied! www.pianocompetition.dk

CROATIA

VARAZDIN | International Piano Competition “Memorijal Jurica Murai and Murai Grand Prix”

Named after academic Jurica Murai, one of the most eminent Croatian pianists, International Piano Competition “Memorijal Jurica Murai and Murai Grand Prix” has been organized since 2015 and is now being held biennially. The competition is divided into two parts: the Memorijal Jurica Murai is intended for pianists up to 19 years of age, who compete in six categories and the Murai Grand Prix is a two-stage competition designed for pianists aged 17 to 32. Numerous awards and recognitions were given to Jurica Murai for his versatile and valuable reproductive activities that testify about his reputation and significance, and it is considered a huge honour by the organisation that the competition is named after such a great artist.

www.natjecanje.hr/en/competition-rules/



Piano Trail in Leeds



Andrea Vizzini, Alberto Nosé, Giovanni Iannantuoni and Roberto Prosseda

FRANCE

MAYENNE | Mayenne International Piano Competition

In 1994, the pianist/teachers Michael Wladkowski and Philippe Vert began a collaboration which, over the years, has led to the creation of various musical events in the town of Mayenne, France. Meeting with Jean Christophe Bergeon, director of the Conservatoire of Mayenne Communauté, produced the Mayenne International Piano Competition, which began in spring 2008, with Svetlana Samsonova as artistic director and president of the jury. Over the years, it has grown to become a major event in the town's cultural programme. Every year, candidates from all over the world come to the Mayenne municipal theatre to compete for the first places.

www.concoursplanomayenne.fr

PARIS | Concours International Grand Prix Animato Chopin

Prof. Marian Rybicki started it in 1993 as a "Rencontre des Jeunes Pianistes", initially as an annual event, but after the fourth edition it was held every two years. A select group of excellent young pianists are invited to take part. They come to Paris and perform in the beautiful Salle Cortot, which is next-door to the famous Ecole Normale de Musique.

Prof. Rybicki is the Artistic Director of the Association Animato and as a teacher, he has guided many young pianists who are already performing at a high level, and he is frequently invited as a jury member at other international piano competitions. It can be said that he has a special nose for discovering great musical talent. This is best illustrated by the long list of wonderful pianists who took part in the Animato Competition, many of whom went on to win top prizes in other major competitions, such as Olga Kern, Alexander Kobrin, Sofya Gulyak, George Li, Siheng Song, Finghin Collins, Juan Pérez Floristán and many more.

www.animato.org/cadres.htm

PARIS | Long-Thibaud Competition

The Concours Long-Thibaud was one of few competitions that emerged during the 2nd World War. Its first edition in 1943 was both for violin and piano, and had to be a national event. Samson François was the winner in the piano competition. Soon after the war had ended, the 2nd edition in 1946 was international already. No less than 56 pianists took part. They all played anonymously in the first round. The next Long-Thibaud Competition for piano took place in 1949. It proved to be an extraordinary year: the jury was even larger than before with 24 (!) personalities, including several composers (Andriessen, Enescu, Halffter, Malipiero) and all the prize winners went on to have great careers: Aldo Ciccolini, Ventsislav Yankoff, Daniël Wayenberg, Paul Badura-Skoda, just to mention the top four of the 10 finalists. The competition continued to grow and peaked in 1953, when the jury counted no less than 27 very distinguished musicians, including Arthur Rubinstein, Jascha Horenstein, Guido Agosti, Lev Oborin and many others.

www.long-thibaud.org

GERMANY

AACHEN | The MozARTE Competition

The MozARTE Competition has an interesting history. The first two years, it was held in Vaals (the Netherlands), but then moved to Aachen. The competition is held at the Hochschule für Musik und Tanz Köln-Aachen, which has a convenient concert hall. Artistic Director Andreas Frölich is a versatile musician and very active as a pianist (solo as well as in chamber music), teacher and organiser. He founded the MozARTE Competition assisted by several students. The competition itself is open for pianists up to 32 years of age and consists of three rounds. Usually, a piano concerto by Mozart has to be performed with orchestra in the finals.

www.mozarte-aachen.com

BERLIN | Carl Bechstein Competition for Children and Young People

C. Bechstein has organized various competitions in its long history, and will continue to do so in a tradition founded by Carl Bechstein himself, who established a concert series to promote young artists and even commissioned his own concert hall. The charitable Carl Bechstein Foundation is committed to promoting the musical talents of children and young people. The aim is to enable as many – mainly underprivileged – youth as possible to learn the piano. Children who play an instrument better develop their personalities, are better at coping with life, improve their IQs and stand stronger in today's often cold and materialistic world. Since 2016, the Carl Bechstein Foundation has annually organised the national Carl Bechstein competition for children and adolescents, in various categories; this year it is for piano solo: classical as well as jazz music.

The C. Bechstein Pianoforte AG is also a partner at the International German Piano Award.
www.carl-bechstein-stiftung.de

BONN | International Telekom Beethoven Competition Bonn

The competition wants to foster exceptional young artists and assist them with their dreams of realizing an international musical career, but also to use it to contribute to keeping the great legacy of Ludwig van Beethoven alive and active in his native city. 'Art unites the world!', said Beethoven, who would have enjoyed seeing the international field of participants in the Telekom Beethoven Competition, which is particularly symbolic for international encounters, and through this for the ideals of Ludwig van Beethoven. 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 program to show the jury their individual artistic potential.
www.telekom-beethoven-competition.de

BRAUNSCHWEIG | International Schimmel Piano Competition

The International Schimmel Piano Competition, organized by the Wilhelm Schimmel Pianofortefabrik GmbH has chosen a unique concept to help young artists prepare for a future career. Lothar Kiesche, CSO of Schimmel, explains: "We ask creativity and imagination of the candidates. The piano pieces can be chosen freely but should predominantly meet high artistic and pianistic standards. The piano works presented should follow a topic of the participant's choice."
www.schimmel-klavierwettbewerb.de

DARMSTADT | International Chopin Piano Competition

Since 1983 the Chopin-Gesellschaft in Germany has been organizing this competitions in Darmstadt, which take place every three



Delicious cakes served in Ettlingen

to four years and has acquired the status of a high-ranking international event. Through these competitions the Chopin-Gesellschaft wishes to honour Chopin and his music, to further young talent and to never cease searching for ways leading to the best interpretation of Chopin's music. For almost four decades now, the competition has served as a steppingstone for a number of budding pianists to a successful career. Since 2009 (with 130 applicants from 30 countries) the Chopin Piano Competition in Darmstadt has been regarded by experts as being the most prestigious Chopin Competition after Warsaw.
www.chopin-gesellschaft.de

DETMOLD | International Brahms Piano Competition

Detmold University of Music is pleased to announce that the fourth piano Brahms Piano Competition will be held in 2024 in Detmold, the city where Brahms lived and worked from 1857 to 1859 at the court as conductor, pianist and teacher. The competition, which is primarily devoted to the works of Johannes Brahms, is open to pianists of all nationalities and is held every three years. The third international Brahms piano competition in Detmold had a brilliant winner: Jonas Aumiller delighted the large audience in the Detmold concert hall and the jury with the first piano concerto by Brahms, accompanied by the Northwest German Philharmonic under Florian Ludwig, at the live streamed finale. The 23-year-old German has already won a number of other competitions and is currently studying with Sergey Babayan in the USA.
www.brahmscompetition-detmold.de

DORTMUND | The International Schubert Competition Dortmund

The International Schubert Competition Dortmund was established in 1987 and has been held at the heart of the Ruhr since then – it seeks to add to the cultural variety and attractiveness of the region. With its high-profile venue for the Laureates' Concert, the atmospheric compressor hall of the Hansa Coking Plant, a listed building, it is invariably a great success. Chairman Stefan Heucke commented: "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."
www.schubert-competition.com



Ortwin Moreau at work in Warsaw

DRESDEN | International Carl Maria von Weber Competition for Young Pianists

This competition – organized by Sächsisches Landesgymnasium für Musik Carl Maria von Weber – was held in 2021 in Dresden. The Competition was divided into four age categories. The final round of the category IV was 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. In the jury outstanding pianists and professors, Karl-Heinz Simon, William Fong, Gesa Lücker, Michel Dalberto, Matthias Kirschnereit, Ewa Kupiec, Aleksandar Madzar, Lilya Zilberstein and others. First prizes were awarded to Linda Yuan, Ildikó Rozsonits, Marvin Maung Tint, and Mariamna Sherlin.

www.landesmusikgymnasium.sachsen.de

DÜSSELDORF | International Robert Schumann Competition for Young Pianists

This competition, held at the Robert Schumann Hochschule this year for the fourth time, was initiated Barbara Szczepanska. She commented: "Naturally, everybody wants to win, to be the best, but losing can also be a win, because it gives you a chance to reflect upon your own talent compared to others. A first prize is no longer a guarantee for a long career. You need personality, stability, presence on the stage, and also a great amount of luck. Life can be unfair and a solo career is definitely one of the more difficult careers. In an artist's development many factors are crucial, not only talent, also environment, family and school. As a teacher working with young talents, I try to help foster the best possible circumstances. These early years are very important and I try to help with all my heart."

www.schumann-competition.com

ETTLINGEN | Ettlingen International Competition for young pianists

This competition was launched in 1988 and has been held every two years, in August. It is open for young pianists up to 21 years old, and there are two age categories. For the first competition in 1988, there already was a good number of applicants, but for the 2nd edition in 1990, the organisers were totally overwhelmed when they received 155 applications from all over the world! Ever since, the competition in Ettlingen has always attracted the attention of many young pianists and their teachers. Looking at the list of past prize winners, one can see many names of pianists who went on to have great international careers and some of them became quite famous. It would take too much space to list them all, but just to mention a few: Lang Lang, Markus Groh, Severin von Eckardstein, Lisa de la Salle, Igor Levitt, Martin Helmchen, Boris Giltburg, Eric Lu and Ivan Krpan.

www.pianocompetition.org

FRANKFURT/KRONBERG | International German Piano Award

The International Piano Forum, the initiator and organizer of this piano competition, was established in 2008 by friends and promoters of classical piano music in Germany. It offers opportunities for discussion and debate, as well as being a platform for an international career. Recipients of the Award are helped with engagements, recordings and development of a website. The rigorous assessment process for the Award means that even being nominated is a considerable honour: The Nomination-Jury elects the shortlist of the six nominations and a second jury, the Laureate-Jury, independent of the first, consisting of conductors and festival artistic directors. Great pianists such as Lukas Geniušas, Eric Lu, Dimitri Levkovich, Hans H. Suh, and Yekwon Sunwoo were laureates in the past.

The aim of this piano competition is not to produce prize-winners on an assembly line, but to support its pianists in a sustainable way through worldwide concerts and CD recordings, to name but a few things.

www.ipf-frankfurt.com

GEILENKIRCHEN | Euregio Piano Award

Florian Koltun and Xin Wang both enjoy a busy life as concert pianists, touring the world giving concerts and masterclasses. But having a broad interest in cultural life, Florian founded a non-profit management as well. With the same focus, the International piano competition "Euregio Piano Award" was started in 2013 in close cooperation with the city of Geilenkirchen, which hosts the 'Klaviersonner Geilenkirchen', an extensive festival with concerts and masterclasses, enthusiastically supported by the local community.

www.euregiopianoaward.com



At the Grieg Competition

KRONBERG | International Piano Competition for Young Pianists Kronberg

Every two years, Kronberg becomes the centre of piano music. The competition aims to convey the joy of making music and sustainably promotes the level and quality of music making as well as special talents. It combines professionalism and the highest standards with cordiality, appreciation, and a pleasant atmosphere. The non-profit association “International Piano Competition Taunus e. V.” invites children and youngsters of all nations between the ages of 6 and 19 to make music and demonstrate their skills in the Carl-Bechstein-Saal, as well as the large chamber music hall. The registered participants qualify for the competition through a digital preliminary round via video selection. All competitions are open to the public and admission is free.

www.piano-competition-kronberg.de

MEININGEN | International Hans von Bülow Competition Meiningen

The competition is organised in association with the Meiningen State Theatre and with the support of the Meininger Hofkapelle orchestra. Von Bülow enjoyed a close association with the then young Carl Bechstein company, whose instruments he valued highly and on which he often performed. The competition will take place exclusively on instruments from the Carl Bechstein company.

Both as pianist and conductor, Hans von Bülow was one of the leading musical personalities of his day. Before being appointed first chief conductor of the Berlin Philharmonic in 1887, he formed the Meininger Hofkapelle into a first-class orchestra, and from 1880–1885 he was a central figure in Meiningen’s musical life. There are three categories: Junior (up to 13 years old and 14 to 17 years old), Professional (18 to 32 years old) as well as the unique category Conducting from the Piano (up to 32 years old).

www.buelow-wettbewerb-meiningen.de

MUNICH | The ARD International Music Competition

The ARD International Music Competition, one of the most renowned and large-scale competitions of its kind, takes place for the 72nd edition from August 28 to September 15, 2023. The competition is open for the following categories: Harp, Double Bass, Viola, and Piano Trio. The competition was founded in 1952 by the public broadcasting radio stations of the Federal Republic of Germany, managed by Bavarian Broadcasting in Munich, and takes place every year in September. For many of today’s world-famous artists, an award from the ARD International Music Competition in Munich represented a springboard to their major careers: Jessye Norman, Christoph Eschenbach, Mitsuko Uchida, Christian Tetzlaff, Sharon Kam, Heinz Holliger, Peter Sadlo, Maurice André, Quatuor Ebène and Fabian Müller, to name but a few. Over the years, the ARD International Music Competition with its annually changing line-up of musicians has developed into an internationally singular and highly regarded institution. Since 2001, the presence of contemporary music has been considerably reinforced through commissions to prominent composers.

www.br.de/ard-musikwettbewerb

WEIMAR–BAYREUTH | International Franz Liszt Competition Weimar–Bayreuth

The “International FRANZ LISZT Competition Weimar–Bayreuth | Piano” honours the legacy of Franz Liszt in two major cities Liszt himself knew so well, and promotes young talents who want to follow in his footsteps. The competition attracts pianists from all over the world and offers them the opportunity to present their repertoire and skills in front of an international jury and an enthusiastic audience. Steingraeber not only provided the instruments for the opening concert in the Margravian Opera House and the 1st round in the Bayreuth Music School, but also enabled all participants to play the famous Liszt piano in the Steingraeber Haus over several days and to familiarize themselves with the grand pianos.

www.hfm-weimar.de | www.steingraeber.de

HUNGARY

BUDAPEST | Franz Liszt Competition

This competition has a long and rich history dating back to 1933, when Annie Fischer won the first prize. At that time, Ernő Dohnányi was chairman of the jury, which included amongst others Alfredo Casella, Emil von Sauer, Wilhelm Backhaus and Alfred Cortot (only for the finals). A very special event indeed. No less than 71 pianists from all over the world had applied. Moura Lympany was one of them, while Louis (Lajos) Kentner reached the finals and received 3rd prize. After the war, in 1948, the piano competition was organised again, dedicated to Béla Bartók. From 1956, the Liszt Competition has been regularly held every five years. Great pianists have taken part and among the prizewinners are names such as Paul Badura-Skoda, Lev Vlasenko, Lazar Berman, David Wilde, Dino Ciani, to mention just a few. More recently, Muza Rubackyte, Károly Mocsári, Igor Kamenz, Vadim Kholodenko and Alexander Ullman received awards in Budapest.

<https://lisztcompetition.hu/public/en/competitions/franz-liszt-international-piano-competition>

BUDAPEST | World Bartók Competition

Chopin, Beethoven and Liszt Competitions are many, but Bartók Competitions are few. In Hungary, there is the traditional Budapest International Music Competition, established as a Liszt Competition in 1933. Since 1956 it has been open for piano every five years and has sometimes been held as a Liszt-Bartók competition. But in 2017, there was a completely new addition: the World Bartók Competition was launched by the Liszt Academy in Budapest. Alternatingly, the competition would be open for violinist, pianists and chamber music and in between, there would be composition competitions. The winning composition would then serve as a compulsory piece for the next instrumental competition. It started in 2017 with a violin competition, followed by composition (2018). In 2019, pianists could apply for the 3rd World Bartók Competition. www.bartokworldcompetition.hu

ISRAEL

TEL AVIV | Arthur Rubinstein International Piano Master Competition

It started with Jan Jacob Bistrizky, who had previously been the director of the Chopin Institute and the Chopin Competition in Warsaw. In the early 1970s, he moved from Poland to Israel and founded the Arthur Rubinstein Competition. He was a close friend of Arthur Rubinstein, who did not like competitions, but Bistrizky

persuaded him to give his name to this new piano master competition. Pablo Picasso once made several portraits of Arthur Rubinstein and Rubinstein handed over three different sketches by Picasso that were used for the design of the medals to be awarded to the top three prize winners. The very first Arthur Rubinstein Competition was scheduled to be held in Jerusalem, December 1973, but was postponed. This year, from 15 to 30 April, 2023, the 17th was held in Tel Aviv. It is one of the major international piano competitions around the world and has a rich history. The Arab-Israeli war in October. The next year (September 1974), the competition took place in Tel Aviv. Arthur Rubinstein himself was on the jury, together with Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli and eleven other personalities from the Music World. This first competition was won by Emanuel Ax. After 1974, the competition was held every three years, except for the 11th edition, which was postponed from 2004 to 2005. In 2020, the competition could not be held because of the corona pandemic, resulting in a hybrid edition.

www.arims.org.il

ITALY

CREMONA | PianoLink International Amateurs Competition

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. “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.

www.pianolink.it

MILAN | Piano Lovers over 40

The International Competition Piano Lovers Over 40 for non-professional pianists over 40 years of age is unique. There are many competitions for “amateurs” and this is the only one reserved for non-professionals over 40 years old. It was born of an idea of Professor Maria Grazia Rossi Vimercati, chairman and founder of Piano Lovers Association. After the first experimental edition in 2012, the competition was happy to welcome an increasing number of contestants to an ever-expanding audience. Professor Maria Grazia Rossi Vimercati: “This encouraged us, knowing we are on the right track.”

www.pianoloversover40.com

MILAN | Piano Talents

More and more competitions have several age categories and are open to very young pianists. Many of these can be found in Italy. In 2009, Catia Iglesias decided to create a new competition “Piano Talents” and to have it in a very special place: Casa Verdi in Milan. It is a house of rest, a comfortable home for elderly, retired musicians founded by Giuseppe Verdi himself in 1896! When Giuseppe Verdi took on this project, a large number of fans of the maestro decided to help him financially by giving donations. Among the donors was the family Horowitz Toscanini who left all their money to the Casa Verdi as a legacy.

www.pianofriends.eu

THE NETHERLANDS

AMSTERDAM | YPF European Piano Competition

Over two decades the Young Pianist Foundation (YPF) has worked tirelessly to assist talented young pianists in the Netherlands. Eight 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.

The YPF European Piano Competition – Grand Prix Youri Egorov, as the competition is officially called, brings top talents from the European Union and the United Kingdom to the Netherlands, creating not only a healthy and stimulating pianistic challenge, but also an incentive for students, teachers and educational programs within the conservatories to achieve even greater engagement and performance. Responsible talent development is the basic idea of YPF.

www.ypf.nl

ENSCHEDA | The International Piano Competition for Young Musicians

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

In its more than 20-year history, the International Piano Competition for Young Musicians has earned a good reputation thanks to objective judging, a friendly atmosphere, host families, an independent press jury, and is therefore now well-known around the world, with participants from countries such as Thailand, Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia, and New Zealand. The competition has

become a “stepping stone” for young pianists, who after their success in Enschede have also won prizes at the “big” competitions. www.pianocompetition.com

UTRECHT | Liszt Utrecht

The Competition was founded in 1986 and has since built a reputation as one of the world’s most prestigious piano competitions. As of the edition in 2022 the competition has a new structure in place, which focuses less on the competing part and gives more opportunities to the participating pianists to showcase their artistry to an international audience. Liszt Utrecht consists of five phases. The first phase is the online selection round. Forty candidates are invited for the second phase, the live selection rounds with public sessions in Utrecht, nine months prior to the competition. Ten will be selected for participation in the next two phases. First, an ‘academy’ where they will be able to fine-tune their repertoire with well-known Liszt experts, followed three months later by the Festival, where each of the ten pianists perform four recitals. The fifth phase is ‘the Finals’, where the three winners of the competition are presented to the world during a performance with the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra. What sets the Liszt Utrecht apart from colleagues is the extensive Career Development Programme that is offered to its winners.

www.liszt.nl





12th International



**Piano
Competition
for
Young
Musicians**

**Muziekcentrum Enschede
The Netherlands**

Group A till 16 years old
Group B till 20 years old

17 - 23 February 2024

www.pianocompetition.com

Artistic leader Michail Markov

NORWAY

BERGEN | Edvard Grieg International Piano Competition Bergen

Every two years, in September, the Edvard Grieg International Piano Competition takes place in the idyllic city of Bergen, Norway. The house at Troldhaugen, where Edvard Grieg lived and worked, is perfectly conserved and has become a wonderful museum that has already been visited by many people. There is a concert hall too, where the first three rounds of the competition take place. The performer as well as the audience can look out through a huge glass window over the green surroundings and the lake. It offers a spectacular view and the pianists find this very inspiring. www.griegcompetition.com

TROMSØ | Top of the World Competition

The first Top of the World Competition was realised in 2009, and immediately broke a record: it had happened never before that a brand-new international piano competition had attracted so many applicants. Not less than 361 pianists applied for this first competition in Tromsø. Several elements contributed to this success: a completely free repertoire, a higher upper age limit than usual for a piano competition (35), and substantial prize money: 30,000 Euros for the first prize, and 20,000 and 10,000 for the other two finalists. Unfortunately this competition no longer exists.

POLAND

BYDGOSZCZ | Paderewski International Piano Competition

The first edition of the competition took place in 1961, and its co-founder was prof. Jerzy Zurawlew, the leading force behind the International Chopin Piano Competition in 1927. Since 1998, the Competition has taken place every three years in Bydgoszcz. A national phenomenon at first, the Competition has been an international event since 1998, with a program founded on the virtuoso repertoire of Ignacy Jan Paderewski. Since 1994, the Competition has been organized by the I. J. Paderewski Music Association. From 2010 onwards the Competition has allowed the participants to select an instrument of their own choice. At their disposal are instruments from Yamaha, Steinway, Kawai and Fazioli. The Competition has given rise to outstanding laureates: Mariya Kim, Nikita Mdojants, Yulianna Avdeeva, Eduard Kunz, Zheeyoung Moon, Dinara Clinton, Hyuk Lee, and Jakub Kuszlik. www.paderewskicompetition.com



Behind the screens in Warsaw

THE FRYDERYK CHOPIN INSTITUTE/DAREK GOŁIK

WARSAW | The Chopin Competition

The Chopin Competition in Warsaw is a world-famous event and the most important competition in the Piano World. It has existed since 1927 and launched the careers of many great artists: Maurizio Pollini, Martha Argerich, Garrick Ohlsson, Krystian Zimerman and many others, not just the first prize-winners. Since 1955, the competition has been held every five years without interruption, except 2020. Each time, in October of the year of the competition, Warsaw becomes a Mecca for thousands of piano lovers. There are four rounds and the entire competition lasts three weeks. Already in Spring, many people try to secure their tickets. And indeed, the Chopin Competition is a magnificent event, not to be missed. All rounds are held in the great hall of the Filharmonia, with perfect acoustics and sublime instruments. In recent years the Chopin Competition is also organising a competition on period instruments. <https://chopin2020.pl/en>

WARSAW | International Competition of Polish Music

The International Competition of Polish Music seeks to popularize 19th and 20th Century Polish music around the world. The goal of the competition is to promote talented musicians (pianists and chamber musicians) who choose to include lesser-known works by Polish authors in their respective repertoires. The organization of the competition is also a way to promote Poland as a venue for artistic events of a worldwide scope. The competition is organized by the National Institute of Music and Dance, in cooperation with the Artur Malawski Podkarpacka Philharmonic Orchestra in Rzeszow, and financed by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage. www.polishmusiccompetition.pl/en



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PORTUGAL

PORTO | Santa Cecilia International Competition

This competition is organised by the emblematic school Curso de Música Silva Monteiro. In the past years, it has gained the status of the biggest competition in Portugal and simultaneously it has been consistently growing in the international panorama also as a member of Alink-Argerich Foundation. The competition is divided into two sections: the main category (up to 32) and the junior categories (from 6 to 18). There are five junior categories, with their own jury, and the performances take place at Fundação Manuel António da Mota, an important institution of the city. The performances of the main category, for participants up to 32 years old, take place at Casa de Música, one of the most relevant music venues in Europe. Every year, many candidates are received from all over the world.

www.scecilia-competition.com

SLOVENIA

LJUBLJANA | Ljubljana Festival International Piano Competition

The first piano competition on such a scale in Slovenia. It was established by the Ljubljana Festival, an internationally recognised Festival. The artistic director of the 1st Ljubljana Festival International Piano Competition is the renowned Italian pianist Epifanio Comis. At all stages of the competition, the pianists are appraised by an expert nine-member jury, consisting of renowned musicians, and presided over by the Slovenian pianist and Professor Emeritus Dubravka Tomšič Srebotnjak, who has for many years been considered Slovenia's No. 1 cultural ambassador. As a young pianist, she won many international piano competitions, and is now a jury member of numerous important international piano competitions throughout the world.

www.ljubljanafestival.si/en/ljubljana-festival-piano-competition

SOUTH AFRICA

PRETORIA | Unisa International Piano Competition

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

www.unisa.ac.za/musicfoundation

SPAIN

BARCELONA | Maria Canals International Music Competition

This competition has a long history. Maria Canals was born in Barcelona, 1914. During her youth, Ricard Viñes was one of her main piano teachers. In the 1940s, Maria Canals embarked on an international career as pianist and became ambassador of the works by important Catalan and Spanish composers such as Montsalvatge and Mompou. As a piano teacher, Maria Canals did very much for the youth and created the Ars Nova Music Academy in 1950 together with her husband Rossend Llates, which grew to become a prestigious institute. In 1954, the first Maria Canals International Music Competition was held. since 1956 it has been an annual event and Among the more recent prizewinners, we can see many more names of pianists who made good careers: José Carlos Cocarelli, Alexandre Tharaud, Kirill Gerstein, Alexander Moutouzkine, Vadym Kholodenko. From 2009, the Maria Canals Competition was only for piano and not for other instruments anymore.

www.mariacanal.org



Chopin Competition in Warsaw



International Piano LAB for young pianists *looks back at 2023 edition*



Revisit
PIANO LAB 2023
THROUGH THIS LINK:



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Registration for Piano LAB 2024 opens on January 24th.

Piano LAB extends its gratitude to the following partners



SANTANDER | Paloma O'Shea Santander Piano Competition

A reunion that has been repeated in Santander for over 50 years now: twenty young pianists coming from all five continents get together for two weeks. They do so to boost their emerging careers and to offer 50 concerts both to the music lovers of Santander and the world. Paloma O'Shea, president of the competition: "We remember the hundreds of pianists who have experienced the competition since its creation in the summer of 1972. Throughout this time, I have noticed that the mere fact of applying and preparing for the phases is already a transforming experience that allows participants to advance as artists and as persons. I encourage them to do so."

www.santanderpianocompetition.com

SWEDEN

ARVIKA | The Nordic Piano Competition

The Nordic Piano Competition in Sweden has been held in Malmö, Sweden, every two years since 2002. It was relocated to Arvika near Oslo, Norway as of 2017. Eligibility to participate in this competition is restricted to those of 16 to 30 years of age, citizen or permanent resident of any of the Nordic countries (Iceland, Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Finland) or currently studying at a music institution in these Nordic countries.

www.nordicpiano.com

SWITZERLAND

GENEVA | Concours de Genève – International Music Competition

The Concours de Genève is one of the most established international music competitions. It has a long tradition that spans nearly 80 years. It started in 1939 under the name Concours International d'Exécution Musicale. At that time, a 19 year-old Italian pianist by the name of Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli travelled on a 3rd class one-way train ticket from Brescia to Geneva, to take part in the competition. The competition's jury consisted of seven pianists, including Alfred Cortot. They awarded Michelangeli the first prize.

www.concoursgeneve.ch

GENEVA | Horowitz Competition Kyiv-Geneva

As the ongoing conflict in Ukraine made it impossible for the Horowitz Competition to take place at its home base in Kyiv, Ukraine, the World Federation of Intl. Music Competitions decided to support and assist the Horowitz Competition to hold its 2023 edition in Geneva. Endorsed by the Ukrainian Minister of Culture and Information Policy, Oleksandr Tkachenko, and the Mayor of Kyiv, Vitali Klitschko, the competition was held

from 13–21 April, 2023 at the Geneva Conservatory, with the final on 21 April at Victoria Hall. The final round was accompanied by the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande and a number of guest players from the National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine.

ZURICH | Géza Anda Competition

In 2021 the music world celebrates the 100th anniversary of the birthday of the famous Hungarian-Swiss pianist Géza Anda (1921–1976). After his untimely death, his widow Hortense Anda-Bührle founded the Géza Anda Foundation to help and mentor the laureates of the Géza Anda Competition.

Among them we find Georges Pludermacher, Dénes Várjon, Pietro De Maria, Alexei Volodin, Konstantin Scherbakov, and Claire Huangci from the edition in 2018.

www.geza-anda.ch

NEUCHÂTEL VAL DE TRAVERS | Piano Neuchâtel Val de Travers

Katja Avdeeva, director of Piano Val de Travers and of the festival Week-ends du piano in Neuchâtel, herself a concert pianist and laureate of international competitions in Switzerland, Italy, France and Spain, is committed to helping young talent. "My idea was to create a competition where all participants are equally important. Young musicians come to share their originality and freshness in their personal approach to music making. Having this experience is vital and so we offer all participants opportunities to play before the audience in the Val de Travers region. Also they can take masterclasses with jury members and get advice from them. Competitions are important, but only time will tell who will have a career. Most importantly, I like to help young musicians develop their own personality and find their own individual form of expression."

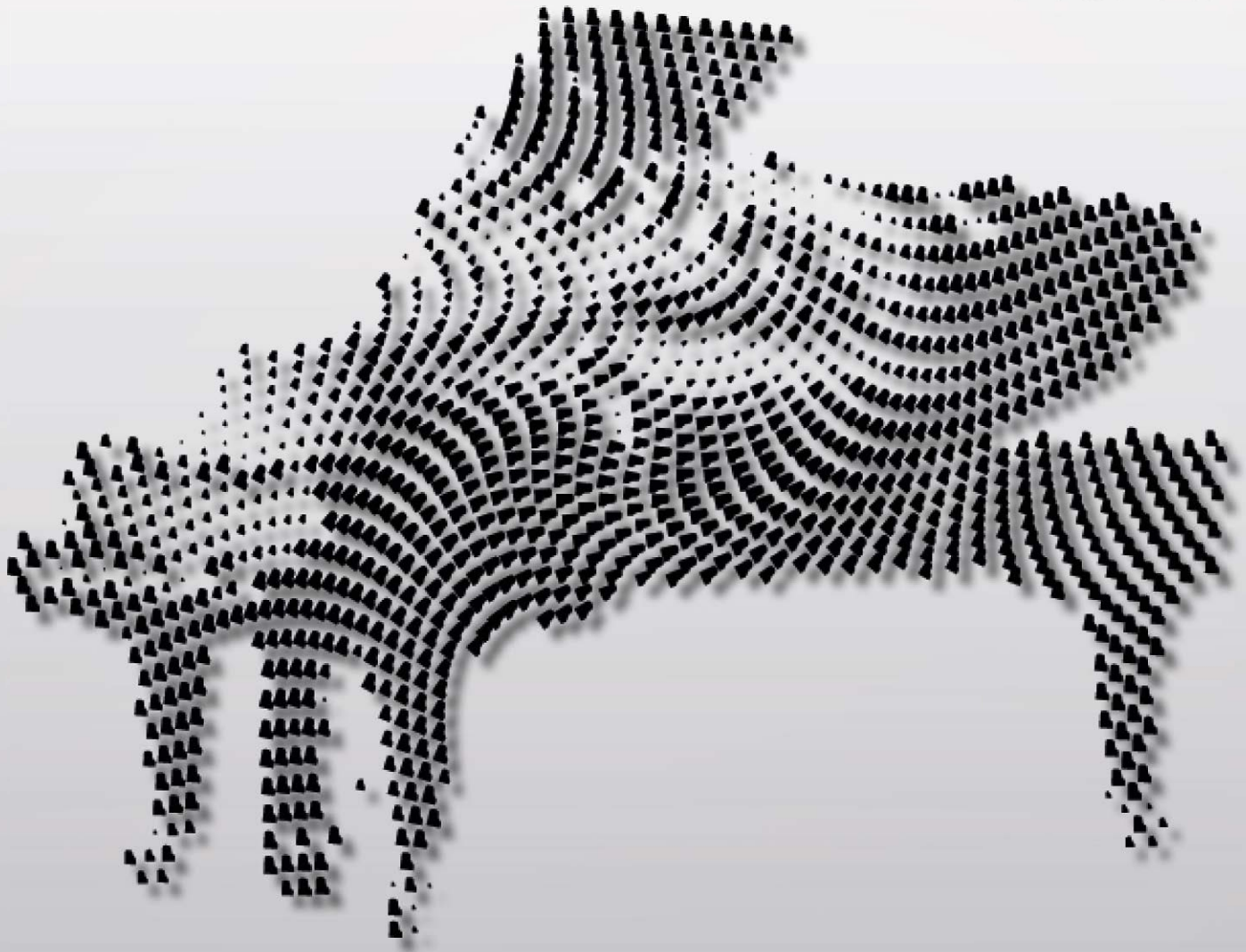
www.piano.international



Julian Trevelyan
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www.schimmel-klavierwettbewerb.de



USA

BOULDER COLORADO | The International Keyboard Odyssey & Festival

This competition is an eight-day summer piano competition and festival featuring over a dozen guest artists and pianists in daily masterclasses and presentations, mini-recitals, special discussion panels, the live Semifinal and Final Rounds of the Olympic-styled Odyssey Competition, and six nights of riveting concerts by internationally renowned pianists, including Van Cliburn winners. IKOF is designed for pianists of all ages and nationalities, teachers, and the general public who love the piano and its repertoire. The Preliminary Round of IKOF is judged online; the Semi-final and Final Rounds of IKOF take place live in Fort Collins, Colorado on the campus of Colorado State University, and are free and open to the public. Winners of the Concerto Division are also invited to perform as soloists with the Boulder Symphony in Boulder, Colorado.

www.odyssey.com

CLEVELAND | Cleveland International Piano Competition

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

www.pianocleveland.org

NEW YORK | GOCAA International Piano Competition

The GOCAA International Piano Competition aims to discover and promote young talent: the competition attracts many young talented pianists from around the world to perform and compete. With highly qualified judges and a rigorous selection process, the competition makes a direct positive impact on the future of piano study for young pianists. GOCAA is a Non-profit Arts Association recognized by the U.S. Federal Government. As a comprehensive artistic organization, GOCAA members are active in many forms of arts, including musical arts, visual arts, dance, and others. GOCAA aims to promote cooperation among Chinese artists and nurture artistic achievements domestically and abroad.

www.gocaamusic.com



A young competitor
in Ettlingen

FRANK REICH

SALT LAKE CITY | Gina Bachauer International Artists Piano Competition

Greek concert pianist, Gina Bachauer (1913–1976), was often regarded as the greatest female pianist of the 20th Century. A highly sought-after world performer, she developed a close bond with the people of Utah as she frequently performed with the Utah Symphony under the direction of Maurice Abravanel. The legacy of mutual admiration between Gina Bachauer and the Utah community lives on through the Gina Bachauer International Piano Foundation. The Artists Competition returns in June 2024, marking forty-eight years of welcoming the world’s most elite pianists to Utah.

www.bachauer.com





The Golden touch

The Wiener Musikverein, with its famous Golden Hall, together with just a handful of concert halls in Berlin, Amsterdam, and Boston, is one of the truly magnificent venues for classical music in the world. It was erected as the new concert hall run by the Society of Friends of Music in Vienna, on a piece of land provided by Emperor Franz Joseph I in 1863. Designed by Danish architect Theophil Hansen in the Neoclassical style of an ancient Greek temple, the Musikverein was inaugurated on 6 January 1870. The first organ recital was given by Anton Bruckner, two years later.

The hall, with 1,744 seats and standing room for 300, is the home of the Vienna Philharmonic as well as Bösendorfer, with a showroom actually located in the building of the Musikverein. Bösendorfer, founded on the 25th of July 1828, the date when Ignaz Bösendorfer was officially granted the right to become a member of the prestigious Austrian instrument manufactures guild in Vienna. Since then the company has embodied the traditional Viennese sound and atmosphere.

The Musikverein is also the home to the International Beethoven Piano Competition, the oldest international piano competition in Austria, founded more than 60 years ago. Hosted by the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, it ranks among the most renowned music competitions today. Since 2011, Jan Jiracek von Arnim has been the artistic director and chair of the competition. The competition was initially co-founded by Bösendorfer and is nowadays still supported by the firm, which generously presents a Bösendorfer grand piano to the first prize winner.

The 17th International Beethoven Piano Competition Vienna will be held in May 2025.

www.boesendorfer.com

Save
the date!



11th International FRANZ LISZT Competition Weimar-Bayreuth | Piano

22 October – 1 November 2024

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





BORDERLAND CHOPIN

The first edition of the Borderland Chopin International Competition will take place on May 22–25, 2024, at the University of Texas at El Paso, USA. The Competition is open to pianists of all nationalities, ages 18–35, and features over \$65,000 in cash prizes, a performance with the El Paso Symphony Orchestra, a CD release contract with KNS, special performance prizes, paid accommodations for all ten quarter-finalists, and airfare refund for prize winners.

BORDERLAND CHOPIN INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION

The required repertoire includes works by Chopin, a work by a living composer, a piano concerto from a selected list, and the candidate’s free choices. The jury is comprised of acclaimed international artists, including Zlata Chochieva, Kevin Kenner, Antonio Pompa-Baldi, Pamela Mia Paul, Magdalena Baczewska, and conductor Bohuslav Rattay.

The competition was created by Dr. Oscar Macchioni, Associate Professor of Piano Pedagogy at the University of North Texas, and former Professor of Piano and Distinguished Teaching Professor at the University of Texas at El Paso. Macchioni’s vision is to bring competitors and artists of international caliber to the University of Texas at El Paso, engaging the community through concerts, masterclasses, outreach, and musical instrument donations to underserved communities in the area.

“Borderland” refers to three border cities, encompassing two countries and three states: El Paso in Texas and Las Cruces in New Mexico, USA, and Ciudad Juárez in Chihuahua, Mexico. This rich cultural area hosted for decades an international Chopin Festival, and it is known for its artisans and culinary wonders, mountains, the Chihuahuan Desert beauty; it is just one hour away from the White

Sands National Park, a genuine nature’s wonder. The host, the University of Texas at El Paso, boasts a beautiful, unique campus in Bhutanese architecture with excellent facilities.

The Borderland Chopin International Competition is sponsored by the generous donation of the Bonnie Brooks Family Foundation, the University of Texas at El Paso College of Liberal Arts and Department of Music, Mr. Lewis Peebles, and Mrs. Wilma Salzman. A dear friend of Dr. Macchioni’s, Bonnie Brooks supported the music scene in El Paso for decades. Her legacy for musical excellence lives through the Borderland Chopin International Competition and Festival.

The competition will open on May 22, 2024 with a recital by celebrated guest artist and juror Zlata Chochieva, performing works by Chopin, Rachmaninoff, and Reger. All live rounds and recitals are free and open to the public.

For more information and to apply, please visit www.borderlandchopincompetition.com and follow us on social media.

Busoni Competition: Exceptional 64th edition

The Busoni Competition in the beautiful city of Bolzano has a long history and a great tradition. The final stages of the 64th Busoni Competition were held 23 August – 3 September 2023. In more than one respect, this edition was exceptional.



Busoni
*64th International
Piano Competition
64° Concorso Pianistico
Internazionale
64. Internationaler
Klavierwettbewerb*

Arsenii Mun is the absolute winner of the first prize. Next to him: Imogen Cooper; second from the right: Ingrid Fliter



Arsenii Mun during his performance in the finals with orchestra

Let's first have a brief look at the history of the Busoni Competition. Since the first edition in 1949 it has been held every year. Arturo Benedetto Michelangeli and Nikita Magaloff frequently served on the jury as well as other illustrious people. In 1953, the famous conductor Carlo Maria Giulini joined the jury for the final stage. Fifty-nine aspiring pianists took part in 1949, among whom Alfred Brendel (who performed one of his own compositions!) and Béla Siki. The expectations of the jury must have been very high, as the first prize was not awarded during the first three editions of the competition. In 1952, Sergio Perticaroli was the first pianist to win the Busoni Competition. In 1956, Jörg Demus was the winner, and we all know that Martha Argerich won the Busoni prize in 1957, when she was only 16 years old. This must have made such a huge impression that the next three years, the first prize was again not awarded. And, indeed, the Busoni Competition got the reputation of an event where the first prize was more often withheld than awarded. Nevertheless, it always attracted excellent young pianists from all over the world. Among the other prize winners, we see the names of Ingrid Haebler, Walter Klien, Joaquín Achúcarro, Agustín Anievas and the later winners Garrick Ohlsson (1966), Arnaldo Cohen (1972) and Boris Bloch (1978). The competition was so well-known that 242 pianists applied in 1987, of whom 146 came to compete in Bolzano.

Typical for the Busoni competition was that the first round was held anonymously, behind closed doors. After the first round, 27 contestants would usually be admitted to the second round. This lasted

until 2002. From that year on, the structure of the competition totally changed. A two-year cycle was adopted. Approximately one hundred pianists were to be allowed to take part in the first phase of the competition: one public round in Bolzano in the first year, after which again 27 pianists would be selected to come back to Bolzano for the second phase: four rounds, the following year. When this new structure was announced, some people were wondering whether it would work. Why would a young pianist travel to Bolzano twice, cherishing the hope to win a prize for more than a year? However, the competition remained very popular. In 2012, the organisers were very generous and admitted 150 pianists to the first round (of whom 135 actually came). Due to the covid pandemic in 2020, the first live round was transformed to a "glocal" competition: around one hundred pianists of all applicants from all over the world would have their performance recorded in one of the specially arranged "local" sites (in close cooperation with Steinway & Sons), to ensure more or less equal conditions and fine quality recordings.

The 64th edition of the Busoni Competition became a highly remarkable event. A record number of 589 pianists applied for the first phase in 2022. (Depending on how you count, there were even more.) No other major piano competition in the world had ever received such a high number of applicants. A huge task for the pre-selection panel in 2022. They chose 110 pianists to enter the "glocal" first stage. Precisely one hundred of them made the recordings. 26 contestants were selected to proceed to the final phase in 2023.



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The jury for the final phase of this 64th edition of the Busoni Competition, chaired by Ingrid Fliter (in the middle)

Nine more pianists were added: three who had been prize winners in other WFIMC member competitions, another three who had received the highest number of audience votes on their 2022 “glocal” recordings, and three who had been selected for the final phase in 2021 but had been unable to attend. So, altogether 35 young high-calibre pianists were invited, of whom eventually 31 came to Bolzano to compete for the Busoni prize.

Mikhail Bouzine, winner of the international competition for 20th and 21st Century music in Orléans (France), surprised the audience with his highly unusual performance, almost making a show. Naturally, compositions and transcriptions by Ferruccio Busoni had to be performed by all contestants, but for the second round they also had to choose another work, composed between 2019 and 2021. In collaboration with the competition in Orléans, a list of pieces was provided. Bouzine played Stockhausen and *Secret Piece* by Yoko Ono. In the second round he performed *Berceuse* by Filidei, which included some acting while playing the music. He had also given a rather theatrical performance of Liszt’s *Mazeppa* (looking around and even standing up during the piece). With Schumann, his interpretation went a bit over the top and the goodwill that he had initially created among the jury, faded.

Hanna Schwalbe had also reached the solo finals, where she gave a beautiful, intimate performance of Brahms’ *Intermezzi*, op. 117. The competition was tough, as practically all participants performed at a high level. Many of them had already won multiple prizes in other competitions. All solo rounds and the Chamber Music finals took place at the Auditorium of Bolzano, which is one of the best halls for classical music: it has perfect acoustics, and the sound of the piano is absolutely magnificent, wherever you are seated in this hall. The contestants themselves were also full of praise about this. Steinway technician Giulio Passadori was also specially credited for his excellent work and great dedication during the entire competition. Six contestants were selected to perform in the Chamber Music finals, together with the Isidore String quartet (from New York City, winners of the 2022 Banff Int’l String Quartet Competition). Four different piano quintets were performed (Shostakovich,

Dvorak, Brahms and César Franck), while this stage also comprised another 30 minutes of solo recital.

Three pianists made it to the finals with orchestra, for which they had to prepare two piano concertos, of which the jury would choose one to perform. Arsenii Mun performed Rachmaninov’s *Paganini Rhapsody*, Anthony Ratinov Prokofiev #3 and Ryota Yamazaki Tchaikovsky #1.

At the end, Arsenii Mun was declared winner of this 64th Busoni Competition and – highly exceptional – he was also awarded the Michelangeli Prize, which is only given when the jury is unanimous in their decision of awarding the first prize. This has not happened in nearly 30 years! Furthermore, Arsenii also received the audience prize.

The jury was chaired by Ingrid Fliter and included distinguished pianists such as Imogen Cooper, François-Frédéric Guy, Aleksandar Madzar, Iain Burnside and Chen Jiang, joined by Fulvia de Colle (Musica Insieme) and Clemens Trautmann (CEO of Deutsche Grammophon). For several years now, all the voting by the jury has been published on the competition’s website. Thus, there is complete transparency.

Peter Paul Kainrath, Artistic Director of the Busoni Competition and President of WFIMC, underlines that all young musicians take part in competitions as individuals and not as representatives of any nation. Music is an universal medium. An artistic career in music transcends nationality. In line with the WFIMC recommendations, the Busoni Competition abstains from any indication of nationality.

GUSTAV ALINK

All performances can still be viewed on <https://competition.busoni-mahler.eu>

The three participants who just heard that they are to play in the finals with orchestra. From left to right: Arsenii Mun, Anthony Ratinov, Ryota Yamazaki



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Due to organizational reasons and because of major flood damage in the Schimmel factory, the third edition of the International Schimmel Piano Competition, organized by the Wilhelm Schimmel Pianofortefabrik GmbH in Germany, will be held from 1 to 3 March 2024. The competition is for pianists aged 18 to 32 who are currently undergoing or have completed professional musical training. In addition to the quality of the performance, the focus of the competition lies in the conception of the presented programme, which must follow a theme chosen by the participants.

International Schimmel Piano Competition

Lothar Kiesche, Head of Marketing and Sales at Schimmel: “Under the circumstances, we could not guarantee that we could hold the competition in the usual way and normal setting as in September. Therefore, after consultation with our jury, we decided to postpone the competition until March of next year. This is primarily in the interest of the participants. It is the only way we will be able to organize the same quality of competition as has been possible in the past years and as the participants would expect from us.”

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

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

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

www.schimmel-klavierwettbewerb.de/competition

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Jonas Aumiller

www.brahmscompetition-detmold.de



Brahms Piano Competition Detmold 2024

Between proven tradition and new developments

The Brahms Piano Competition Detmold will be held for the fourth time in September 2024. Numerous innovations and further developments confirm its rank among the major international competitions dedicated to a composer. For example, prize money will be increased, all competition rounds will be streamed live, and the jury now includes seven members. It consists of Hiroe Arai, Markus Bellheim, Michel Béroff, Richard Braun, Inge-Susann Römhild, Catherine Vickers and the artistic director, Detmold professor Jacob Leuschner. The latter emphasizes: “The atmosphere in the jury has always been characterized by great harmony and fairness, and this will certainly be the case in 2024 as well.”



Jonas Aumiller

As in previous rounds, highly attractive follow-up engagements are available to all prize winners, including performances at the Böblingen Pianists’ Festival, the Steinfurt “Bagno”, the Thürmer Hall in Bochum, and the “Stars of Tomorrow” series at Corvey Castle. The overall winner will also receive a CD production, taken care of by the Tonmeisterinstitut of the Detmold University of Music.

The Brahms Competition’s nose for talent is demonstrated by the fact that all previous winners have since gone on to enjoy fine international careers and have also received awards at other competitions. For example, Jonas Aumiller was invited on the spot by the Nordwestdeutsche Philharmonie, which had seen him perform at the final. The orchestra has once again agreed to engage the winner. In addition, Aumiller’s prize-winning CD was added to the total edition of the magazine *Audio* and thus received broad attention – a result of the good contacts of Detmold Tonmeister professor Werner Dabringhaus.

The idea of its founder, professor Jacob Leuschner, to establish a one-week piano festival in Detmold has been fully realized with the competition. Not only the people of Detmold themselves follow the event with great interest – the audience also sometimes comes from far away. The final round with the two piano concertos by

Brahms in the always well-filled Detmold Konzerthaus is a festive event that also offers many concert organizers the opportunity to discover outstanding talent. The competition also brings to mind that Johannes Brahms had his first employment at the Detmold Fürstenhof in the years 1857–59 (even though he quickly moved away again after completing his work as a choir director and piano teacher).

Professor Jacob Leuschner formulates what makes the Brahms Competition unique: “Brahms’ piano music is conceivably unsuitable for any kind of self-promotion. Despite its considerable pianistic difficulties, it is the opposite of virtuoso music – no one can hide a lack of musical depth behind technical brilliance here.

Thus, at the Brahms Competition we are looking for mature musicians who are interested in internalization, tonal differentiation, and structural understanding of the works. That is why we have set the age limit at 35. Through this, we hope to once again hear a large number of outstanding Brahms interpreters in Detmold in 2024!”

A maximum of 30 participants will be selected by video pre-selection; the application deadline is April 30, 2024.

www.brahmscompetition-detmold.de

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

The Kayserburg International Youth Piano Competition Turns 40!



Since 1983, the Kayserburg International Youth Piano Competition has achieved worldwide status as the springboard for artists who have gone on to widespread acclaim. This year, on its 40th Anniversary, the 2023 competition is now the world's largest with over 100,000 contestants. Visit KayserburgUSA.com to learn more, including how to become a participant.

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Chen Yuxin



COMPETITION REPORT

Yang Haokun

KAYSERBURG INTERNATIONAL YOUTH PIANO COMPETITION

The 2023 Kayserburg International Youth Piano Competition concluded its 40th anniversary on October 6 in Guangzhou, China, with the announcement of the Grand Prize Winners in the Student and Open categories. Pianists competed in regional events in the United States, Canada, Philippines, Singapore, Australia, Indonesia, Vietnam, Ecuador, Poland, and Iran, to earn the all-expenses-paid trip to the finals.

In the Student Category, which is restricted to ages 13 to 16, Mo Zixuan from the Chinese island province of Hainan, and Zhou Cheng from Beijing, China, won First Prize, taking home a Kayserburg 47.5" Excellent Series Vertical Piano, certificate, and a trophy. The Student Category Second Prize went to Xu Qilun from Shandong Province, China, and Tan Xincuo from Hunan Province, China, who each received a cash prize, a certificate, and a trophy. Nayla Arifa Salwa from Indonesia, Han Yuliang from Hunan Province, China, and Liu Xiaohe from Shandong Province, China each earned the Third Prize award of a cash prize, a certificate, and trophy.

In the Open Category, reserved for pianists from the age of 17 to 32, the First Prize winner was Chen Yuxin from China, who was awarded a Kayserburg 5' 3" Baby Grand Artists Series Piano, a certificate, and a trophy. The Second Prize was shared by Zhang Sichen from China, and Wang Chong from Germany, who each received a cash prize, a certificate, and a trophy. The Third Prize winners of a cash prize, a certificate, and a trophy were Wang Yuke, Yang Haokun, and Li Yizhe from China.

Held every two years, the competition was launched in 1983 by the Pearl River Piano Group, the world's leading piano manufacturer, to pave the way for the higher development of deserving young talents and expand piano education's influence globally.

"We're honoured how this competition has grown to become the world's largest with over 100,000 participants," said Pearl River's Global Director of Sales & Marketing Leng Tshua. "It's because of the worldwide support from teachers, students, and dealers that we are expanding the influence of piano education."



Li Yizhe, Wang Yuke, Yang Haokun
(from left to right)



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~Richard Strauss~



Valeria Erandi and Alejandro González Gerwig



Mina Selina and Marie Elisa Himpel

Carl Bechstein Competition for Children and Young People

Even the top-class jury was amazed at times during the ninth Carl Bechstein Competition for Children and Young People which took place recently in Berlin. Several piano duos were awarded prizes for performances at a level that one would not normally expect of the age of those pianists.

For the third time, the competition was announced in the category piano duo; this time it was four-handed at a grand piano. And among the numerous outstanding duos, the first prize winners in categories III (14 to 15 years) and IV (16 to 17 years) stood out: the musical mastery with which the only ten-year-old Sophie Elisabeth Wagner from Wachtberg near Bonn, together with her 15-year-old brother Alexander William, played Franz Liszt's highly virtuosic Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2 on his 212th birthday was nothing short of astounding.

Mina Selina and Marie Elisa Himpel from Hanover were also awarded first prize in Age Group III for their mature interpretation of Francis Poulenc's Sonata for Four Hands FP8 in the prize-winners' concert. The duo Valeria Erandi and Alejandro González Gerwig thrilled the audience with Paul Dukas' *L'apprenti sorcier* and continued their success of seven years ago when the siblings from Königswinter won first prize in age group IV.

The 2023 awards were presented by the experienced (duo) pianists and piano teachers Prof. Wolfgang Manz (chair), Wei Chen, Götz Schumacher, Alina Shalamova and Sivan Silver, who formed a decidedly harmonious jury. In age group I, the jury awarded first prize to Maximilian Hongchen Zhu and Yishi Huang from Baden-Württemberg and in age group II to the duo Darian Leonid Müller

and Parzival Passa Namsongnein from Würzburg. The latter duo also won the special prize for the best interpretation of a contemporary work in this age group for their Kurtág interpretations, which went to the duo Klėja and Kaja Kašubaitė from Berlin in age group III.

For the first time at the Carl Bechstein Competition, the Fondation Hindemith awarded two special prizes for outstanding Hindemith interpretations, which were presented to the duos Andrey Azpiri Munoz and Michael Kabanovsky from Berlin, and to Mina Selina and Marie Elisa Himpel in age group III.

"With this competition, the Carl Bechstein Foundation has also set itself the task of consciously promoting making music together," noted Gregor Willmes, Chair of the Board of the Carl Bechstein Foundation, after the competition. "In this way, we deliberately counter the numerous solo competitions, which now also exist for children and young people, with a chamber music counterpart every two years. Although this leads to fewer entries than in solo competitions, it does not lead to a reduction in artistic quality." The next Carl Bechstein Competition will take place from 18 to 20 October, 2024, at Schloss Britz and will then again be dedicated to the category "piano solo".



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akustika – The Fair for Music

From 8 to 10 March 2024, the akustika trade fair will focus on the diversity and quality of handcrafted musical instrument making, and offer numerous workshops and concerts. Following the successful premiere as "Musik-Messe Nürnberg 2023", a special focus in 2024 will be on the piano. Important manufacturers will be represented, and the combination with the Europiano Congress for Piano and Grand Piano Making is also unique. An opportunity to immerse yourself in the multifaceted world of keyboard instruments!

Andreas Harke, Chair of the Association of German Piano Makers: "In spring 2023, the akustika trade fair for handcrafted instrument making was held for the first time and was very well received by both the public and exhibitors. The wind and string instrument sector was significantly represented there. In the piano sector, a successful congress of the European Piano Makers' Association was held in Warsaw in autumn 2022. Both events were a great success in their own right and were much appreciated. It therefore made sense to address a broad music-loving audience and combine the two events."

A good six months before akustika 2024, more than 60 per cent of the exhibitors have registered who were already present at the previous event. The exhibition space booked so far corresponds to over 80 per cent of the exhibition space of the first edition. The organiser of akustika is the Nuremberg trade fair company AFAG. Christoph Endres, Headmaster of the Guild for Musical Instrument Making in Northern Bavaria, is a professional partner of akustika: "With akustika 2024, the trade fair is taking a significant developmental step into the spectrum of musical instrument making. In 2024, the trade fair will be expanded to include the piano and organ building sector, making it the leading event for musical instrument making in Europe. As in the previous year, akustika will be a unique musical experience for universities, music associations, schools and all those interested in music, from beginners to professionals."

Andreas Harke: "In the Kyiv room, where there is also a stage, all well-known manufacturers are present with their flagship or centre-piece: Steingraeber, Steinway & Sons, C. Bechstein, Chris Maene, Keybird, Bösendorfer, Feurich, PTDAE, Schiedmayer, Schimmel Pianos, Schiedmayer, Neupert and Paul McNulty (this is as of November 2023, but more will follow!)."

This room will be used exclusively for Europiano participants for short presentations by the exhibitors. During the time open to visitors, the instruments can be played under supervision (time-regulated). Participants coming to the fair from Germany and abroad can make direct contact with the manufacturer at akustika.

The congress area is located on the same level as the trade exhibi-

tion but is reserved for members of the piano-making associations. In the other areas, especially in the Kyiv area and the concert stage in St. Petersburg, there will be a lively exchange between trade fair visitors (pianists, teachers, specialist dealers, amateur musicians, etc.) and professionals from all over Europe (manufacturers, suppliers, instrument makers, piano technicians, etc.).

In the specialist areas, these topics will be explored in greater depth in lectures and seminars at the Europiano Congress. Piano makers, manufacturers and suppliers will share their expertise with congress participants and interested trade visitors.

Dr Frank P. Bär, curator of the musical instrument collection at the Germanisches Nationalmuseum in Nuremberg since 1997, together with the President of the Nuremberg University of Music, Prof. Rainer Kotzian, will be hosting the information event "From yesterday to tomorrow - a look into the piano universe". Henk Swinnen from Maene Piano's will provide information on the development and construction of the Maene-Viñoly Concert Grand, which will also be on display at the fair.

Thomas Kumpfe, project developer and head of the C. Bechstein production of hammers department, will talk about Bechstein's own hammerheads, and there will also be an intonation workshop with Paula Kiechle and Elia Ramm.

Joachim Leonardy (Jahn Pianoteile) will address the topic of "How does a soundboard work - and what does the sound have to do with the construction?" In addition, very different topics will also be covered, from adjustments in the mechanics, weighting and digitalisation in piano making to the manufacture of historical keyboard instruments and the treatment of hearing impairment.

www.akustika-nuernberg.de



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

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

Upcoming edition of The World of Piano Competitions is published: May 2024
For all inquiries please contact: h.bruger@pianist-magazin.de

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Trio Orelon



Tio Pantoum, Trio Orelon, Amelio Trio

ARD International Music Competition

The ARD International Music Competition is one of the most prestigious and largest competitions for classical music. Many of today's world-famous artists were supported by it and were subsequently able to further develop their careers. These include Ingrid Haebler, Michael Ponti, Edith Fischer, Christoph Eschenbach, Mitsuko Uchida, Bernd Glemser, Anne Queffélec, Piotr Paleczny, Alexandre Tharaud, Severin von Eckardstein, Jeung Beum Sohn and Fabian Müller. Around 200 candidates from 35 to 40 countries take part in the competition each year, which is organised by Bayerischer Rundfunk.

Before the foundation of ARD, Radio Frankfurt organised a "Competition for Young Soloists" from 1947 to 1950. The very first competition led to the discovery of two great singers: Christa Ludwig and Erika Köth.

ARD organised an annual competition from 1952 onwards. This developed into a unique and highly esteemed institution, precisely because of its annually changing programme for musicians. Even today, now organised by Bayerischer Rundfunk, it still offers young artists a platform – both as soloists and chamber musicians. Since 2001 composition commissions have been awarded to prominent composers, thus strengthening the presence of contemporary music. In 2001, the Festival of ARD Prize Winners was developed as a series of concerts in which musicians from all over the world perform chamber music works together.

This year a total of four instrument categories of first, second and third prizes were awarded at the 72nd ARD International Music Competition 2023 in the fields of harp, double bass, piano trio and

viola. Meret Forster and Falk Häfner, the two Artistic Directors of the ARD Music Competition, commented: "We are delighted with the top musical performances and outstanding prize winners! The number of participants, the extremely high standard and the enthusiasm of the audience are once again proof of the success and international significance of the ARD Music Competition this year."

In the piano trio category, first prize went to Trio Orelon (they won also won the audience prize), Trio Amelio was awarded second prize and Trio Pantoum third prize as well as the BR-Klassik online prize. Trio Bohémo also received several prizes, including the Alice Rosner Prize and the Jeunesses Musicales Deutschland Award. Henle also provided prizes.

The next competition for piano will take place from September 5 to 14, 2025, with the application deadline set for March 31, 2025.

www.br.de/ard-music-competition/index.html



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