

# THE WORLD OF PIANO COMPETITIONS



THE WORLD FEDERATION  
OF INTERNATIONAL  
MUSIC COMPETITIONS

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2024

Phillip  
Lynov

*Musical  
Voyager*

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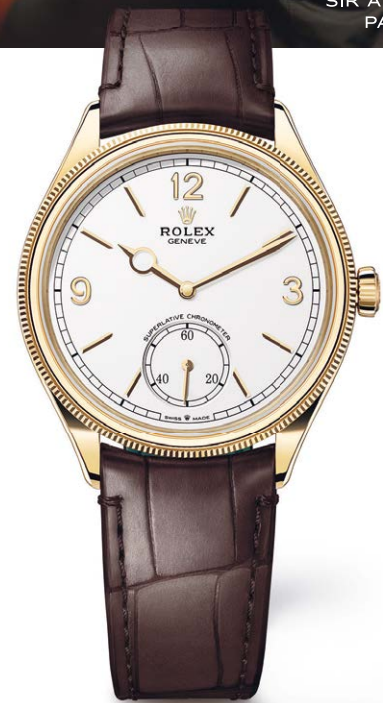


SIR ANTONIO PAPPANO

## LET THERE BE MUSIC

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## W E L C O M E

*Dear readers,*

*“How was the tempo?”* According to Carl Czerny, this was the first question Beethoven would ask when learning of a performance of one of his works. But tempo is not the only thing that matters, of course, for as Edwin Fischer said: “in studying Beethoven’s piano sonatas one encounters difficulties, questions and problems the solution of which constitutes part of the entire artistic and human education of a musician.”

The International Beethoven Piano Competition Vienna was established over 60 years ago, organized and conducted by mdw – University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna. We are now preparing for our 17th edition in May 2025, with our Grand Finale in the famous Golden Hall of the Vienna Musikverein taking place on May 24, 2025. Save the date!

Our competition’s repertoire consists entirely of works by Beethoven. Preparing for this competition helps to pave many young musicians’ path to interpretational maturity – a context in which the journey is indeed its own reward. As artistic director of this competition, I am looking forward to welcoming a new generation of piano talents to Vienna, observing how they understand and interpret Ludwig van Beethoven’s piano works.

There are those who have reservations when it comes to music and competitions, but let’s not forget that the idea of “musical duels” (e. g. Liszt and Thalberg, Beethoven and Steibelt) always had a special appeal to audiences.

I confess, however, to also have my share of bittersweet memories as a former competitor, after not winning the Gold Medal at the Tenth Van Cliburn Competition – with the New York Times titling a feature about me “A Loser neither Bloody nor Unbowed”... In hindsight, I can personally attest how helpful competitions can be: not as a final verdict about “the best”, but as an opportunity to showcase your talent, making connections and meeting like-minded music lovers.

Not winning the Cliburn competition jump-started my international career.

Writing this just days before the start of the “Concours musical international de Montréal”, where I will be a member of the jury, I am genuinely excited to listen to young talents there, completely open to being swept away by their passion, whole-heartedly wishing the best for their future careers.

**JAN JIRACEK VON ARNIM**

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR AND CHAIRPERSON OF THE JURY  
INTERNATIONAL BEETHOVEN PIANO COMPETITION VIENNA





## THE WORLD OF PIANO COMPETITIONS

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### Stay updated!

For upcoming application deadlines etc. check:

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



## PARTNERS



THE WORLD FEDERATION  
OF INTERNATIONAL  
MUSIC COMPETITIONS

### WORLD FEDERATION OF INTERNATIONAL MUSIC COMPETITIONS

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

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

[www.wfimc.org](http://www.wfimc.org)



European Union of Music  
Competitions for Youth

### EUROPEAN UNION OF MUSIC COMPETITIONS FOR YOUTH

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

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

[www.emcy.org](http://www.emcy.org)



### ALINK-ARGERICH FOUNDATION

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

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



### PIANO STREET

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

[www.pianostreet.com](http://www.pianostreet.com)



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Claire Huangci att the Steingraeber Chamber Concert Halll in Bayreuth

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*Claire Huangci* March 2022

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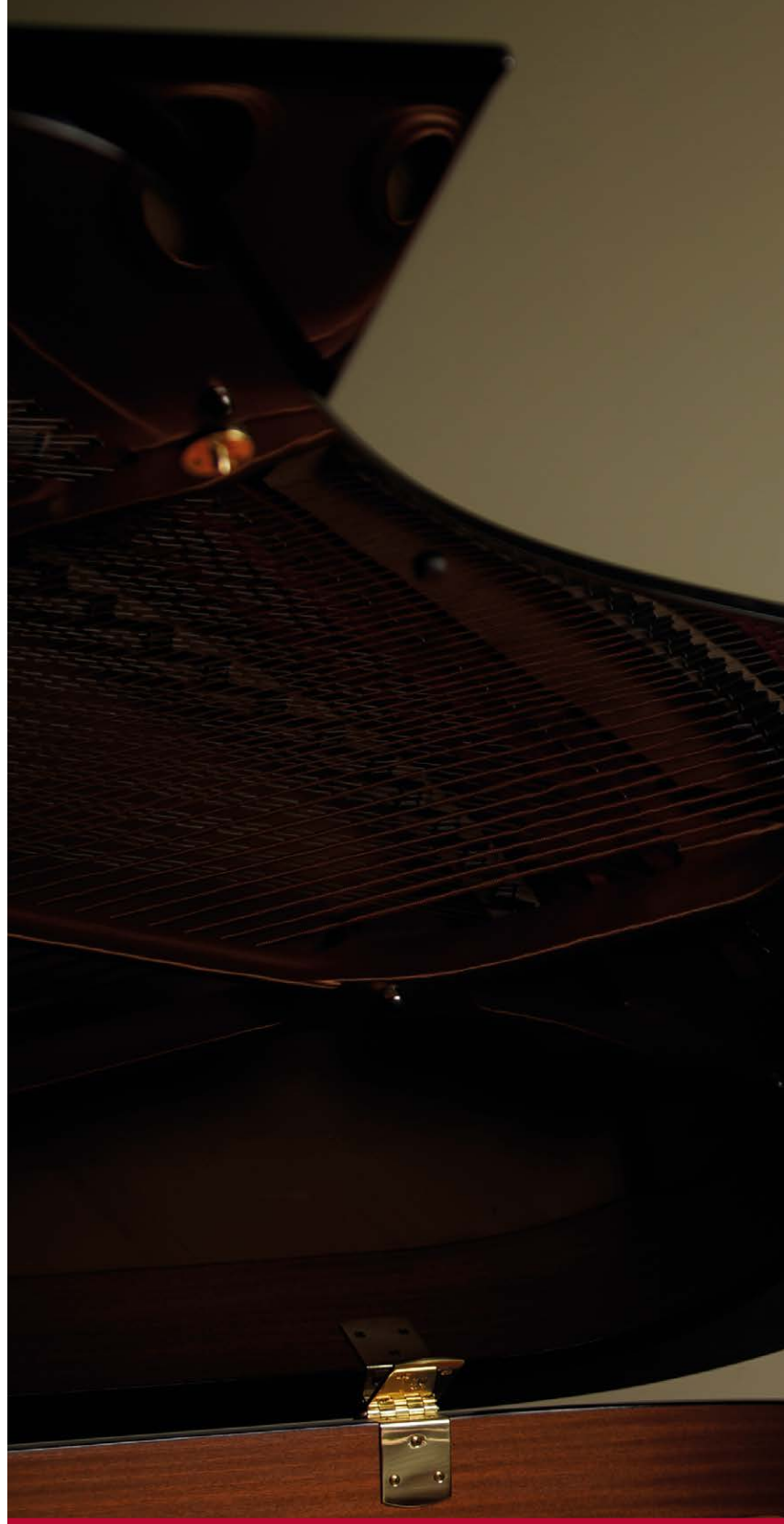
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## Phillip Lynov

Russian pianist Phillip Lynov lives a multi-faceted life. A former student of Moscow Conservatory, he has spent the past six months studying at *Hochschule für Musik und Tanz* in Cologne. As a frequent competitor, Phillip's life is a dynamic blend of professional engagements, academic commitments, and preparation for upcoming competitions. When he's not performing or studying, he devotes his time to exploring an eclectic selection of literature and movies, going to the gym, and exploring the fascinating world of perfume scents, a passion sparked by his interest in chemistry. With music as his passport, Phillip feels grateful to have the opportunity to travel and discover new aspects of himself, viewing his life as a journey of self-discovery.

### What sparked your interest in music and led you to begin playing?

Neither of my parents are musicians, and it was probably just sheer curiosity to try something interesting. When I went to kindergarten there was one very kind woman who was always playing piano, and I was probably somehow impressed by it. At 12 or 13, I planned to make music my profession, gradually become something I'm really passionate about and in 2017, at the age of 18, I enrolled in the conservatory to study under the renowned pianist and professor Eliso Virsaladze. Recently, I have had the opportunity to further my studies in Cologne with Claudio Martinez-Mehner, another talented musician who has a vibrant personality.



### Virsaladze represents a rich Russian piano tradition which is rooted in the legacy of Neuhaus and others. What do you say could distinguish the universal Russian approach in piano playing?

I have been wrestling with this question for a while now, constantly changing my opinion. When it comes to the Russian pianistic style, what sets it apart? I would say it embodies true academicism. But what does that really mean? It encompasses a deep understanding of art, a broad perception of life, and a high level of professionalism. However, in today's globalized world, these distinctions are becoming blurred. Despite this, there are still unique traits that stand out in true artists. When a true artist begins the creative process,



A portrait of a young man with dark hair and a beard, wearing a dark pinstriped jacket over a white shirt. He is looking slightly to the right of the camera. The background is a plain, light-colored wall. The title 'Musical Voyager' is overlaid in large, gold-colored text on the left side of the image.

# Musical Voyager

EMIL MATVEYEV

they are alone in their own world, separate from any traditional school of thought.

**So, is there a unique 'Russian narrative' in the pedagogy of piano playing, or is it a complex interplay of various elements?**

The fusion of various elements is truly intriguing, and I consider myself lucky to have had exceptional teachers, like Eliso Virsaladze, who is a remarkable and unique individual. It's difficult for me to categorize her teaching style as she doesn't adhere to a specific method. She simply connects with her students on a deeper level, sharing her experiences without rigidly following a set pedagogical approach.

**Now that you are studying in Cologne, how do you feel about the contrast between the Russian music scene and the German one?**

I am still navigating my way through Cologne as I have only been here for a short time. My current teacher, Claudio Martinez-Mehner, shares Russian piano traditions as he studied in Moscow with Dmitry Bashkurov. I have also learned from various Russian teachers, not only in Russia. This blending of traditions is interesting to me, especially when considering globalization. Recently, I have been contemplating the role of contemporary art in different cultures. In Germany and Europe, it is more common to hear contemporary programs in concert halls compared to Moscow. Each

country has its own traditions in programming and audience reactions vary greatly. Russian audiences are known for their emotional responses and deep passion for concert life and cultural events. The audience in Russia is diverse, with a higher percentage of young people compared to Europe. However, I still have much to learn and experience in Cologne to fully understand the differences. It is fascinating to compare different cultural attitudes towards music and art.

**A pianist's identity is shaped by their repertoire, which balances competitions and concerts. How do you curate your repertoire, and how do you navigate building a diverse range of pieces, including contemporary, that reflects your unique artistic voice?**

The question is intriguing and challenging, as young musicians need to develop a broad range of skills and repertoire to discover our artistic identity. However, the reality is that musical competitions are now an integral part of a young musician's life, with strict repertoire requirements that can sometimes conflict with personal goals and a teacher's advice. For instance, some competitions focus on specific composers or styles, while others require a broader range of repertoire, such as classical sonatas or pieces from the Well-Tempered Clavier. This can be overwhelming, as young artists we must balance competition preparation with professional growth and the need to expand our repertoire. So, when you are young,

it's quite important to expand your repertoire, because later it becomes a bit harder to learn as much as you did before.

**What is your personal repertoire focus or preferences?**

I strive for diversity as a musician, exploring various styles to become more versatile. Lately, I've delved into historical piano playing, learning pieces like those for harpsichord by composers such as Couperin. While this may not be typical mainstream repertoire for concert pianists, I believe it's important to study the core repertoire that shapes true artists. For me, mastering the classical period is essential as it serves as the foundation for all other styles, including baroque and romantic. Achieving a balance across these genres is crucial for a well-rounded musical journey. For contemporary music, it's important to approach these styles with an open mind and willingness to explore. These explorations serve as a form of learning, as well as a way to appreciate art and satisfy curiosity.

**In today's digital age, winning competitions can swiftly propel success. This raises questions about the role of technology, social media, and online platforms like YouTube, Instagram and TikTok. How do you view digital transmission and the innovative ways artists now showcase their talents?**

The digital realm is evolving rapidly, and its impact on our lives is profound. As we navigate this interconnected world, I've been

*"I think classical music will be still extremely relevant, but there will definitely be a different kind of form to it, which is inevitably connected to the internet and social media and different platforms."*







Philipp Lynov recently won first prize at the Takamatsu International Piano Competition (2023) the International Paderewski Piano Competition (2019), and the Astana Piano Passion International Competition (2017). Philipp has performed in prestigious venues across Russia, Germany, Austria, Poland, Spain, Italy, Israel, Switzerland, and Japan. He is a scholarship holder from the International Academy of Music in Liechtenstein.

pondering how globalization has bridged cultural gaps, but also created unseen challenges. The dynamic of online fame, for instance, is a fascinating aspect to monitor and understand. Take, for instance, a popular celebrity with millions of followers who may still be unknown to some. It's a fascinating dynamic that we need to navigate and monitor as it progresses.

**In 2022, you made your debut in the Berlin Philharmonic with Rachmaninov's second piano concerto in the main auditorium and in the finals at Takamatsu you played the third concerto. When playing Rachmaninov, how much do we rely on fact or tradition? His recordings demonstrate a relaxed approach, unsentimental, straightforward and light approach contrasting with modern performances' dramatic and grandiose flair.** When discussing Rachmaninov's music, it's essential to consider the composer's personality and life, as these factors greatly influenced his style. While his music is often described as accessible and open to listeners and performers, Rachmaninov himself was a reserved person. This reserved nature was reflected in his performance style, characterized by strictness and severity. By contrast, his music as a composer was marked by its openness and sincerity. His 3rd Piano Concerto unquestionably ranks among the greatest piano concertos. It stands out as one of the few works where he fully expressed himself, unveiling his controversial inner world. Beyond its reputation as a tour de force of pianistic bravura, the concerto resonates with profound emotional depth, a wealth of melodies, and technical brilliance. However, I believe that despite Rachmaninov's acclaim as a pianist and the great support of loved ones, he always experienced

profound loneliness, a feeling palpable throughout this masterwork, even at its most uplifting moments. Thus, it was really important for me to accentuate this facet of the concerto.

#### **Rachmaninov often seems to prefer faster tempi.**

He often defied his own indications, reflecting his focus on broad melodies and larger structures. His dynamic contrasts can be striking, with some passages played extremely differently. While he had the right as a composer to experiment, we as performers must respect his original intentions and follow his markings.

#### **What about classical music in the future?**

I think it will be still extremely relevant, but there will definitely be a different kind of form to it, which is inevitably connected to the internet and social media and different platforms. It's hard to predict how it will go, in which direction, but I would love to believe that it will not devalue real art. We're gradually losing our ability to focus on things for extended periods. This decline in concentration might be linked to the rise of social media and instant gratification. In the past, people were able to focus on complex tasks for longer periods, but now everything is blending together in a sea of distractions. The pandemic has altered the development of art, with home concerts and recordings becoming a norm. This shift may indicate a future for classical music in smaller, more intimate spaces, reminiscent of 19th-century salon traditions. The pandemic has forced innovation, and its effects on the art world will be lasting.

**PATRICK JOVELL**

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# AGENDA

## WFIMC Piano Competitions

### June to December 2024

**6 – 16 June 2024**  
**GERMANY | ZWICKAU**  
*Robert Schumann International Music Competition*

**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*

**9 – 15 September 2024**  
**SLOVAKIA | BRATISLAVA**  
*International Johann Nepomuk Hummel Piano Competition*

**11 – 21 September 2024**  
**UNITED KINGDOM | LEEDS**  
*Leeds International Piano Competition*

**30 September – 5 October 2024**  
**ITALY | MONZA**  
*Rina Sala Gallo International Piano Competition*

**21 October – 1 November 2024**  
**GERMANY | WEIMAR**  
*International Franz Liszt Competition*

**26 October – 2 November 2024**  
**FRANCE | ORLÉANS**  
*Orléans International Piano Competition*

**10 – 16 November 2024**  
**SPAIN | LAS ROZAS DE MADRID**  
*International Piano Competition Spanish Composers*

**9 – 24 November 2024**  
**JAPAN | HAMAMATSU**  
*Hamamatsu International Piano Competition*

**20 – 30 November 2024**  
**ITALY | BOLZANO**  
*Ferruccio Busoni International Piano Competition  
 (Glocal Piano Project)*

**1 – 13 December 2024**  
**SOUTH KOREA | SEOUL**  
*Seoul International Music Competition*

# PIANIST

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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.

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

**GUIDO ZIMMERMANN**

PRESIDENT STEINWAY & SONS EUROPE







Jonathan Fournel,  
the first prize winner in 2021

# The Queen Elisabeth Competition

Founded in 1937 at the instigation of Her Majesty Queen Elisabeth of Belgium and the Belgian violinist Eugène Ysaÿe, the competition was originally called the Eugène Ysaÿe Competition, it adopted its current name in 1951, thus paying tribute to its Honorary President and initiator.

The event soon established itself as one of the key international competitions for violinists and pianists. In 1988, those competitions were joined by the Voice competition; the cello competition launched in 2017 rapidly became a major feature of the international competition landscape from its very first edition. Until 2012, a composition competition was also held.

The competition is one of those of which we remember most of the laureates, and in any case the first prize winners from 1938 onwards: Emil Gilels, Leon Fleisher, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Malcolm Frager, Eugène Moguilevsky, Ekaterina Novitskaya-Hervy, Valery Afanasiev, Mikhail Faerman, Abdel Rahman El Bacha, Pierre-Alain Volodot, Andrei Nikolsky, Frank Braley, Markus Groh, Vitaly Samoshko, Severin von Eckardstein, Anna Vinnitskaya, Denis Kozhukhin, Boris Giltburg, Lukas Vondracek, and Jonathan Fournel.

In 2025, the Queen Elisabeth Competition will focus on the piano for the 21st time. The best young pianists from all over the world will compete in Brussels from May 5 to 17 during the first round and semi-finals at Flagey. The finalists will perform with Brussels Philharmonic at Brussels' Palais des Beaux Arts from May 26 to 31.

On June 9, the 4th, 5th, and 6th laureates will return to the Henry Leboeuf Hall stage for their laureates' concert, together with the Orchestre Philharmonique de Liège. On June 11, located at the Centre for Fine Arts, the first three laureates will conclude the piano session with the Antwerp Symphony Orchestra. Tickets for these public rounds will go on sale from January or February 2025, at Flagey and Bozar.

Registrations for pianists between 18 and 30 years old who are interested will open in early November 2024. All candidates must send video recordings of a Fugue from *Die Kunst der Fuge* BWV 1080 by J. S. Bach, a sonata by Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, or Schubert, an etude by Chopin, and a work of their choice for solo piano. These videos will be screened behind closed doors by an international jury in early January 2025. In early March 2025, the candidates will be made known who have been admitted to the first round in Flagey.

All rounds of the competition will can be followed online, live and on demand. [queenelisabethcompetition.be](http://queenelisabethcompetition.be)



*Open  
your  
heart!*

## Jan Jiracek von Arnim

His success in international competitions such as the Busoni, Maria Canals and Van Cliburn, launched his career and now Jan Jiracek von Arnim feels very much at home in the world of piano competitions, working with young artists as a pedagogue, but also a juror in competitions, like the Hamamatsu, Busoni and Montréal. He has been the Artistic Director and Chairperson of the International Beethoven Piano Competition in Vienna since 2011; this competition is one of the most prestigious piano competitions in the world.



A conversation with Jan Jiracek von Arnim is like meeting an old friend, although we only met for the first time last year. We plunge into our talk with Jan, knowing my interest in the art of practicing, remembering his most valuable lesson: ‘The one thing that inspired me the most about how to study, was being the only person in the hall when Richter was practicing, and you could not believe how slowly he went through his repertoire!’

**Yes, that is exactly how notably Rachmaninoff and many more great pianists studied.**

Indeed, and it took me some time to realise what piece he was working on. Actually, it’s a great method, I am doing that now myself mostly.

**Please take us back to your childhood; you came into contact with music at an early age.**

Yes, my mother was a church organist, and my father had a dream of me becoming a trumpeter like him. I still play the trumpet, and it proved very important for me because you learn so much about breathing, phrasing and melodic lines.

When I was six years old, I came to Heidi Köhler, the assistant of Karl-Heinz Kämmerling and I stayed with her until I was sixteen. She would have small house concerts with pupils and family, and with my mother I was singing in the choir and playing the organ, thus it all came very naturally.

Meanwhile I won my first competition, the Steinway Competition in Hamburg, when I was ten years old. I gave my debut perfor-

mance with an orchestra when I was 11 years old, with a piano concerto by Mozart. I remember I enjoyed people listening very much, and, in the end I could not imagine not being a musician. Early on, my parents decided I should not only have the best possible teacher, but also the best possible conditions and although money was tight, they bought me a Steinway baby grand. I still own it and it has a special place in my heart. It’s so important for young people to have a good instrument to be able to enjoy studying, it’s all about finding colours and listening.

**Mozart was your hero all along.**

Yes, no other music touches me so deeply. And he achieves this with an incredible reduction to the essentials. Do you know *The Chronicles of Narnia* by C. S. Lewis? These children find a hidden door in a wardrobe and through that they enter a wonderland. I feel like that with Mozart: I forget everything around me, it’s a magical world. I wish everyone could experience this.

Music is a place of happiness of the soul, it makes us forget about the terrible news in the world. Therefore, before the concert I need time alone to concentrate and to prepare for this other world so to speak and after a concert I can’t go eat a steak with sponsors right away. Music is something we cannot explain. Recently I played Mozart’s Piano Concerto K 488 in Cape Town, and this slow movement is a good example of a reduction to the essentials. You don’t need more notes there. You have the melancholy and there are moments when the sun is coming through the clouds, as a sign of hope.







Teaching Piotr Pawlak  
in Poland



And especially in South Africa, where during corona everything was closed, people seem to appreciate music more than in London or Paris, where you have so many concerts.

**Arthur Rubinstein is another hero.**

Sadly, he would not perform in Germany after the war, but I listened to all his recordings; I went through all of them. The Spanish music is so beautiful, and his Chopin is so amazing - how he was able to sing!

**Do you encourage your students to listen to recordings by greats like him?**

Very much so, while I discourage them from listening too much to the en vogue pianists of our time! With YouTube now you can find anything in seconds. We need to be inspired constantly by the greats, to get new ideas - but youngsters also have to find their own voice and not pick two bars from Arrau and then two bars from Rubinstein - it doesn't work like that. I hear so many technically perfect performances but often so little music. Sometimes I feel they are afraid to try things. The technical level is so high, but I don't count mistakes; I could not care less. When I am on a jury I want to forget about the competition and be inspired by the music: why are we listening in the first place? Sometimes young people forget there are real musicians in the jury waiting to be swept away musically. You can't teach this: like a preacher you can read the bible as long as you want, if you don't have this ability to instill something in your listeners, it makes no sense.

**You work with young people all over the world, do you see differences in culture and mentality?**

Yes, it's so fulfilling so many young talents come to me for advice and everywhere you have those inexplicable talents playing from the heart. I am a big fan of the Russian tradition; I would advise everyone to read Heinrich Neuhaus *The Art of Piano Playing!* Russian students amaze me with their knowledge, great heart and understanding of art in general. Such a shame we can't communicate with Russians now so easily, and I am totally against excluding Russian artists from competitions, it's ridiculous. And in China so much is happening; they are learning extremely fast, but you need time to understand, it's not about quick results. Arrau said the more roots a tree has, the better. In Japan, the respect for the composer is very strong, but we should not generalize. I sometimes worry about European tradition. The arts are not supported enough, children need education in music to develop as a human being. As a child I was performing already, speaking to audiences, before I decided to become a musician, that really formed me.

**Tell me about the International Beethoven Piano Competition in Vienna.**

Well I became the Artistic Director in 2011; it was founded 66 years ago and to this day is organized by my university: the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna. We want to showcase the Beethoven tradition in our teaching, and we invite people from all



*“Music is a place of happiness of the soul, it makes us forget about the terrible news in the world.”*

over the world to have a dialogue. Beethoven is an essential composer for pianists, and we focus on Beethoven exclusively; my dear friend Pavel Gililov runs a Beethoven competition in Bonn where they have a different concept.

Our competition is not a foundation, so we have to find funding every four years. Always a struggle, but we are fortunate to have Bösendorfer as our partner; they give the first prize winner a grand piano Model 214 and the finals are held in the spectacular Goldener Saal of the Musikverein with a professional orchestra. I love being involved in such a high-calibre event.

**You are planning a book on Vienna?**

I'm thinking about it! I came here 23 years ago, and the city is so inspiring. I should write about the feeling walking in the streets, passing houses where Beethoven lived, hearing the church bells that Schubert heard every morning. The atmosphere is still there, and I understand Beethoven and Schubert so much better now. When I came to Vienna, the first thing I did was to learn the Viennese Waltzes and to visit the balls. It was amazing: from ten in the evening until five in morning, 2000 people all dressed up ... The tradition is so alive! Like in Warsaw, I went to the Holy Cross

Church where Chopin's heart is kept, and I could feel the Polish soul there. When you are open to these things, it inspires you. This summer I will be performing and teaching at the Chopin Festival in Duszniki in Poland, the oldest piano festival in the world. Chopin performed there himself in the small hall they have. I'm really looking forward to it!

**ERIC SCHOONES**

Jan Jiracek von Arnim performs in prestigious venues in cities like New York, Tokio, Prague, Munich, Berlin, Paris, Barcelona and many more. Having studied in Berlin and Salzburg with Hans Leygraf and Alfred Brendel, he was appointed Professor of Piano Performance at the mdw – University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna, making him the youngest tenured professor in the history of this university. And currently he is also working as a guest professor in Hiroshima and Beijing. He was a visiting professor at the Yale School of Music and regularly he gives master classes in North America, Asia, and Europe. His students are prize winners of major international piano competitions.





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**YOUNG PIANIST  
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Member of the  
Alink-Argerich  
Foundation

**INFO [WWW.YPF.NL](http://WWW.YPF.NL)**



Juan Pedro García Oliva,  
the winner of last edition in 2022

# The Young Pianist Foundation

The 9th YPF competition will take place in February/March 2025 and will open its doors to young pianists up to and including the age of 27 from the European Union (incl. the United Kingdom and Switzerland). The YPF European Piano Competition/Grand Prix Yuri Egorov will bring the greatest young talents from the European Union to the Netherlands, creating not only a fair and stimulating pianistic challenge, but also an incentive for students, teachers, and educational programs within the conservatories to achieve even greater engagement and performance.

The YPF is grateful to welcome Severin von Eckardstein, Jean-Claude Vanden Eynden, Edith Fischer, Nino Gvetadze, Ronan O’Hora, Hannes Minnaar, Malcolm Singer, and Einav Yarden as members of the international jury. The repertoire for the competition will be partly free, but the most important style periods will have to be part of the repertoire in different rounds. In addition, the following works, amongst other things, have been made compulsory: a chamber music piece by Mozart in the semi-finals and Beethoven or Schumann in the final round with orchestra. Prior to the competition, potential candidates are selected through video submissions and a newly commissioned piece for piano solo by Jan-Peter de Graaff. The quarter- and semi-finals will take place at the Bimhuis and the final round, together with the Phion Orchestra under the baton of Benjamin Levy will take place in Muziekgebouw aan ’t IJ, a leading concert hall in Amsterdam. Online application for the YPF European Piano Competition 2025/Grand Prix Yuri Egorov is now open.

Registration for the YPF competition closes on November 15, 2024; on or around December 15, 2024, the pre-selection jury, led by Thomas

Beijer, will select 20 quarter-finalists. From February 26 to March 5, 2025, the quarter-finals and semi-finals will take place at the Bimhuis, Amsterdam.

The final of the National Piano Youth Competition 2025 – which the YPF is organizing in cooperation with the Liszt Competition (and is open to children ages 12 through 17) – will take place on Saturday, March 8 at the Bimhuis. The final of the YPF European Piano Competition 2025 – Grand Prix Yuri Egorov will take place on Sunday afternoon, March 9, 2025. The finalists will be accompanied by Phion, Orchestra of Gelderland & Overijssel under the baton of Benjamin Levy.

On Saturday evening, March 8, 2025, members of the international jury as well as Thomas Beijer will play during “A Tribute to Yuri Egorov”. This concert, in honour of Yuri Egorov and his philosophy of giving young pianists the opportunity to develop, has become a true YPF tradition and every time it is special to attend because of the large number of master pianists in one evening.

[www.ypf.nl](http://www.ypf.nl)



View of the 1st AAF Conference  
in Barcelona

OLIVER ADELL

## 3rd Alink-Argerich Foundation International Conference announced

Twenty-five years ago, AAF was founded by Gustav Alink and Martha Argerich. Gustav Alink: “The main objective has always been to serve as an independent and objective information centre for musicians and competitions with a specific focus on the piano world and all the international piano competitions. We aim to assist pianists by providing very detailed and useful information on competitions, and frequently we also give dedicated personal advice.” At the same time, AAF became a well-known platform for the organisers of international piano competitions to announce their events. A vast range of competition details, listings of jury members and, of course, all the competition results are meticulously collected and posted on AAF’s website. These details are constantly checked

and frequently updated. Useful overviews are published in the annual AAF e-catalogue.

Over the years, AAF has been the prime source of information for thousands of pianists with an interest in competitions. During all the research and by attending hundreds of competitions, Gustav Alink has built a dense network of personal contacts. This, together with a deep respect of the musicians’ lives and needs as well as a wealth of observations and thorough understanding of the functioning (and shortcomings) of competitions, has been fundamental in providing useful feedback, suggestions and recommendations, by which AAF has been able to assist the competition organisers and to serve as a reliable partner.

This year, on 8 and 9 August, the Alink-Argerich Foundation (AAF) will again organise its conference. After two successful editions in Barcelona and Utrecht, Piano Cleveland will now host this special event, a must for all involved in piano competitions and a unique opportunity to meet colleagues, exchange ideas and opinions, and make new contacts for further networking and collaboration in the piano world. We spoke to Gustav Alink.

Gustav Alink: “In 2018, we took a new initiative and organised an international conference, where important topics and common problems in the world of piano competitions could be discussed. I can say this first AAF Conference, held in Barcelona in March 2018, in collaboration with the Maria Canals Competition, was an overwhelming success! It was attended by more than 150 organisers of international piano competitions, pianists, and other representatives from all over the piano world.” Two years later Alink planned a second conference, this time in Utrecht (Netherlands) in collaboration with the Liszt Utrecht Competition, but both events had to be postponed due to the covid pandemic. Held in 2022, this second edition was another success, with 120 attendees, including the directors of many well-known piano competitions and also several concert pianists.

At these conferences, a wide range of issues were tabled and openly discussed, such as the pros and cons of publishing the votes of the jury, the complications at competitions where students of jury members are allowed to take part and other inconvenient situations, such as the instances where prize winners had to wait too long before they received their awards or until some of the promised concert opportunities finally materialised.

Now for the third edition various international piano competitions offered to host the event. Gustav Alink: “Yes, we feel very fortunate with this support and after careful consideration, it was decided to have the conference in Cleveland this time, in collaboration with Piano Cleveland, which will be celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Cleveland International Piano Competition in 2024.”

For two days, August 8-9, 2024, the Reinberger Chamber Hall at Severance Music Center will be the meeting point for many interesting panel discussion topics, such as rules and procedures for the jury, as well as a reflection on which factors may enhance or damage the reputation and image of a competition. The large variety in the description and value of awards and prize packages will be

compared, as well as details on financing competitions. Innovative ideas for supporting the contestants and promoting the prize winners will be presented, and the challenges competition organisers face in the current situation of the world will be addressed.

In the evenings of August 9 and 10, attendees of the conference are invited to attend the Cleveland International Piano Competition finals, with the famous Cleveland Orchestra.

In all, the 3rd AAF Conference promises to be most attractive again for all organisers of international piano competitions and anyone professionally involved in the piano world. Attendance of the conference is free of charge, but only open to those who have registered.

**ERIC SCHOONES**

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





Save  
the date!



# 11<sup>th</sup> International FRANZ LISZT Competition Weimar-Bayreuth | Piano

22 October – 1 November 2024

Application deadline: 15 June 2024  
[www.hfm-weimar.de/liszt](http://www.hfm-weimar.de/liszt)







Martin Helmchen

GIORGIA BERTAZZI

The anticipation is growing: the registration portal for the 11th International Franz Liszt Competition Weimar – Bayreuth/Piano is open until 15 June. There will once again be a pre-selection of participants by video submission. The international piano competition from 21 October to 1 November, 2024, will thrill the public with several top-class concerts in addition to public evaluation rounds.

## Exciting concerts and evaluation rounds

The opening concert on 21 October, 2024, at 20:00 in the Margravia Opera House in Bayreuth will be performed by renowned pianist Martin Helmchen with works by Beethoven, Schubert and Gubaidulina. The Liszt Competition, organised in cooperation with the City of Bayreuth, is considered one of the most important international competitions focusing on the works of Franz Liszt. The University of Music Franz Liszt Weimar and the City of Bayreuth are now organising the competition for the eleventh time. After the first round in Bayreuth (22 to 24 October), the competition will continue with the second round (26 and 27 October) and the semi-final (28 and 29 October) in the Festsaal Fürstenhaus of the University of Music Franz Liszt Weimar. From the second round of the competition onwards, the exciting events can also be watched live on [www.hfm-weimar.de](http://www.hfm-weimar.de) and [www.youtube.com/hfmfranzlisztweimar](http://www.youtube.com/hfmfranzlisztweimar).

The final concert on 31 October at 19:30 in the Weimarhalle with the Staatskapelle Weimar is also the final evaluation round with orchestra. The competition will return to Bayreuth for the winners' concert on 1 November at 19:30 in the Zentrum.

In the middle of the competition, there will be another highlight with the European Liszt Night on 24 October at 19:00 in the Villa Wahnfried in Bayreuth and on Friday, 25 October at 19:30 in the Festsaal Fürstenhaus in Weimar. The first prize winners of the three renowned Liszt competitions will perform: Kevin Yutong Chen

(1st Prize Budapest 2021), Yukine Kuroki (1st Prize Utrecht 2022) and Shota Kaya (1st Prize Weimar – Bayreuth 2021).

The international jury welcomes Weimar piano professor Michail Lifts, who is also the artistic director of the competition, as its new chairperson. The jury also includes Michel Dalberto (France), Wolfgang Döberlein (Germany, first round), Norma Fisher (Great Britain), Leslie Howard (Great Britain/Australia), Vivian Li (China), Boris Petrushansky (Italy) and Lilya Zilberstein (Austria, from the second round).

The jury will be awarding prizes totalling € 25,000 to the most talented youngsters. In the first and second rounds, the required competition repertoire clearly focusses on the piano works of Franz Liszt. There will be an innovation in the semi-final in 2024: one of four piano quintets by Robert Schumann, Johannes Brahms, Antonin Dvořák or César Franck must be selected, which will be performed together with the Karol Szymanowski Quartet. In the finale, the competition's namesake will once again take centre stage with his two piano concertos.

The Liszt Competition, which was founded 30 years ago by the Weimar University of Music, is largely funded by the Free State of Thuringia and the City of Bayreuth. The Neue Liszt Stiftung also provides major support.

[www.hfm-weimar.de/liszt](http://www.hfm-weimar.de/liszt)



The three top prize winners (from left to right): Youl Sun (2nd), Teppei Kuroda (1st) and Leonardo Merlini (3rd).

# International Piano Competition – Istanbul Orchestra'Sion

During the first days of April, 2024, the 6th edition of the international piano competition Orchestra'Sion was held in Istanbul.

Thinking of important cultural events such as a major international music competition, one would expect to find these in the main capitals of the world. And indeed, we all know about the famous Queen Elisabeth competition in Brussels, the Chopin competition in Warsaw and other well-established competitions in Budapest, Prague, Bucharest, Moscow, Paris, Munich, Geneva and Vienna. It is surprising that there never was a major international piano competition in London or Amsterdam until finally Sulamita Aronovsky launched the London International Piano Competition in 1991 and the YPF Competition in Amsterdam opened up for European entries in 2022 (Grand Prix Yuri Egorov). Interestingly, in 1948 an impressive international piano competition was held not in Amsterdam, but

in Scheveningen, and in 1949 in Ostend (Belgium) instead of Brussels.

In Türkiye, there are quite a few well-known pianists who made fine international careers, such as Süher and Güher Pekinel, Idil Biret, Hüseyin Sermet, Gülsin Onay, Ayşe-Gül Sarıdja and Fazıl Say, to mention but a few, while also among the middle-aged and younger generation there are several Turkish pianists who have been successful in international competitions, such as Rusen Özgür Aydın, Emre Elivar, and Can Cakmur.

The initiative to create an international piano competition in Istanbul came from the “Notre-Dame de Sion” high school (NDS) which is a French private bilingual school offering its students



high-performance facilities (concert hall, theatre, art gallery, auditorium, sports complex and swimming pool, and pianos) and a high-level academic and cultural programme. The concert hall is very convenient and over the years, it became renowned for the concerts by well-known musicians from France, Türkiye and elsewhere, such as Paul Badura-Skoda, Bruno Rigutto and others. This Lycée Notre-Dame de Sion has a good experience in organising ambitious international projects.

The first edition of the international piano competition was realised in 2013. It was open to all pianists without any age limit. After a preselection, 24 pianists from 11 different countries were selected to compete. The jury of seven included Süher Pekinel, Ayşe-Gül Sarıdja and pianists from France, Greece and Korea. The second edition of the competition was held in 2015 and already expanded to four rounds, including a final stage with orchestra. An upper age limit was set at 40. From the beginning attractive prize money was offered.

The competition continued to be organised every two years, in the middle of November. However, the 4th competition in 2019 was postponed to March 2020, and could fortunately be held just before the world locked down because of the covid pandemic. In 2022, the competition took place in November again, but the 6th edition in 2024 was in April and the age limit was set at 35.

Usually, after the preselection, the live rounds of the competition last approximately one week, but in 2024 the entire competition had to take place within four days. This was because the first day of the event was originally planned on Sunday, March 31st, which coincided with the municipal elections on which no public events may be held. The final day of the competition was planned on the following Friday, but the great hall was not available. In spite of these scheduling complications, the organisers managed everything

very well and all four rounds of the competition could take place within those remaining four days of 1–4 April without a problem. In that regard, it was perhaps even fortunate that there turned out to be a higher percentage of “no-shows”; even though altogether 29 pianists had been selected from among the nearly 150 who had applied (from 30 countries), quite a few withdrew or cancelled their participation, so that finally only 16 pianists showed up and performed in the 1st round. All contestants were given ample practicing facilities, while the piano on stage was a Steinway D concert grand, thanks to the support of IKSŞ: the Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts.

As in the previous competition, the jury was chaired also this year by Jean-Yves Clément, who had also done the initial preselection of all applicants. The other French jury member was Denis Pascal, from Türkiye Gülsin Onay and Toros Can, and three excellent musicians from the younger piano generation: Etsuko Hirose, Lukas Geniušas and Anna Genuishene (second prize winner of the latest Van Cliburn Competition).

During the competition, a large variety of piano repertoire from all stylistic periods could be heard. A specially commissioned piece by Turkish composer Ali Darmar was compulsory in the third round and an extract from a work by Cemal Reşit Rey in the finals. The three finalists performed their concertos in the Cemal Reşit Rey Hall with the Orchestra’ Sion Orchestra conducted by Orçun Orçunsel. Teppei Kuroda (Japan) became the winner of this competition, while the second prize went to Youl Sun (Korea). Both had chosen Mozart’s piano concerto KV 488, while Leonardo Merlini (Italy) won third prize with Beethoven #3. Apart from the professional jury, there also was a jury of 17 students who awarded their special NDS Jeunesses Musicales Award to Youl Sun.

GUSTAV ALINK

First prize winner Teppei Kuroda during his performance with orchestra in the final round.



Youl Sun receives the Jeunesses Musicales special prize, awarded by a jury of 17 students at NDS.







International  
Beethoven Piano Competition  
Vienna

Bösendorfer



Save the Date:  
May 16 – 24, 2025

# 17<sup>th</sup> International Beethoven Piano Competition Vienna 2025

The Final Round with orchestra will take place  
in the Golden Hall of the Musikverein Vienna

Applications open in May 2024

[www.beethoven-comp.at](http://www.beethoven-comp.at)

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# Beethoven at home

The International Beethoven Piano Competition Vienna is preparing to invite a new generation of selected piano talents to Vienna to showcase their talent – be a part of it!

maturity for many young musicians – and this path is also the goal. After all, Beethoven's compositions are a mainstay in the training of all concert pianists.

The clear profile of this competition, its rigorous selection process, and the objective assessment by a highly esteemed international jury make the International Beethoven Piano Competition Vienna a role model for other piano competitions worldwide. Participants have the unique opportunity to demonstrate their skills regarding Beethoven on an international stage, receive valuable feedback from renowned music experts, and network with like-minded people from all over the world. And what better place in the world to perform Beethoven than at the magnificent Golden Hall of the Vienna *Musikverein!*

The exclusive instrument played at this competition is a Bösendorfer – the ideal guarantee for the unique Viennese sound culture. By promoting young musicians, the International Beethoven Piano Competition Vienna makes a significant contribution to the further development of the classical music scene and consolidates its reputation as one of the leading piano competitions worldwide. The artistic reputation of this competition is confirmed by its winners, such as Mitsuko Uchida and, most recently, Aris Alexander Blettenberg.

Every four years, a special light shines on Ludwig van Beethoven in Vienna:

Having been initiated over 60 years ago by Professors Richard Hauser and Josef Dichler, the International Beethoven Piano Competition Vienna is now Austria's oldest international music competition and ranks among the most renowned of its kind. In 2025, the mdw – University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna is extending invitations to this competition for the seventeenth time, with three live rounds in front of an enthusiastic audience taking place between May 16–24, 2025. The mdw not only contributes its many years of experience and expertise in the field of music promotion and education, but also offers a first-class infrastructure and an inspiring environment for the international participants in this competition.

Since its foundation, this competition has established itself as an important platform that allows outstanding young pianists from all over the world to present their talent and passion for Beethoven to an international jury and audience in Vienna every four years. The usual competition repertoire, from virtuoso etudes to thunderous Rachmaninoff concertos, is not what is required here. The repertoire consists exclusively of piano works by Beethoven. The intensive study of Ludwig van Beethoven's compositions in preparation for this competition paves the way to interpretational

The Grand Finale with orchestra will take place on May 24, 2025, in the Golden Hall of the Vienna Musikverein. All rounds in Vienna will be streamed on [beethoven-comp.at](http://beethoven-comp.at) and other channels – but of course nothing beats being there live!

'This competition in the heart of Vienna offers young talents the unique opportunity to demonstrate their musicality and artistic maturity,' says Artistic Director Jan Jiracek von Arnim.

All pianists born after January 1, 1993, are invited to apply. The winner takes home EUR 30,000 plus a Bösendorfer Concert Grand Piano Model 214 VC!

Apply before October 15, 2024, at [www.beethoven-comp.at](http://www.beethoven-comp.at)



Aris Alexander Blettenberg, the winner of 2021 in action



## Composer in Residence Alexey Shor

# The piano is like an orchestra

This year, throughout practically the entirety of the month of February, the UAE city of Dubai hosted the 3rd Edition of the Classic Piano International Competition: a wide-ranging international contest that saw 70 talented pianists from the four corners of the globe being invited to Dubai to go head-to-head over four rounds for a prize fund of €250,000. The first prize was awarded to Andrei Gugnin, Kim Sunah got the second and Anastasiia Kliuchereva the third.

The candidates, selected in 14 competitions held in 14 different countries around the world, were asked to perform a contemporary piece, *From My Bookshelf*, written by Alexey Shor and crafted in collaboration with Mikhail Pletnev. Consisting of eight movements, this intriguing piece, as its name suggests, is inspired by a variety of seminal literary classics, with each section providing a musical portrait of its particular subject.

We met up with Mr. Shor at the Zabeel Theatre in Dubai, with the competition in the midst of its third, and penultimate round, to ask him about his experience at Classic Piano, and his views on competitions, composition, and orchestral music in the 21st century.

**Please tell us about your collaboration with Classic Piano, and what has motivated you to return to the competition again for this third edition?**

I think it's a fantastic competition and the selection process is unique. Of course it's a lot more work for the organisers, but it probably results in a fairer selection than when people simply submit videos, and nobody knows how they're processed.

This competition ends up with people who are all very high-level. It's very interesting, it's not like in the first round you think, okay, these people are excellent, or these people are just random people who have no chance, everybody has a chance here. It's an honour and a privilege to be involved with this competition, and it's also just a real pleasure to watch these future stars interpret my music.

**How does your interaction with pianists unfold during the composition process?**

Well, for the most part, I work completely alone, and the final result is what it is. Then for any instrument – piano, violin, especially the violin, cello – which I don't play, once I send it to the artists, sometimes I get comments that something is technically too hard and not worth it, so maybe it can be changed. So, I get technical input from people who are the first to play my pieces. Occasionally I get comments that are more substantive about the piece, and then I always listen very carefully. Technically and musically, they influence the composition process for sure. I have great respect for the profession of the performer. At the end of the day, people who perform my music a year or two after I wrote it, know it better than me because they come back to it all the time and I don't. So, I take their input very seriously.

**What do you think about the role that competitions play in the music world and their importance to the future of classical music?**

I think it's very important. I think it's very easy to criticise competitions because obviously music is not a sport – everything is very subjective. Selection criteria may not be ideal, there are all kinds of problems with the idea of a competition, but still at the end of the day, out of thousands of promising people, how do you focus attention on a few?







ALEXANDER GUSOV

Sometimes the diamond is so big and so bright that everybody notices it, and it does happen that some people become stars without ever winning the big competition. But winning a big competition is a very legitimate and useful way of attracting attention to a young talent.

**As someone who has composed for competitions before, could you share your perspective on the experience of hearing your work being interpreted by different candidates and how that influences your future compositions, if at all?**

A few times when I wrote specifically for a competition, I always had in mind that I should give the performer a chance to show different aspects of their craft. There should be virtuosic passages, there should be lyrical passages, and there should be different dynamics that they can display especially on string instruments where playing pianissimo is a skill in itself and then it's great to see how people rise to that challenge.

**For *From My Bookshelf* you collaborated with Mikhail Pletnev.**

I think it's very rare for composers to collaborate. There are instances in history where composers who are friends wrote things together, and then slightly more common is when somebody admired someone and made rearrangements of their work, but generally, it's a lonely job and a lot of stars have to align for some collaboration to happen.

The competition aligned with me and the great pianist Mikhail Pletnev; he was supposed to play my piece and then he had some

ideas of how to make changes to it and that's how this work was born. I'm very happy about this collaboration; he is an amazing artist, and it was a real pleasure to collaborate with him.

**Being a mathematician, do you feel your mathematical background influences your compositions?**

I really don't think that being a mathematician influences my music writing. Being a mathematician is a very useful thing for learning new things because when you do math for a while, you get into a habit of ordering things in your head quickly and neatly. But the actual writing of music requires different things. It's just the learning process that's helped.

**What would you say influences you in your compositions?**

Well, I always imagine myself as an audience member, whenever I write something I literally sit down and play it in my head and think, "well, if I was in the audience would I like it or not?" And maybe I like it once, but would I want to hear it twice? So, everything I do is geared towards the public.

**Your compositional style very notably tends to avoid ultra-modernist elements, choosing to focus on harmony and tonality. What is your inspiration behind such an approach, and do you find it challenging to go against what is often considered to be the norm for contemporary music?**

Well, it's sort of like the previous question, because I always write for myself as an audience member and I never look at the pro-

Winner Andrei Gugnin



gramme of a concert and think, “oh, an avant-garde piece... I’m going to go see that”. I think music should be quickly understandable for a discerning listener without having to read a long scientific article about what’s behind it.

It’s like any other art that should be appreciated on its own, and I feel a lot of avant-garde music is very theoretical and can only be appreciated by a few people who care to understand what the theory behind it is, and that’s just not something that appeals to me.

**Are there any specific composers who you would say have been a great influence on your work?**

Yes, so there are two types of influences. One is when I listen to the music of the greats like Bach or Mozart. It just inspires me to write music in very vague terms. After a while, it’s very hard to learn something concrete from reading their scores. It’s just amazing, it’s the way of writing that’s very familiar to me and they are just incredible at it, and that’s all I get out of it; thus, I want to write more music. But then there are other composers of whom I’m not such a huge fan but there is a lot to learn from them in terms of the craft, like Rimsky-Korsakov, or Ravel, who are amazing orchestrators, so reading their scores is very, very useful.

**Can you discuss your thoughts on contemporary music’s role in modern concert life and how your works contribute to or challenge prevailing trends in the musical landscape?**

Well, being a composer is extremely challenging because there is so much good music that’s already written, and I’ve been a music

fan all my life, and I happily kept listening to the greats and didn’t feel a need to listen to anything new. But other people do want something new, even though they may enjoy the classics. Like in every human endeavour, people want new things, and most of the time these new things are not of the quality of the greats, and they fall by the wayside and get forgotten but you still have to do it so that someday somebody does something great.

**Would you say that you have a favourite or preferred instrument that you like to compose for?**

Well, the piano is the most obvious and preferred choice, sort of the king of all instruments, because as much as I love violin or cello, they can only play one note most of the time. The piano is sort of like a full orchestra, you can have multiple voices, and you can have melody and harmony at the same time. So, whenever I have a musical idea, occasionally I have a very strong feeling that this should be for clarinet, for example, then I write it for clarinet. But if it’s a vague idea where I don’t know what instrument it’s for then of course I write it for piano and then figure out what to do with it.

**ADJEIWAA WOODMAN**

[www.alexeyshor.com](http://www.alexeyshor.com) | [www.classicpiano.eu](http://www.classicpiano.eu)





**Pierre Barbizet**

# **International Piano Competition**

**Prizes:**

- **1st prize** 10,000 €
- **2nd prize** 5,000 €
- **3rd prize** 2,000 €
- **Audience award** 1,000 €

**1st prize concert engagements:**

- Festival de la Roque d'Anthéron (Summer 2025)
- Société Chopin de Paris
- Société Chopin de Nohant (Nohant Festival Chopin)
- Société Chopin de Marseille (SMAC)
- Société Tropicaine des Amis de la Musique (STAM)
- Festival de Ponlevoy
- Génération France Musique (Radio)

**Audience award concert engagement:**

- Nuits du Castellet

**Jury members:**

- Claire Désert (France)
- Joanna Domanska (Poland)
- Roger Muraro (France)
- Marie-Ange Nguci (France)
- Roland Pöntinen (Sweden)
- Anne Queffélec (France)

**Application deadline: 31st August 2024 | Open to pianists aged up to 28 from all nations**

**Further information: [www.chopin-marseille.com](http://www.chopin-marseille.com)**



The town of Marseille

In 2024, the Chopin Society of Marseille, a French organization member of the International Federation of Chopin Societies, launches the first edition of the Pierre Barbizet international piano competition.

# INTERNATIONAL PIANO COMPETITION PIERRE BARBIZET

Born in Chile in 1922, Pierre Barbizet studied piano at the Marseille Conservatory, and then at the Paris Conservatory where he won the first prize in 1944 in the class of Armand Ferté. In 1948, he obtained first prize at the Scheveningen international competition (The Hague), prior to winning the Marguerite Long international competition in 1949.

At that time, he met the violinist Christian Ferras with whom he formed one of the most famous duos, until the death of the latter in 1982. Together, they recorded in particular Beethoven's complete sonatas, and also Brahms', Debussy's, Fauré's and Franck's sonatas. As far as chamber music is concerned, Pierre Barbizet also worked with Samson François and the flutist Jean-Pierre Rampal. As a soloist, he established his name with Mozart and Beethoven, and also with the French repertoire, of which he became a tireless propagator, in particular with the recording of the first Chabrier's complete piano works.



Pierre Barbizet

In 1963, Pierre Barbizet became director of the Marseille Conservatory until his death in 1990. He gave a new impetus to the institution, applying his motto "no conformity in the midst of an immense tradition." He was a renowned teacher: he contributed to today's talent discovery with students like Hélène Grimaud, Philippe Casard and Jean-Yves Thibaudet.

Naturally, the Chopin Society of Marseille decided to pay tribute to him with a competition, to be held in Marseille, from December 20th to 22nd, 2024.

The first edition will have six jury members: Claire Désert (France), Joanna Domanska (Poland), Roger Muraro (France), Marie-Ange Nguci (France), Roland Pöntinen (Sweden) and Anne Queffélec (France).

The first Prize of € 10,000 comes with six concert engagements (one of them at the famous La Roque d'Anthéron festival 2025), as well as participation in a national radio show *Génération France Musique*. The second Prize is € 5,000, third Prize € 2,000 and the Public Prize € 1,000 plus one concert engagement.

Applications are open now and the age limit is 28. For the pre-selection, candidates are asked to send a video (YouTube link) to [concours@chopin-marseille.com](mailto:concours@chopin-marseille.com) by August 31st, 2024 at the latest. Accommodation will be arranged with host families.

## The Schedule 2024

**Quarter-finals:** December 20

**Semi-finals:** December 21

**Final and winners concert:** December 22

Further information, repertoire and rules: [www.chopin-marseille.com](http://www.chopin-marseille.com)



A portrait of Professor Christopher Elton, an elderly man with thinning hair, wearing a light blue suit jacket. He is leaning forward with his right hand resting on his cheek, looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background is a dark blue wall with some blurred white and red text.

Professor  
Christopher  
Elton

# Master of Masters

SHENZHEN INTERNATIONAL PIANO CONCERTO COMPETITION

Christopher Elton is a well-known figure in the professional piano community, with his students frequently gracing concert stages worldwide and achieving success in prestigious competitions. Despite retiring from Royal Academy of Music in London over a decade ago, he remains active there and as a respected teacher and judge on a global scale. Elton's influence resonates internationally through the accomplishments of his students at the Academy, many of whom have earned esteemed accolades in competitions. As an educator, Elton has conducted masterclasses and served as a jury member in various countries such as the USA, Japan, Israel, and China. Over his illustrious career, Elton held esteemed positions as Head of Keyboard at the Royal Academy of Music – a position he held for 24 years, and where he still maintains a large class. In 2001 he was awarded the title of “Professor of the University of London” – an honor bestowed a handful of staff. In 2018, he was appointed as a Visiting Professor of Piano at Yale University.

I had the privilege of serving on the jury alongside Christopher Elton at the 2nd International Piano Competition in Gothenburg last fall. We engaged in discussions about Elton's extensive career and his experiences in judging various competitions, from smaller events to renowned ones like The Cliburn and the Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow. Elton has a longstanding connection with the Ettlingen piano competition, where renowned pianists such as Lang Lang, Boris Giltburg, Igor Levit and Yeol Eum Son have made their mark at young ages. Elton's interests extend beyond music into politics and language; he once considered becoming a barrister. Despite lacking vocal talent (Elton's own verdict), his diverse knowledge gained through international experiences underscores his remarkable contributions to the world of music.

Elton spent over fifty years at the Royal Academy before retiring as Head of Faculty in 2011, but he continues to teach there and expressed his enjoyment of focusing on teaching after leaving his administrative role. He sees music competitions as opportunities to find new talents and connect with others in the industry. Elton stressed the importance of competitions that provide a supportive environment for participants of all ages. Elton also highlighted the importance of students who chose not to focus solely on competitions, emphasizing the value of building a reputation over time. "I enjoy the diversity of music and people I encounter through competitions, noting the unique charm of each one and I value competitions that prioritize the well-being of participants and offer support to help ease the pressure to win."

**How have you seen competitions evolve over the past 25 years, particularly in terms of educational focus and global influences?**

Competitions still follow a similar structure and purpose, but there have been some notable shifts. While competitions often offer feedback sessions with jurors, the effectiveness and value of this feedback can be questionable, especially when given immediately after elimination. Some competitions have integrated master classes with jury members, which can be more beneficial. I've witnessed a significant increase in the number of applicants, with competitions receiving hundreds of entries but only selecting a fraction to participate. This influx of participants has led to challenges in providing support and housing for contestants, especially with the emergence of Asian pianists in the competition circuit.

I participated as a jury member in the Ettlingen competition nearly four decades ago and observed a remarkable transformation in the competition landscape, particularly with the rising number of Russian and Asian contestants. The rise of Asian pianists, particularly from South Korea, has brought a new depth and seriousness to competitions.

While each country produces exceptional talents, the influence of European and American training on Asian pianists is evident. This cross-cultural exchange has elevated piano playing to new heights, although certain regional characteristics can still be discerned, such as the French school.

**In a recent interview with Chopin Competition winner 1970, Garrick Ohlsson, we discussed the changing landscape of piano playing and how national styles are becoming less distinguishable. As piano playing becomes more internationalized, do you see this as a positive trend, or does it risk diluting traditional approaches to playing?**

The diversification of influences in piano playing has indeed blurred traditional boundaries between regional schools. While the Russian school and the French school were once easily identifiable, today's pianists draw from a global pool of influence, making it challenging to categorize them based on traditional styles. The collaboration between Eastern and Western teaching traditions has led to a rich exchange of ideas and techniques, resulting in a more nuanced and sophisticated approach to piano performance. While some distinctions may have softened, the depth and seriousness seen in South Korean pianists, for example, showcase the evolution and refinement of piano playing across borders. This melding of traditions has elevated the art form to new heights, creating a diverse tapestry of styles and interpretations in the piano world.

**Our discussion on narratives shaping culture over time and across regions reveals the diverse interpretations of music and cultural norms globally. What are the advantages of cultural exchange between regions like Europe and China, considering their unique historical contexts, and how does this shape different perspectives on culture?**

Chinese music and opera, along with Hungarian folk traditions and Italian opera, represent rich cultural heritages that contribute to global diversity. Despite variations in cultural traditions between regions like England and Sweden, my teaching experience at the Academy has exposed me to a diverse group of talented pianists from various backgrounds. By fostering international dialogues among musicians, students can expand their musical horizons and promote mutual understanding. Unfortunately, the impact of Brexit has hindered our ability to attract a diverse student population from Europe, limiting our cultural exchange opportunities.

**As an educator with a roster of accomplished students, how do you approach teaching individuals with extensive knowledge and established artistic profiles at the highest level?**

When working with exceptionally talented and advanced students, traditional teaching methodologies may not apply. Instead, I prioritize respecting their unique talents and avoiding hindering their musical personalities. Rather than imposing a rigid methodology, my role is to strike a balance between offering guidance and allowing students to unleash their creativity. As students evolve into performing artists, our sessions evolve into discussions, fostering their distinct musical expressions. Witnessing the diverse and individual sounds produced by students like Yevgeny Sudbin, Benjamin Grosvenor, and Anna Geniushene brings me immense joy.

**PATRICK JOVELL**

[www.pianostreet.com](http://www.pianostreet.com)





Piano  
Neuchâtel VdT

# "Piano Neuchatel- Val de Travers"

7-8-9 FEBRUARY 2025



Application deadline 5 December 2024

**Jacques Rouvier**  
jury president

**Katja Avdeeva**  
artistic director

[piano.international/en/](https://piano.international/en/)

# International Competition Piano Neuchâtel – Val de Travers

Founded in 2017, the International Competition Piano Neuchâtel – Val de Travers is a professional piano festival for young pianists from all over the world up to the age of twenty-five, with participants divided into three age categories. As a member of the European Union of Music Competitions for Youth (EMCY), it is officially supported by local government and the music conservatory in Neuchâtel.

Since 2020, ASDAN China has started a strategic partnership with the competition and will act as the exclusive partner to organize and promote the China National Round of the Swiss festival. Winners of the China National Round can participate in the online round for free. The winners of the Global Round are invited to perform and compete at the Final Round in Neuchâtel.

Simon Haje, who won the last competition, says about his experience: “The last competition in Neuchâtel was a great experience for me in many ways. When I arrived in Neuchâtel, the first thing I noticed was the good organisation and the reliable service under the direction of Katja Avdeeva. Each participant was provided with a host family and sufficient practice time. In addition, the support was very nice, so that all participants could relax and really concentrate on the music. There were two things I particularly liked about the competition: the high-calibre jury, with names like Jacques Rouvier, and the opportunity to play with an orchestra in the final. I was particularly happy that I was able to play the 1st Chopin Concerto in E minor for the first time in my life in the final. Despite the competitive atmosphere, I really enjoyed this performance!



Simon Haje at the WEpiano festival from Neuchâtel Conservatory

I am very happy that I have already been able to come back to Neuchâtel several times to give concerts after winning the competition. I also like the fact that Swiss audiences are also very interested in and attentive to challenging programmes. Last year, for example, I was able to give a recital consisting solely of the composers Liszt and Ligeti.

Last but not least, I always look forward to coming back to Neuchâtel because of the beauty of the city. Last time I took a day off after my concert and tried to explore the city! I'm looking forward to the next time.”

Jacques Rouvier says: “Excellently organized competition in a great atmosphere, although the rounds were exhausting and challenging. Plus a wonderful first prize! These are all things that motivate to continue the adventure of this competition.”

## Piano Neuchâtel – Val de Travers 2025

February 7–9, 2025 | Application deadline December 5, 2024  
<http://piano.international/en>



29.10.2024 | 19:30 Uhr

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*„If music  
be the food of love,  
play on!“*



*„Bad music disturbs me, but wonderful  
music disturbs me even more.“*

ARTURO BENEDETTI MICHELANGELI

\* \* \*

*„The music is not in the notes,  
but in the silence between.“*

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

\* \* \*

*„If, while at the piano, you attempt  
to form little melodies, that is very well;  
but if they come into your mind of  
themselves, when you are not practicing,  
you may be still more pleased; for the  
internal organ of music is then roused  
in you. The fingers must do what the  
head desires; not the contrary.“*

ROBERT SCHUMANN

\* \* \*

*„I haven't understood a bar of music  
in my life, but I have felt it.“*

IGOR STRAVINSKY

\* \* \*

*„Music can change the world.“*

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

A dark-themed advertisement for Steinway &amp; Sons. At the top, the Steinway &amp; Sons logo (a lyre) is centered above the text "STEINWAY &amp; SONS". Below this, a list of German words is arranged vertically: "LEIDENSCHAFT", "INNOVATION", "HANDWERKSKUNST", "PERFEKTION", "HINGABE", "FREUDE", and "VISION". The words "LEIDENSCHAFT", "INNOVATION", "HANDWERKSKUNST", "PERFEKTION", and "HINGABE" are in a larger, gold-colored font, while "FREUDE" and "VISION" are in a smaller, white font. In the lower right quadrant, a black grand piano is shown from a three-quarter view, with its lid open. The piano has gold-colored casters. The background is dark with faint, repeating text of the same German words.

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





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*~Richard Strauss~*



The prize winners from left to right: Anfisa Bobylova, Tamta Magradze and Elizabeth Goh

## The winners of the International Schimmel Piano Competition 2024 have been announced

The third International Schimmel Piano Competition set new standards for piano competitions from March 1–3, 2024. This year, the field of applicants was particularly strong with over 100 international candidates, which underlines the high appeal of this competition. Twenty-four talented pianists from fourteen countries were invited to the final rounds in Braunschweig to win the hearts of the audience and the points of the expert jury with their specially created programmes.

After the exciting preliminary rounds, the six finalists presented their programmes in the second round on Sunday, before the three prize winners wowed the audience in a fully booked prize winners' concert in the evening. At the same time, music fans all over the world were able to listen to these virtuoso pianists. The entire competition was streamed live on the Schimmel Pianos YouTube channel, so that a wide audience could experience the performances from the comfort of their own homes.

The conclusionary prize winners' concert honoured the three best female pianists. The Ukrainian Anfisa Bobylova was able to secure the coveted first prize, which is endowed with €6,000. Her exceptional talent and her captivating programme entitled "Dedicated

to the Homeland", which shows a deep connection to her home country of Ukraine, touched both the jury and the audience. Elizabeth Goh secured a respectable second place, while third prize went to Tamta Magradze. In addition, the audience chose its favourite: Anfisa Bobylova also received the audience prize of €500 for her moving and impressive performance. Schimmel is a German premium manufacturer of grand and upright pianos with headquarters in Braunschweig. Since 1885, the long-established company has been manufacturing high-quality pianoforte instruments with an international reputation for quality. Schimmel instruments are the most award-winning and most-played grand and upright pianos made in Germany.

[www.schimmel-pianos.de](http://www.schimmel-pianos.de)

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*„If music  
be the food of love,  
play on!“*



*„Life is like a piano. What you get out  
of it depends on how you play it.“*

TOM LEHRER

\* \* \*

*„Do not find yourself in the music,  
but find the music in yourself.“*

HEINRICH NEUHAUS

\* \* \*

*„Piano playing consists  
of common sense, heart and  
technical resources. All three should be  
equally developed. Without common sense  
you are a fiasco, without technique an  
amateur, without heart a machine.  
The profession does have its hazards.“*

VLADIMIR HOROWITZ

\* \* \*

*„Music is enough for a lifetime,  
but a lifetime is not enough for music.“*

SERGEI RACHMANINOFF

\* \* \*

*„I know two kinds of audiences only –  
one coughing, and one not coughing.“*

ARTUR SCHNABEL





Tour of the Grotrian-Steinweg factory



Announcement of results

# Great enthusiasm at the 65th Grotrian-Steinweg piano competition

An early Friday morning in January. The Grotrian-Steinweg Piano Competition is about to start again. The competition has a long tradition that spans 70 years. Young talents come to Braunschweig alone or with their families, friends, and piano teachers, and even some from overseas. This year marked the 65th edition of the competition, after a three-year hiatus due to the pandemic.

Soon more participants arrive and then things get livelier: the competition starts punctually at 8.30 a.m. In the practice rooms, contestants have half an hour and then they head to the factory's own concert hall, where the judges, parents and some visitors are already waiting.

Especially their family and the five judges listen very attentively. Prof. Hinrich Alpers, the competition's jury president and artistic director, has assembled an experienced team with Sheila Arnold, Aleksandra Mikulska, Bernd Goetzke, and Roland Krüger. Choosing the strongest performances from nearly 60 young talents is no easy

task with a field of competitors of such a high level. And many of the young talents are just incredible.

For two full days from Friday morning to Saturday evening, it is a coming and going of participants. True, this is a competition, and you would rightly think there would be clear rules and a lot of discipline. And yet it can be said that it is rare to find a strict competition of high calibre in such a relaxed atmosphere.

But what then is the secret of this competition? It is the combination of the high level of professionalism of the organisation, the participants, and the family atmosphere – as well as the relaxed atmosphere in the canteen. Parents and children, some of whom know each other but most of whom have never met before, sit together at long tables, get their hot dogs, potato salad, biscuits and drinks and enjoy the moment. And to bridge the waiting times, there are regular exciting factory tours showing how Grotrian-Steinweg instruments are made.



Prize-giving ceremony with Stefan Gritzka and Hinrich Alpers Johanna Staemmler



Workers sit in the canteen of the Grotrian-Steinweg piano factory in Braunschweig. It is actually a perfectly normal morning in a production, were it not for the presence of eight-year-old Min Jae and his parents, casually dressed with a small suitcase in one hand and his lucky charm stuffed animal in the other. Stefan Gritzka, CEO of Grotrian-Steinweg gives us his impressions of the last Grotrian-Steinweg competition.

Of course, it is also the jury that gives this competition its quality and high reputation. Almost all the judges have known Grotrian-Steinweg for decades, and almost all of them participated and won prizes here in their youth, long before their successful careers as pianists and professors. Therefore, they know exactly how the candidates feel during an audition. Although judging is done according to strict standards, it should still be fun and the feeling of support should always prevail, and the jury gives all participants a sense of recognition, regardless of prizes and awards. After two days and almost 60 judging sessions, the first prize winners are announced and on Saturday evening, the factory is quiet again. The lights in the canteen go out.

But then comes the highlight: the final concert in the main hall of the State Theatre Braunschweig. It is Sunday morning, 21 January. Punctually at 11 a.m., 11-year-old pianist Yuxin from Heidelberg enters the stage and enchants the audience with Robert Schumann's

*Abegg Variations*. A great start to the concert. I told the audience about the very first competition in 1954: auditions were held on the first floor of Hertie department stores, and the prize money consisted of a bar of chocolate or a packet of cocoa. The audience acted as judges – the winner was the one who received the most applause. Then the program continued, the stage once again belonged to the young pianists, who then displayed a veritable fireworks' display of musical performance: Chopin's Ballade and Scherzo, brilliant works by Clara Schumann, Liszt, and Rachmaninov, and much more. Each of the ten works was enthusiastically lauded by the audience. For all present, one thing is certain: they would want to be there again next year to experience this special moment one more time. From 10 to 12 January next year, they will have the chance to do so.

**STEFAN GRITZKA**

The winners can be found at [www.grotrian.de/aktivitaten/wettbewerbe](http://www.grotrian.de/aktivitaten/wettbewerbe)





**21. 2.-1. 3. 2026**

Ljubljana, Slovenia

# LJUBLJANA FESTIVAL INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION Piano 2026

General and Artistic Director of the Ljubljana Festival: **DARKO BRLEK**

Artistic Director of the Ljubljana Festival International Competition - Piano 2026: **EPIFANIO COMIS**

Jury President: **DUBRAVKA TOMŠIČ SREBOTNJAK**

**APPLICATIONS: 5. 1.-10. 5. 2025**

1<sup>st</sup> prize: **50.000 EUR**

2<sup>nd</sup> prize: **30.000 EUR**

3<sup>rd</sup> prize: **15.000 EUR**

4<sup>th</sup> prize: **8.000 EUR**

5<sup>th</sup> prize: **5.000 EUR**

6<sup>th</sup> prize: **3.000 EUR**



More information: <https://ljubljanafestival.si/competition-piano/>



The Ljubljana Festival was founded by the City of Ljubljana.

The Ljubljana Festival reserves the right to alter the programme.



The winner of the first Ljubljana Festival International Competition – Piano, Kai-Min Chang

After a very successful first Ljubljana Festival International Competition – Piano, the Ljubljana Festival will organise the second edition in 2026, bringing the best young and aspiring pianists to the Slovenian capital, Ljubljana. It will take place between February 21 and March 1, 2026. The aim is to enable young, talented pianists to become top musicians, and to share outstanding classical music with a large international audience.

# The Ljubljana Festival International Competition – Piano

The Ljubljana Festival International Competition – Piano was the first piano competition on such a scale held in Slovenia. There were twenty-two competitors from fourteen countries competing for the first prize worth € 30,000 in the first edition of the competition.

“Thanks to Ljubljana Festival’s exceptional international reputation, it has placed its competition on par with the world’s most important piano competitions,” according to the general and artistic director of the Ljubljana Festival Darko Brlek. Under the baton of conductor and pianist Ricardo Castro, accompanied by the RTV Slovenia Symphony Orchestra, he performed Piano Concerto No. 3 in D minor, Op. 30 by Sergei Rachmaninov. Besides the main prize he received the opportunity to perform at the 7th Winter Festival, the Emilia Romagna Festival 2024, and he will also perform in a recital with the first prize winner of 2023 Elmar Oliveira International Violin Competition.

In the second edition, the competition will be open to professional pianists of all nationalities who were born between 1995 and 2009. Prizes will be awarded up to the 6th place, with the main prize being € 50,000. In addition, there will be special prizes for the best performances of a baroque musical work, a classical sonata, a romantic work, a 20th century work, a 21st century work, a musical work by a Slovenian composer, and the highest ranked pianist representing Slovenia.

The artistic director of Ljubljana Festival International Competition – Piano 2026 is the renowned Italian pianist Epifanio Comis. He says that “the competition has already occupied a special place

in the music world, as it was created within the framework of a well-known and prestigious European festival.” At all stages of the competition the pianists will be appraised by an expert jury, consisting of renowned musicians, and presided by the Slovenian pianist and Professor Emeritus Dubravka Tomšič Srebotnjak, who has for many years been considered Slovenia’s No. 1 cultural ambassador, who has expressed that she hopes and expects “that the competition will be successful and that gradually it will become one of the great, prestigious world piano competitions.” Pianists wishing to enter the Competition will have to submit the required application documents by May 10, 2025. The applications will open on January 5 and should include a video recording, proof of age, photographs, short biography, the complete list of the repertoire, two letters of recommendation and proof of payment. The competition jury will select thirty applicants to compete. It will be divided into three stages. Twelve competitors will progress to the second stage, and six will make it to the third. The first two stages will take place in the Marjan Kozina Hall at the Slovenian Philharmonic, while the final round will be in Cankarjev dom. Finishing with the impressions of Nevenka Leban Orešič, musicologist and honorary consul of Lithuania in Slovenia: “We are already looking forward to 2026, when the triennial of the Ljubljana Festival International Competition – Piano will take place. It will be an incentive for even more lively cooperation between young top pianists and a larger, more international audience.”





The laureates and the jury

# 12th International Piano Competition for Young Musicians

Since the first edition of the International Piano Competition for Young Musicians was held in Enschede in 2001, this biennial competition for pianists has always remained small scale. Nevertheless, over the past 12 editions, the competition has attracted young pianists from almost all parts of the world. Their level in both category A (10-15 years old) and category B (16-20 years old) was high on average; many laureates have now managed to secure a place on the concert stage.

Until the 2018 edition, the competition had only one preliminary round and a final, both held in the recital hall. The winners were then allowed to present themselves at the final concert (usually in the Main Hall), competing only for the audience prize. In 2022, however, for the first time, a final was held in the final evening for category B only, in which three laureates competed against each other in a concerto with orchestra. The extra cachet that such an orchestral final gave to the competition was then negated, as the amateur orchestra hired for this purpose was not of a sufficient

level to provide optimal support to the young pianists. An additional disadvantage was that the Great Hall of the Muziekgebouw was not available, and the final had to be held in a church. At the twelfth edition held this February 2024, these drawbacks did not apply: the Main Hall was now available, and more importantly, this time the finalists were accompanied by Phion, led by conductor Erik Desimpelare; this professional orchestra provided excellent support.



Akari Bastiaens

## Category B

A total of 57 pianists from 26 countries had entered for this edition. In the selection round eight semi-finalists were selected. All of them delivered magnificent performances. Ukrainian Roman Fediurko (20 years old) stood out in the semi-finals for his solid and narrative piano playing. In particular, his renditions of two *Moments musicaux* by Rachmaninoff were admirable. In the final, he performed Beethoven's Fifth Piano Concerto (first movement). He did so accurately and energetically, but his tone was often rather harsh and blended less with the orchestral sound. The second prize was awarded to Fediurko.

Following him came the much younger Shuailin Li (16 years old) from China. His intimate rendition of Mozart's Piano Concerto in d, K.466 (first movement), was a breath of fresh air after the ponderous Beethoven, in which he blended beautifully into the orchestra like a chamber musician. The international press jury rewarded his clear playing with the press award. The specialist jury (chairperson Mikhail Markov, founder of the competition) ranked him third.

As the last finalist, Ivan Petrović played. The impressive way this 19-year-old Croatian had played Rachmaninoff in the semi-final already made it clear that the first prize could hardly escape him. He fully lived up to those expectations in the first movement of Grieg's Piano Concerto in A. His brilliant performance won him first prize and the audience award.

## Category A

For category A there were only two rounds, held in the recital hall of the Muziekcentrum In the final there, nine participants played.

It was striking how these children were also able to play the same virtuoso repertoire as those in category B with great technical skill. Even the youngest, ten-year-old Yiqi Guo (China), appeared to have no trouble whatsoever in blasting out Liszt's extremely difficult *Tarantella* from *Venetia e Napoli*, even though it was clear that musically much was still missing in that performance. This was evident when the four-year older Pole Filip Kauch played this same piece with much more differentiation. He nonetheless fell outside the three main prizes but was allowed to present himself as the winner of the prize for the best performance of a modern work on the closing night in a swinging Concert étude by Nikolai Kapustin.

Kauch's compatriot Jan Kwiatkowski (aged 14) impressed everyone with his Beethoven and Chopin interpretations. He came third. It was Oleksandr Fediurko, aged 13 and the brother of Roman Fediurko in category B, who deservedly earned second prize with his dramatic performance of the first movement of Beethoven's *Sonata Appassionata*.

The big surprise of the competition was Akari Bastiaens, who at eleven was the second-youngest participant. She is from Belgium but studies in the Netherlands. The young artist performed musical miracles. Akari was not looking for pianistic fireworks, although her repertoire (including Mozart, Ligeti, and Ravel) was definitely not meant for children. What is special about her lyrical piano playing is that it sounds completely natural. Her qualities could not escape anyone. Thus, in addition to the first prize, she also won the press and audience award.

CHRISTO LELIE



# The 29th New Orleans International Piano Competition July 13–20, 2024



PHOTO: Victoria Z Photography

  
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## COMPETITION JURY

Tanya Bannister,  
United Kingdom  
Douglas Humpherys,  
USA  
Igal Kesselman,  
Israel/USA  
Alexander Korsantia,  
Georgia/USA  
Faina Lushtak,  
Russia/USA  
Alan Chow,  
Chairman of the Jury, USA

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# INTERNATIONAL PIANO COMPETITION FOR YOUNG PIANISTS KRONBERG

#futureforchildren  
#musicconnects  
#culturepromotion

# MARCH 21-23 2025

7 age groups - 6 to 19 y. o.

1st Prize 1.000 € / 750 € / 500 €

2nd Prize 750 € / 500 € / 300 €

3rd Prize 500 € / 300 € / 200 €

+Special Prizes



**Registration:** Oct 1st, 2024 - Jan 11th, 2025  
[www.piano-competition-kronberg.de/en](http://www.piano-competition-kronberg.de/en)

Place: Casals Forum  
Beethovenplatz 1,  
61476 Kronberg Ts.  
Germany

## Rising Piano Stars take the stage in New Orleans

The Musical Arts Society of New Orleans (MASNO) presents the 29th New Orleans International Piano Competition (NOIPC), July 13–20, 2024.

Carefully selected from over 200 international auditions, representing twenty-eight countries, twelve of the world's top emerging pianists have been invited to New Orleans as semifinalists for a week of competing, performing and recording. Prizes, totalling over \$100,000, include a studio recording on the Steinway & Sons label, concerto performances with the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra, the Baton Rouge Symphony Orchestra, the Acadiana Symphony Orchestra; solo concerts at Kaufman Music Center | Merkin Hall in New York, on the University of New Orleans Musical Excursions Series, and others. Steinway &

Sons is the official piano of the New Orleans International Piano Competition. The goal of the competition is to provide opportunities for the most gifted and communicative musicians to further their careers and to offer an opportunity to the community to discover the world's finest pianistic talents. The New Orleans International Piano Competition is held in conjunction with the annual summer New Orleans Piano Institute and Keyboard Festival, both hosted by the Musical Arts Society of New Orleans.

<https://masno.org/noipc/>



Elia Cecino, first prize winner of the 2022 New Orleans International Piano Competition

VICTORIA Z PHOTOGRAPHY

## Young pianists in Kronberg

Every two years, the International Piano Competition for Young Pianists Kronberg invites young pianists aged between 6 and 19 from all over the world to the renowned Casals Forum in Kronberg, Germany. Its aim is to comprehensively and sustainably promote young talents and provide them with a unique and motivating experience.



VICTORIA HUECKER

Sophie Wagner, first prize winner AG III

The first edition of the Piano Competition, organized by the non-profit association International Piano Competition Taunus e. V., was hugely successful. Over 290 young pianists from thirty-three countries have applied to participate on the digital preliminary round, sixty-two participants were admitted for the competition in Kronberg 2023. The first prize and special prize winners wowed the audience at the prize winners' concert, which was broadcast worldwide via live stream.

The innovative concept is characterized by prizes in seven age groups, including numerous and valuable special prizes with a focus on promotion: masterclasses, concert performances, professional audio and video recordings etc., and a top-class jury – Prof. Matthias

Kirschnereit, Prof. Claudia Schellenberger, Prof. Christian A. Pohl, and Ulrike Dannefeldmann. It provides optimal conditions, a high standard in all respects, as well as a very personal and warm atmosphere and, among other things, a free supporting program offering the young talents plenty of opportunity for exchange and fellowship.

From 21 March to 23 March, 2025, the second Piano Competition for Young Pianists Kronberg will take place under the patronage of Minister President Boris Rhein. As Rhein put it, “we want to turn the competition into a celebration of the music and talents for everyone involved, focusing on the development of young talent.”

[piano-competition-kronberg.de/en](https://piano-competition-kronberg.de/en)





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