

Review**Cleveland International Piano Competition:
Award Ceremony and Medalist Recital (August 11)**

by Guytano Parks



“Everything must gel at that one moment...a culmination and balance of mind, heart and soul.” That bit of wisdom was shared by HaeSun Paik of Korea, one of the jurors of the Cleveland International Piano Competition during the Jury Roundtable Festival Conversation on August 5. All twenty-eight of the extremely talented contestants certainly had their moments, but several stood out from the rest and they were recognized and rewarded for their outstanding performances in the 2013

CIPC on Sunday, August 11 during the Awards Ceremony at Severance Hall.

Serving as host for the event was WCLV's program director Bill O'Connell who welcomed, greeted and thanked all forces involved in making the 2013 CIPC a splendid and exciting success, in addition to remarks by Piano International Association of Northern Ohio president Teresa Good and Pierre van der Westhuizen, Executive Director of CIPC. Generous individuals and foundations provided special cash awards which ranged from \$1,500 to \$2,500 and presented them to the pianists who were all present except for one. The categories and recipients were: Baroque Prize to Andrejs Osokins; Beethoven Prize to Stanislav Khristenko; Cairns Family American Prize to Oskar Jezior; Chopin Prize to Francois Dumont and Ruoyu Huang; Contemporary Prize to Ben Schoeman; French Prize to Francois Dumont; Mozart Prize to Miao Huang; Russian Prize to Arseny Tarasevich-Nikolaev; and Audience Prize to Jiayan Sun.

The four finalists, heard in concerto performances with The Cleveland Orchestra on Friday and Saturday evenings, received these medalist awards: Mixon First Prize of \$50,000 to Stanislav Khristenko; Knowlton Second Prize of \$25,000 to Arseny Tarasevich-Nikolaev; Third prize Cash Award of \$15,000 to Francois Dumont and Fourth Prize Cash Award of \$10,000 to Jiayan Sun.

After intermission, the four medalists were heard in encore performances of some of their competition repertoire. In Bartók's *Out of Doors*, Jiayan Sun displayed his penchant for the rhythmic, bringing details into clear focus. His keen and imaginative playing was

crisp, colorful, and full of exciting and exotic effects, all delivered within a wide range of dynamics. Mr. Sun's ability to play many different degrees of *pianissimo* was particularly impressive.

An astute balancing of chords with clear delineation of the melodic from the accompaniment distinguished François Dumont's performance of Liszt's *Vallée d'Obermann*, a brooding, plaintive piece with occasional moments of optimism which Dumont played with effervescent lyricism. He displayed a fine grasp of Liszt's lament, allowing the piece to unfold organically while making sure to keep the throbbing chords well beneath the melody as the work crescendoed to its impassioned conclusion.

Arensy Tarasevich-Nikolaev's highly poetic reading of Scriabin's *Sonata No. 4* was full of pulse and surge with sensitive and creative tonal colorations. He followed it with two preludes by Rachmaninoff — No. 5 in G major, Op. 32 and No. 5 in g minor, Op. 23. He played the first one beautifully with a crystalline treble melody and delicate filigree above the gentle, undulating figurations in the bass. The opening march of the second prelude was rhythmic, menacingly martial before turning heroic. Tarasevich-Nikolaev handled the transition into the gorgeous central section marvelously, soaring with long, legato melodic lines before a recap back to the march ended in a hushed, upward flourish.

Finally, First Prize winner Stanislav Khristenko took to the stage to perform Montsalvatge's *Sonatina para Yvette* (1962) and Liszt's *Rhapsodie espagnole*. The pianist's abundant gifts were immediately apparent as he created beautiful and poignantly expressive sounds from Montsalvatge's dissonances, layering and texturing them with a mature and cultivated technique. He made a children's tune (*Twinkle, Twinkle little Star* as we know it today) humorously simplistic at first, then rhapsodic and full of wit and charm. Khristenko captured the essence of *Rhapsodie espagnole*, displaying consummate musicianship coupled with clean and accurate execution. The pianist milked every drop of its melodic content while dazzling with brilliant runs, ferocious octaves and sparkling figuration.

Bravo and congratulations to the four medalists and the recipients of the special awards as well as to all of the other contestants in the 2013 Cleveland International Piano Competition. We look forward to following your careers and wish you all much happiness and success in your musical endeavors.

Photo by Roger Mastroianni at the medals ceremony on August 10 at Severance Hall.

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