

CIPC for Young Artists: Rising Star First Prize winner Wilson Liu

Wilson Liu age 12, (United States) — First Prize, Rising Star Division, Classical Prize, and Romantic Prize

Clevelandclassical.com: Congratulations — fantastic playing.

Wilson Liu: Thank you.

CC.com: You've been in many competitions: How did you deal with your nerves? Do you get nervous? You didn't look like it.

WL: I get nervous but I also get excited at the same time. And I think I can deal with that nervousness, but I still do different techniques to help me reduce that nervousness. Like, I power pose sometimes in front of the mirror to make me feel big and more confident. I had a class with Jo from [Mindful Opus](#) who taught me these techniques and I've been trying to use them. And they're pretty good, actually. (Demonstrates) You can do this like a starfish, and you could also do this like a boss, you know?

CC.com: That's really cool. You had a wonderful variety of pieces: how did you choose the repertoire?

Since this competition was free repertoire I chose the pieces that best represented me and that I was most comfortable with, and the pieces that were most dear to my heart. So I started with the Rameau, and then the Mozart, and then the Chopin. Both the Chopin and the Rameau are in A minor. So I decided to start with the Rameau, which was A minor, and then end with the other A minor. And then it's kind of like a memory of that Rameau. I guess that's how I thought of that.

CC.com: You played them beautifully.

WL: Thank you.

CC.com: And your Mozart piano four hands during the chamber music round was delightful: Did you have fun working with Khanh Nhi Luong?

WL: Yeah. It's probably the most fun I've had on the stage for a while.

CC.com: Really? Have you played a lot of four hand piano?

WL: No, this was actually my first time. So it's a learning experience.

CC.com: That's impressive. I wrote in my notes that you were matching her articulations and phrasing and you couldn't tell where you left off and she began, or she left off and you began.

WL: I guess the purpose is to sound like one person playing both parts.

CC.com: What keeps you so interested in the piano?

WL: I guess my family because they've made so many sacrifices. Like my dad has to stay in California to work, and then my mom takes me and my brother. So I have to keep going and stay strong for them.

CC.com: Is your brother a pianist?

WL: No, he plays the violin. My mom doesn't want another pianist in the house. I think she's had enough of, you know, hearing us bang, bang, bang.

CC.com: I'm curious, who is your favorite composer?

WL: I don't have a favorite one. All of them are my favorites. I can't choose. They're all so amazing.

CC.com: What was it like on Friday night to go out after everybody had played their concertos to play your solo repertoire?

WL: It was nice of Piano Cleveland to let me go on stage after all of them. But I was pretty exhausted by then. I remember it was like 10:30 when I had to go on stage, and they also had a break after. It was fun, though. My first time playing in Kulas — It's a very nice hall.

CC.com: Did you enjoy the other hall?

Mixon — Yeah. It's my first time having the audience sit higher than the stage. I've never played in a hall like that before But it was really cool.

CC.com: Why do you enjoy going to competitions?

WL: It's an opportunity to see how much I've grown since the last competition. I don't really think of a competition as, you know, going against others. It's really going against myself to see if I've grown and improved.

CC.com: What grade would you give yourself for this one?

Maybe the solo round, like 70%. and the chamber round, maybe 85%.

CC.com: I would give you much higher scores. But it's good to think in those terms.

WL: It is. Maybe next time I'll aim for 80% or 90%.

CC.com: And you enjoyed your time. Did you meet new people?

WL: Yeah, I made a bunch of new friends. And we're actually going to eat ice cream at Mitchell's right after this.

CC.com: You'll love Mitchell's, and I understand from these cards that you enjoy a lot of different sports.

WL: I like all kinds of sports — soccer, basketball, I swim and play badminton.

CC.com: Did you watch any of the World Cup?

WL: Oh, yeah — Crazy, especially that final.

CC.com: I couldn't believe the one point was scored at 105 minutes. And I understand you also enjoy traveling.

WL: Yeah, especially for competitions and vacations. I mean it's an opportunity to travel the world.

CC.com: And you love food from all over the world.

WL: Yeah, I eat a lot. I love food in general.

CC.com: Is there anything else you'd like to tell us? If not, thank you so much.

WL: Thank you for having me.

CC.com: I hope to see you in Cleveland again.

WL: I love it here. I'm going to try to visit more.

Published on ClevelandClassical.com August 5, 2026

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