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## **A Study of Select World-Federated International Piano Competitions: Influential Factors in Performer Repertoire Choices**

Yuan-Hung Lin

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A STUDY OF SELECT WORLD-FEDERATED  
INTERNATIONAL PIANO COMPETITIONS:  
INFLUENTIAL FACTORS IN PERFORMER REPERTOIRE CHOICES

by

Yuan-Hung Lin

A Dissertation  
Submitted to the Graduate School,  
the College of Arts and Sciences  
and the School of Music  
at The University of Southern Mississippi  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Doctor of Musical Arts

Approved by:

Dr. Elizabeth Moak, Committee Chair  
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Dr. Joseph Brumbeloe

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## ABSTRACT

In the last ninety years, international music competitions have increased steadily. According to the 2011 *Yearbook* of the World Federation of International Music Competitions (WFIMC)—founded in 1957—there were only thirteen world-federated international competitions at its founding, with at least nine competitions featuring or including piano. One of the founding competitions, the Chopin competition held in Warsaw, dates back to 1927. The number of world-federated international competitions has since increased to 122 in 2019, with a total of fifty-nine piano competitions (thirty-two dedicated solely to piano). More and more, pianists strive to participate in several competitions in order to win a competition title and its tangible benefits such as prize monies and/or additional concerts.

However, there are many pianists, but few prizes. It is always a challenge for contestants to stand out from the vast number of outstanding pianists, to be noticed by the public, and to develop their career. “How will the choice of repertoire influence the competition results” or “what is the best repertoire to play in the competition” become important questions when contestants are selecting repertoire for a competition.

This research is thus focused on the use of repertoire in the WFIMC piano competitions. It will explore the question whether there is a beneficial repertoire for contestants by analyzing the use of competition repertoire and comparing the choice of repertoire between different contestants. It will sample several well-known international piano competitions such as the Long-Thibaud-Crespin Competition in Paris, France; the Géza Anda Competition in Zurich, Switzerland; the International Ferruccio Busoni International Piano Competition in Bolzano, Italy; and the International Telekom

Beethoven Piano Competition Bonn in Germany. It will examine these factors: repertoire requirements of different competitions, repertoire choices offered for each round, repertoire difficulty, and choice of repertoire by the performers.

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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my husband, Luke; my daughter, Kinchu; my parents, Agilasay and Ljigiyan; my parents-in-law, Alex and Elaine; and the big family of Pakawyan and Pavavaljun.

I give all glory to God who loves me most.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>AFF</i>	Alink-Argerich Foundation
<i>IRB</i>	Institutional Review Board of The Univ. of Southern Mississippi
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
<i>WFIMC</i>	World Federation of International Music Competition

## CHAPTER I – INTRODUCTION

### Personal Interest

When I decided to develop my piano performance skills, my teacher encouraged me to participate in different piano competitions. My first piano competition was at the age of twelve. I played one obligatory piece (Johann Sebastian Bach's Prelude and Fugue in C Minor, BWV 847, from *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, Bk. II) and one free choice repertoire (Ludwig van Beethoven's Sonata No. 9 in E Major, Op. 14, No. 1). The result of that competition was not too bad, and since then I have participated in more competitions.

In 2008, I participated in my first international piano competition. Luckily, I was selected for the first round. I still remember the many cameras surrounding me, journalists asking if they could interview me, and my performance picture being included in the newspaper. Although I did not pass the second round, my name was remembered by some audience and jury members present.

For international competitions, there is always a great deal of repertoire that needs to be prepared. When I was participating in that first international competition, I often wondered if I had the best repertoire to present to my audience and jury members. For this reason, I decided to research the use of repertoire in the World Federation of International Music Competitions (WFIMC) for piano. I hope that my research will benefit pianists wishing to develop their careers by participating in different international piano competitions.

## State of Research

Participating in music contests is important for performers for tangible and intangible reasons. According to the concept of rite of passage from the British cultural anthropologist Victor Witter Turner,<sup>1</sup> competition is a kind of rite for musicians. When musicians go through the competition rite, they will progressively reach another level. Thus, music competition could be a rite of passage for musicians. A competition is not solely for winning titles, but it is also a chance to challenge oneself. Even if competitors do not win anything in the competition, the repertoire they learn for the competition, for example, can still help them build their performance career. The value of a contest is further enhanced by the engagement of all the participants.<sup>2</sup>

As international music competitions belonging to the WFIMC require a massive amount of repertoire, performers—also often feeling pressure to present the music well—must prepare as early as possible in order to perform at a high level. Many contestants wonder about the following questions when they are selecting repertoire for a competition: “How will the choice of repertoire influence the competition results?”; or “What is the best repertoire to play in the competition?”

A current review of literature regarding international piano competitions includes books by Lisa McCormick<sup>3</sup> and Joseph Horowitz,<sup>4</sup> as well as seven doctoral

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1. Victor W. Turner, *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play* (New York City: Performing Arts Journal Publications, 1982): 10.

2. Stanton C. Belfour, “The Values of Music Contests,” *Music Educators Journal* 21, no. 5 (March - April 1935): 23.

3. Lisa McCormick, *Performing Civility: International Competitions in Classical Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

4. Joseph Horowitz, *The Ivory Trade: Piano Competitions and the Business of Music*. (Boston:

dissertations.<sup>5</sup> Of these sources, only Michael Dean's 2010 dissertation "The Gina Bachauer Piano Competition: An Organizational History and Survey of Offered Repertoire" has a focus on repertoire. His dissertation includes a thorough research on the use of repertoire in each year of the Bachauer competition. However, he focuses on only one competition. Dean explored the relationship between the winners' repertoire choices with the other contestants' repertoire and ends up with this conclusion: the choice of repertoire did not affect the results of the competition. In a competition at that high level, it is not what literature one performs, but how artistically one presents the music.<sup>6</sup>

Although in Dean's research he made the conclusion that there is no ideal repertoire for winning a competition,<sup>7</sup> skepticism still exists with this conclusion. In Eileen Cline's dissertation, written in 1985, and with only a few pages on repertoire, she does mention that many experienced competitors spoke of the foolishness of playing a late Beethoven sonata. Cline herself went on to say, "Indeed, it is difficult to find an

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Northeastern University Press, 1991).

5. Eileen Cline, "Piano Competition: An Analysis of their Structure, Value, and Educational Implications" (DME diss., Indiana University, 1985);

Hyun-Jung Kim, "Selected Repertoire Representative of Requirements of International Piano Competitions" (DMA diss., University of Maryland, 2005);

Lauren A. Sosniak, "Successful Learning: Becoming an Exceptional Concert Pianist" (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 1983);

Lisa McCormick, "Playing to Win: A Culture Sociology of the International Music Competition" (PhD diss., Yale University, 2008);

Michael Dean, "The Gina Bachauer Piano Competition: An Organizational History and Survey of Offered Repertoire" (DMA diss., University of Oklahoma, 2010);

Stacy E. Lom, "'Sometimes Less is More': The Development and Effects of Evaluative Cultures" (PhD diss., Northwestern University, 2013).

Therese M. Davison, "The Competitive Edge: An Examination of Music Competition, Arts Education, and Leadership" (DA diss., Franklin Pierce University, 2012).

6. Michael Dean, "The Gina Bachauer Piano Competition: An Organizational History and Survey of Offered Repertoire" (DMA diss., University of Oklahoma, 2010), 315.

7. Ibid.

instance in which a performer who has played a late Beethoven sonata has not been eliminated at the end of that round.”<sup>8</sup>

This study will explore the question of whether there is a beneficial repertoire for contestants by analyzing the use of competition repertoire and comparing the choice of repertoire between different contestants. The study will focus on a comparison of different WFIMC-member international music competitions and their regulations regarding repertoire. It will aim to sample several well-known international piano competitions such as: the Concours International Long-Thibaud-Crespin in Paris, France; the Géza Anda Piano Competition in Zurich, Switzerland; the Ferruccio Busoni International Piano Competition in Bolzano, Italy; and the International Telekom Beethoven Piano Competition Bonn, in Germany. It will examine these factors: official competition changes in repertoire from the previous competition, repertoire choices offered for each round, repertoire difficulty, and the choice of repertoire by the performers.

Interviews are an important method and means of collecting information in this research. This researcher interviewed on location, for each of the four sampled WFIMC competitions, between three to six competitors, one to three jury members, as well as, when possible, the artistic director of the competition. A chart of the repertoire of all competitors will be produced for comparison purposes. I will use Maurice Hinson’s

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8. Eileen Cline, “Piano Competition: An Analysis of Their Structure, Value, and Educational Implications” (DME diss., Indiana University, 1985), 471.

*Guide to the Pianist's Repertoire*<sup>9</sup> and Jane Magrath's *The Pianist's Guide to Standard Teaching and Performance Literature*<sup>10</sup> as references for the repertoire difficulty level.

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9. Maurice Hinson, *Guide to the Pianist's Repertoire* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000).

10. Jane Magrath, *The Pianist's Guide to Standard Teaching and Performance Literature* (Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Publishing, 1995).

## CHAPTER II – WORLD-FEDERATED INTERNATIONAL PIANO COMPETITIONS

### Brief History of the World Federation of International Music Competitions

#### The World Federation of International Music Competitions (WFIMC)

organization headquarters is in Geneva, Switzerland. The organization was founded in 1957 with the Ferruccio Busoni International Piano Competition and ten other European competitions (see Table 1). (One of the founding competitions, the Chopin competition held in Warsaw, dates back to 1927.)

Table 1

#### *WFIMC Founder Competitions*<sup>11</sup>

Competition	Category	City	Country	Membership
Ferruccio Busoni International Piano Competition	Piano	Bolzano	Italy	1957-Present
International Queen Elisabeth Competition	Multi-Discipline	Brussels	Belgium	1957-Present
Budapest International Music Competition	Multi-Discipline	Budapest	Hungary	1957-Present
Geneva International Music Competition	Multi-Discipline	Geneva	Switzerland	1957-Present
International Violin Competition “Premio Paganini”	Violin	Genoa	Italy	1957-Present
Concours de Quatuor à cordes	String Quartet	Liège	Belgium	1957-1999
ARD International Music Competition	Multi-Discipline	Munich	Germany	1957-Present
Concours de Piano “Alfredo Casella”	Piano	Napoli	Italy	1957-1978
Concours Long-Thibaud	Piano	Paris	France	1957-Present
Henryk Wieniawski International Violin Competition	Violin	Poznań	Poland	1957-Present
Prague Spring International Music Competition	Multi-Discipline	Prague	Czech	1957-Present
Concours International de Musique Gian Battista Viotti	Piano	Vercelli	Italy	1957-Present
International Frederyrk Chopin Piano Competition	Piano	Warsaw	Poland	1957-Present

The number of WFIMC competitions increased yearly. In 2020, the exact number of members was 122. For piano competitions, the number is fifty-nine,<sup>12</sup> with thirty-two dedicated solely to piano.

For over sixty years, leading music competitions throughout the world have joined the WFIMC. One hundred ten cities on five continents are represented. This international organization is a member of the International Music Council (a musical

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11. Lisa McCormick, *Performing Civility: International Competitions in Classical Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 251.

12. “Member Competitions,” World Federation of International Music Competitions, December 8, 2018, <https://wfimc-fmcim.org/member-competitions/>.

advisory body to UNESCO) and forms a global network. The WFIMC aims to support talented musicians by presenting them to the public through competitions and helping them build their professional career.<sup>13</sup>

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13. World Federation of International Music Competitions, *2019 Annual Book* (Saint-Imier, Switzerland: Juillerat Chervet, 2019), 3.

## Competitions to be Sampled

As previously mentioned, in 2020, there were a total of 122 competitions belonging to WFIMC, with fifty-nine for piano (thirty-two solely for that purpose).<sup>14</sup> According to the calculations from Gustav Alink (music researcher and founder of the Alink-Argerich Foundation), there are more than 300 piano competitions<sup>15</sup> which are not members of the WFIMC, but they call themselves an “International Piano Competition.”

In order to become a competition member of WFIMC, the competition must meet the requirements of its regulations. For the purposes of this research, the focus is on the competition structure and repertoire regulations. Regarding competition structure guidelines, a WFIMC competition does not have a specific regulation for number of rounds, and the preliminary (or pre-selected, pre-screening) round is not a requirement.<sup>16</sup> For repertoire regulations, the WFIMC suggests presenting the final round with orchestra, unless the competition’s own rules makes the requirement unsuitable.<sup>17</sup>

This research includes four types of competitions:

1) the competition with a famous composer’s name and repertoire requirements based on and related to the specific composer (e.g. the International Telekom Beethoven Bonn Competition);

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14. “Member Competitions,” World Federation of International Music Competitions, December 8, 2018, <https://wfimc-fmcim.org/member-competitions/>.

15. Wei-Tsu Fan, *International Sunset Colosseum for Aspiring Young Pianists* (Taipei: Hung Yeh Ltd, 2007), 13. 樊慰慈, 夕陽下的琴鍵沙場(臺北: 洪葉文化, 2007), 13。

16. “Heritage and Governance,” World Federation of International Music Competitions, October 12, 2018, <https://wfimc-fmcim.org/heritage-and-governance/>.

17. Ibid.

2) the competition with a world-famous musician's name (but not a composer) and repertoire based on the musician's performance repertoire (e.g. Concours Géza Anda);

3) the competition with a famous composer's name and repertoire requirements with only a small representation of works by the specific composer (e.g. Ferruccio Busoni International Piano Competition); and

4) the competition with world-famous musicians' names (but not composers) and incorporating repertoire with a regional character (e.g. Concours International Long-Thibaud-Crespin).

This research also incorporates field investigation. The researcher observed each of these four sampled competitions on location, along with conducting, on-site, the previously mentioned interviews, either between or after the competitions.

### Overview of Sampled Competitions

#### International Telekom Beethoven Competition Bonn

In 2009, the International Telekom Beethoven Competition Bonn in Germany became a member of the WFIMC.<sup>18</sup> Unlike the Vienna International Beethoven Piano Competition, which only permits works of Beethoven, the Bonn competition also includes works that have a relationship to Beethoven.

The first edition of the International Telekom Beethoven Competition Bonn was held in 2005. The competition is held every two years in December, celebrating the birth month of Beethoven. This competition is sponsored by the large telecommunications company of Germany—Telekom. This researcher sampled the 2017 seventh edition

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18. "Partners," Deutsche Telekom, September 10, 2018, <https://www.telekom-beethoven-competition.de/itbcb-en/competition/about-us/presented-by/partners-542838>.

competition. Twenty-five contestants were selected from the “Qualification Round” (video audition) and invited to the city of Bonn to play for the public. The prizes consisted of five titled cash prizes and one non-cash prize.<sup>19</sup>

In addition to Beethoven’s works, other Germanic repertoire is incorporated in the Bonn competition. In 2017, this competition was designated as a public four-round competition plus the preliminary video “Qualification Round.” The repertoire requirements of the qualification round were: one Bach Prelude and Fugue; and one late Beethoven Sonata from Op. 109, Op. 110, or Op. 111. These works would then be repeated in the first round of the public competition.<sup>20</sup>

The limitation for performance time of the first round was forty-five minutes. In addition to the above-mentioned Bach and Beethoven from the qualifying round, competitors had to select one more piece from Beethoven’s piano works such as the Bagatelles, Variations, Rondos, Fantasy, or Capriccio.<sup>21</sup>

For the second round, the time limitation was about an hour. Twelve contestants were selected for this round. One Beethoven sonata could be chosen, but there was a limitation on which sonata could be played (see below Table 2). Beethoven’s *Variations on a Waltz by Diabelli* in C Major, Op. 120, was also an option. The other choices were mostly either Viennese-Classical or German-Romantic works.<sup>22</sup>

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19. Sophie Wasserscheid, Jonas Nachtsheim, Annette Semrau, Tobias Meier-Krüger, *International Telekom Beethoven Competition Bonn* (Bonn: Int. Beethoven Bonn gGmbH, 2017), 8-11.

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid.

For the third round (the “Semi-Final” round), six contestants were selected. For this round, a different Beethoven sonata needed to be chosen. Additionally, contestants were required to play chamber music with a cellist, at least one twentieth-century work, and any composition composed after 1980. Following this round, the Chamber Music Prize was announced, and three finalists were selected to play a concerto with orchestra.<sup>23</sup>

For the final round, finalists prepared two paired concerti by Beethoven (see Table 2 below). Only one concerto however, decided by the jury, would be performed in the finals.

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23. Wasserscheid, Nachtsheim, Semrau, Meier-Krüger, *International Telekom Beethoven Competition Bonn* (Bonn: Int. Beethoven Bonn gGmbH, 2017), 8-11.

Table 2

*Repertoire Requirements of Intl. Telekom Beethoven Competition Bonn 2017<sup>24</sup>*

Qualification/Application Round	First Round	Second Round	Semi-Final Round	Final Round/Finale
<b>Item 1:</b> A Prelude and Fugue by J. S. Bach	<b>Item 1:</b> A Prelude and Fugue by J. S. Bach	<b>Item 4:</b> One sonata by Beethoven (but not: • No. 1 in F Minor, Op. 2, No. 1 • No. 5 in C Minor, Op. 10, No. 1 • No. 6 in F Major, Op. 10, No. 2 • No. 9 in E Major, Op. 14, No. 1 • No. 10 in G Major, Op. 14, No. 2 • No. 19 in G Minor, Op. 49, No. 1 • No. 20 in G Major, Op. 49, No. 2 • No. 22 in F Major, Op. 54 • No. 24 in F-sharp Major, Op. 78 • No. 30 in E Major Op. 109 • No. 31 in A-flat Major, Op. 110 • No. 32 in C Minor, Op. 111)  Or 33 Variations on a Waltz by Anton Diabelli in C Major, Op. 120	<b>Item 6:</b> One of the following sonatas by Beethoven • No. 1 in F Minor, Op. 2, No. 1 • No. 5 in C Minor, Op. 10, No. 1 • No. 6 in F Major, Op. 10, No. 2 • No. 9 in E Major, Op. 14, No. 1 • No. 10 in G Major, Op. 14, No. 2 • No. 22 in F Major, Op. 54 • No. 24 in F-sharp Major, Op. 78  <b>Item 7:</b> One or more works by Arnold Schönberg, Béla Bartók, Igor Stravinsky, Anton Webern, Alban Berg, Sergej Prokofjew, Paul Hindemith, Viktor Ullmann, Hanns Eisler or Dmitri Schostakowitsch  <b>Item 8:</b> A contemporary work, composed after 1980 (chosen by the performer)  <b>Item 9:</b> Sonata for Piano and Cello in C Major, Op. 102, No. 1, 3 <sup>rd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> movements by Beethoven	<b>Item 10:</b> Piano concerti by Ludwig van Beethoven  • No.1 in C Major, Op. 15, and No. 3 in C Minor, Op.37  Or  • No. 2 in B-flat Major, Op. 19, and No. 4 in G Major, Op. 58  Or  • No. 5 in E-flat Major, Op. 73, and the Concerto for Violin and Orchestra in D Major, Op. 61 (version for piano)  The jury will decide which work shall be performed in the finale.
<b>Item 2:</b> One of Beethoven's last three sonatas • No. 30 in E Major, Op. 109 • No. 31 in A-Flat Major, Op. 110 • No. 32 in C Minor, Op. 111	<b>Item 2:</b> One of Beethoven's last three sonatas: • No. 30 in E Major, Op. 109 • No. 31 in A-Flat Major, Op. 110 • No. 32 in C Minor, Op. 111  <b>Item 3:</b> <b>Either</b> one of the following works by Beethoven. • Seven Bagatelles, Op. 33; • Six Variations on an Original Theme in F Major, Op. 34; • Two Rondos in C Major, Op. 51/1 and in G Major Op. 51/2; • Fantasy in G Minor/B Major, Op. 77; • Eleven Bagatelles, Op. 119; • Six Bagatelles, Op. 126; • Andante favori in F Major, WoO 57; • Ten Variations on the theme 'La stessissima' from the opera 'Falstaff' by Antonio Salieri, WoO 73; • Seven Variations on the quartet "Kind, willst du ruhig schlafen?" from Peter Winter's opera 'Das unterbrochene Opferfest', WoO 75; • 32 Variations in C Minor, WoO 80  <b>Or both:</b> • Rondo a capriccio <i>Rage over a Lost Penny</i> in G Major, Op. 129, and Polonaise in C Major, Op. 89.	<b>Item 5:</b> One or more works by Brahms, Czerny, Haydn, Hummel, Liszt, Felix Mendelssohn, Ignaz Moscheles, Max Reger, Ferdinand Ries, Richard Strauss, Schubert, Robert Schumann, or Carl Maria von Weber		

24. Wasserscheid, Nachtsheim, Semrau, Meier-Krüger, *International Telekom Beethoven Competition Bonn* (Bonn: Int. Beethoven Bonn gGmbH, 2017), 8-11.

## Concours Géza Anda

The Concours Géza Anda is an international piano competition that takes place every three years in Zürich, Switzerland, where the Hungarian pianist Géza Anda resided from 1969 until his death in 1976. The Géza Anda Foundation was founded by Hortense Anda-Bührle in 1978 in memory of her husband, Géza Anda. This competition is aimed at young pianists who will pass on the musical spirit of Maestro Géza Anda.<sup>25</sup>

The first edition of the Concours Géza Anda was held in 1979.<sup>26</sup> The competition became a member of the WFIMC in 1987.<sup>27</sup> As referred to earlier, the design of the competition repertoire is based on the performance repertoire of Géza Anda. The 2018 edition required a video recording for the application itself, plus four public competition rounds.<sup>28</sup> The video recording was to consist of three pieces/movements, with each piece/movement being ten minutes in length. All three works were to be selected from different genres and specified composers.<sup>29</sup> The 2018 competition awarded a total of five cash prizes and two non-cash prizes.

Thirty young pianists were selected for the public “First Round: Auditions.” Each contestant had approximately twenty-five minutes of performance time. The repertoire of

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25. “The Géza Anda Foundation,” Concours Géza Anda, <http://www.geza-anda.ch/pages/view/id/25>.

26. Ibid.

27. WFIMC, *2019 Annual Book*, 85.

28. “General conditions of participation - Géza Anda Competition 2018 - Concours Géza Anda,” Concours Géza Anda, <http://www.geza-anda.ch/document/General-conditions-of-participation---G%25C3%25A9za-Anda-Competition-2018/6f2240d55265b2792d5e3548c39e03c7>.

29. Ibid.

the First Round and the “Second Round: Recitals” was the same, although the performance time permitted was different as the second round was longer. The competitors were to decide which piece to play first in the first round, while the jury decided the remainder of the music, with each competitor informed one and a half hours before the performance.<sup>30</sup> After the first round, thirteen competitors were selected for the “Second Round: Recitals.”

In the recital round (second round), competitors performed a fifty-five-minute recital. The performance repertoire was discussed by jury members and competitors.<sup>31</sup> After the second round, six competitors were selected for the “Third Round: Semi-Finals.”

For the semi-finals round, each competitor chose from one of four specified Mozart piano concerti (D Minor, K. 466; C Major, K. 467; A Major, K. 488; or C Minor, K. 491) to be performed with the Musikkollegium Winterthur, conducted by Theodor Guschlbauer. The jury and the Musikkollegium Winterthur awarded the Mozart Prize to the Semi-Finalist whom they considered to have given the best Mozart interpretation during the Semi-Finals.<sup>32</sup>

For the “Fourth Round: Final Concert,” three finalists were selected. The soloists performed with the Zurich Tonhalle Orchestra conducted by Christian Zacharias, who also was the president of the jury. Contestants had to prepare two concerti from a select list of paired concerti (see Table 3 further below), and the finalists decided which

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30. “General conditions of participation - Géza Anda Competition 2018 - Concours Géza Anda,” Concours Géza Anda, <http://www.geza-anda.ch/document/General-conditions-of-participation---G%25C3%25A9za-Anda-Competition-2018/6f2240d55265b2792d5e3548c39e03c7>.

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid.

concerto would be performed on stage.<sup>33</sup> After the final round, the audience voted for their favorite pianist for the “Audience Prize” (a non-cash prize), and the First Prize winner of the Géza Anda Competition presented an encore piece to conclude the competition.

The repertoire requirement of this competition was enormous; the total length of the entire repertoire each contestant selected was about six to seven hours.<sup>34</sup>

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33. Nathalie Wappler, interview by author, Zurich, June 12, 2018.

34. Daumants Liepiņš, interview by author, Zurich, June 6, 2018.

Table 3

*Repertoire Requirements of Concours Géza Anda 2018.*<sup>35</sup>

(Application) Video Recording	First Round: Auditions	Second Round: Recitals	Third Round: Semi-Finals	Fourth Round: Final Concert
Video recordings of 10 minutes each: • Movement/ work by Haydn/Mozart/ Beethoven/ Clementi • Movement/ work by Schubert/ Schumann/ Brahms/ Rachmaninov • Movement/ work by Fauré/Ravel/ Debussy/ De Falla/ Albéniz	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Haydn: Sonata in E-flat Major, Hob. XVI:49; Sonata in C Major, Hob. XVI:50; Sonata in E-flat Major, Hob. XVI:52; <i>One of the above sonatas is to be selected</i></li> <li>• Mozart: Sonata in F, K. 280 Sonata in A Minor, K. 310 Sonata in B-flat Major, K. 333 Sonata in C Minor, K. 457 Sonata in D Major, K. 576 <i>One of the above sonatas is to be selected</i></li> <li>• Beethoven: Sonata No. 4 in E-flat Major, Op. 7. Sonata No. 7 in D Major, Op. 10, No. 3 Sonata No. 16 in G Major, Op. 31, No. 1 Sonata No. 18 in E-flat Major, Op. 31, No. 3 Sonata No. 28 in A Major, Op. 101 Sonata No. 32 in C Minor, Op. 111 <i>One of the above sonatas is to be selected</i></li> <li>• Schubert: Impromptus, Op. 90, D. 899 Impromptus, Op. 142, D. 935 Sonata in D Major, Op. 53, D. 850 Sonata in C Minor, Op. posth., D. 958 Sonata in A Major, Op. posth., D. 959 Sonata in B flat Major, D. 960 <i>One of the above works is to be selected</i></li> <li>• Schumann: Carnaval, Op. 9; Fantasy Pieces, Op. 12; Symphonic Etudes, Op. 13; Fantasy in C Major, Op. 17; Humoreske, Op. 20 <i>One of the above works is to be selected</i></li> <li>• Brahms: Sonata No. 1 in C Major, Op. 1 Sonata No. 2 in F-sharp Major, Op. 2 Sonata No. 3 in F minor, Op. 5 Handel Variations, Op. 24 Paganini Variations, Op. 35 8 Pieces for Piano, Op. 76 Fantasies, Op. 116 6 Piano Pieces, Op. 118 <i>One of the above works is to be selected</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chopin: 3 Etudes from Op. 10 (except Nos. 3/6) or Op. 25 (except No. 7). It is compulsory for the above to be combined with: 24 Préludes, Op. 28; or Sonata No. 2 in B-flat Minor, Op. 35; or Sonata No. 3 in B Minor, Op. 58; or one Scherzo and one Ballade <b>or</b></li> <li>• Liszt: 5 from 12 Etudes d'exécution transcendante; or 6 Paganini Etudes; or Sonata in B Minor</li> <li>• Debussy: Images I and II; or Estampes and L'isle joyeuse; or 5 Préludes <b>or</b></li> <li>• Ravel: Gaspard de la nuit; or Le Tombeau de Couperin; or Miroirs; or Valses nobles et sentimentales and Jeux d'eau</li> <li>• Bartók: Suite Op. 14 and Out of Doors, Sz. 81; or Improvisations on Hungarian Peasant Songs, Op. 20 and Sonata, Sz. 80 <b>or</b></li> <li>• A contemporary work from the last 60 years, of the candidate's own choice</li> </ul>	<p>A performance of one of the following Mozart piano concerti, accompanied by the Musikkollegium Winterthur under the direction of Theodor Guschlbauer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No. 20 in D Minor, K. 466</li> <li>• No. 21 in C Major, K. 467</li> <li>• No. 23 in A Major, K. 488</li> <li>• No. 24 in C Minor, K. 491</li> </ul>	<p>Candidates will play a piano concerto selected by the jury. The soloist will be accompanied by the Zurich Tonhalle Orchestra under the direction of Christian Zacharias.</p> <p>Two of the following concerti are to be prepared:</p> <p>Beethoven No. 3 in C Minor, Op. 37; or No. 4 in G Major, Op. 58; or No. 5 in E-flat Major, Op. 73.</p> <p>It is compulsory for one of the above to be combined with one of the following piano concerti: Schumann A Minor, Op. 54</p> <p>Brahms No. 1 in D Minor, Op. 15; or No. 2 in B-flat Major, Op. 83</p> <p>Chopin No. 1 in E Minor, Op. 11; or No. 2 in F Minor, Op. 21</p> <p>Liszt No. 1 in E-flat Major; or No. 2 in A Major</p> <p>Tchaikovsky No. 1 in B-flat Minor, Op. 23</p> <p>Bartók No. 3, Sz. 119</p>

35. "General conditions of participation - Géza Anda Competition 2018 - Concours Géza Anda."

## Ferruccio Busoni International Piano Competition

The Ferruccio Busoni International Piano Competition, one of the important names in world-famous music competitions, was founded in 1949 in Bolzano, Italy. The Busoni competition was originally held every year at the Monteverdi Conservatory in Bolzano. In 2002, the competition changed to a biennial event, spread over two years. An application video is required. The first round (“Pre-Selection Phase”) occurs in the even year, and the Finals, which include the “Semi-Final” round (second round) and the additional remaining three final rounds, occur one year later in the subsequent odd year.<sup>36</sup> The 62<sup>nd</sup> edition of this competition occurred in 2018/19, some seventy years after its founding.

Many pianists who are famous in the classical music world, such as Alfred Brendel, Martha Argerich, Jerome Rose, Lilya Zilberstein, and Dong-Min Lim, were prizewinners of the Busoni competition.<sup>37</sup> Because these Busoni prizewinners inspire the younger generations, there are always many young pianists who apply to the Busoni. In the 2018/19 competition year, there were 420 applications resulting in a total of 120 hours of application recordings (although there are no specific repertoire requirements). The jury spent around five to six weeks listening to the recordings. As a result of this application audition process, the jury chose 100 pianists for the public “Pre-Selections” first round held in August 2018 in Bolzano.<sup>38</sup>

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36. “History of the Competition Ferruccio Busoni,” Concorso Busoni, <https://www.concorsobusoni.it/en/history-of-the-competition-ferruccio-busoni>.

37. “Hall of Fame Ferruccio Busoni International Piano Competition,” Concorso Busoni, <https://www.concorsobusoni.it/en/hall-of-fame?y=2015&ya=2010>.

38. Peter Paul Kainrath, interview by author, Bolzano, Competition, August 31, 2019.

This 2018 Pre-Selections round permitted no more than twenty minutes of repertoire including two etudes (a nineteenth-century etude, and a twentieth-century or contemporary etude) in addition to one or more pieces of the contestant's choice. Up to twenty-four contestants could be selected for the August 2019 Semi-Final round, but there could be some flexibility with the number as explained further below.<sup>39</sup> In fact, the jury chose twenty-seven competitors for the August 2019 Semi-Final round. The rules stated:

Candidates who have won first or second prize in a competition that is a member of the World Federation of International Music Competitions in the period between 1 January 2016 and 31 July 2018 may be admitted directly to the Finals of the Busoni Competition. Should the number of suitable candidates applying for a direct participation in the competition's finals fall short of the places available, the jury has the possibility of appointing additional candidates from the group of those who have been playing in the Pre-Selections in 2018. **In any case, the total number of participants in the final stage is limited to 27.**<sup>40</sup>

However, only twenty-two contestants attended the August 2019 Semi-Final round, as five selected contestants decided to abstain from participating in the Busoni competition.

In the semi-final round, competitors had to prepare forty to forty-five minutes of music to include one piece by Busoni from a specified list (see Table 5 below) along with other works of free choice by the competitor to complete the required time.<sup>41</sup> The Semi-Finals lasted three days in order for each Semi-Finalist to perform. Late in the evening, on the third day of the Semi-Finals, the results were announced. Twelve competitors were selected for the "Solo Finals" (third) round. The Junior Jury Prize also was awarded by a

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39. "Competition Rules," Concorso Busoni 2019. Note: Bold-face type from the original source.

40. Ibid.

41. Ibid.

separate jury comprised of fifty piano students of the music schools of Trentino-South Tyrol (Italy).<sup>42</sup>

For the Solo Finals (third) round, each contestant had to present a recital of about fifty-five to sixty minutes in length. The recital repertoire was to include one piece from Busoni's transcriptions of Bach, one classical period sonata (both the transcription and sonata requirement are in Table 5 further below), one or more contemporary works indicated by the competition (Table 4 below), and a free-choice repertoire selection (however, not from the Pre-Selections/first round) by the competitor. This third round took two days to finish. After the third round, six competitors were selected for the "Chamber Ensemble Finals" (fourth) round, involving the collaboration of the David Oistrakh String Quartet.<sup>43</sup>

There were five piano quintet options at the competitor's choice (see Table 5 further below). Each contestant received a two-and-a-half-hour rehearsal time with the David Oistrakh String Quartet.<sup>44</sup> After this round, the results of the ranking for fourth, fifth, and sixth prize appeared to the jury but was not announced to the audience.<sup>45</sup> Three finalists were announced to advance to the "Grand Final" (fifth and last) round. Before the "Finale" (in Italian) began though, the competition took one day off and held two masterclasses by two of the jury members: Tatiana Zelikman, and Shihkun Liu.

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42. "Prizes Ferruccio Busoni International Piano Competition," Concorso Busoni, <https://www.concorsobusoni.it/en/prizes-ferruccio-busoni-international-piano-competition>.

43. Peter Paul Kainrath, *62<sup>nd</sup> Ferruccio Busoni International Piano Competition* (Bolzano: Concorso Ferruccio Busoni): 66-67.

44. Emanuel Ivanov, interview by author, Bolzano, September 3, 2019.

45. Till Fellner, interview by author, Bolzano, September 5, 2019.

For the Grand Final (fifth) round, the competitors had prepared one concerto from a required list of concerti (Table 5) to perform with the Bolzano Haydn Orchestra conducted by Arvo Volmer.<sup>46</sup> This last round took place at the Bolzano City Theatre with thousands of people in the audience and was also broadcast live stream. The results of the competition were announced thirty minutes after the last competitor performed. The competition offered seven cash prizes and seven non-cash prizes.<sup>47</sup>

Table 4

*Contemporary Works of Busoni Competition 2018/19<sup>48</sup>*

<b>Thomas Adès</b> (UK): Mazurkas for piano, Op. 27 (2009) ca. 8 min. Editions Faber Music UK	<b>Augusta Read Thomas</b> (USA): Two Thoughts About the Piano (2017) ca. 5 min. Editions Nimbus Music Publishing
<b>Régis Campo</b> (France): Hommage à Georges Cziffra (2009) ca. 8 min. Editions Lemoine	<b>Olga Neuwirth</b> (Austria): Trurl-Tichy-Tinkle for piano (2016) ca. 9 min. Editions Ricordi Berlin
<b>Philippe Schoeller</b> (France): Prélude 1 - Omaggio a Cy Twombly & Prélude 3 - Ritualis Vincent van Gogh (2018) ca. 8 min. Editions Artchipel	<b>Bettina Skrzypczak</b> (Poland): Daphnes Lied (Daphne's Song) (2002) ca. 9 min. Editions Ricordi Berlin
<b>Mikel Urquiza</b> (Spain): Contrapluma (2016) ca. 6 min. Editions Suvini Zerboni	<b>Francesco Filidei</b> (Italy): Berceuse (2018) ca. 6 min. Editions Ricordi Milano–Annamaria Macchi
<b>Lorenzo Pagliè</b> (Italy): Uno: Courbes (2005/2006) ca. 6 min. Editions Suvini Zerboni	<b>Alex Nante</b> (Argentina): Invocation (2017) ca. 8 min. Editions Durand Salabert Eschig–Isabella Vasilotta
<b>Deqing Wen</b> (China): Love Song, River Chant (2006) ca. 9 min. SME Editions–Mauro Ursprung	<b>Philippe Manoury</b> (France): Nouvelles études: Vitesses paradoxales / Suspensions – Effondrements (2017) ca. 8 min. Editions Durand Salabert Eschig–Isabella Vasilotta

46. Peter Paul Kainrath, *Busoni Competition*, 72-73.

47. “Prizes Busoni Competition,” Concorso Busoni.

48. “Orléans Concours International,” Concorso Busoni,  
[https://www.concorsobusoni.it/en/orlans-concours-international?fbclid=IwAR3W-8DZB0iHz0aOplKhZCTgXNEtoBbCIw0EU6YPTZ\\_YmBmZcyymZwZqYDA](https://www.concorsobusoni.it/en/orlans-concours-international?fbclid=IwAR3W-8DZB0iHz0aOplKhZCTgXNEtoBbCIw0EU6YPTZ_YmBmZcyymZwZqYDA).

Table 5

*Repertoire Requirements of Ferruccio Busoni International Piano Competition 2018/19<sup>49</sup>*

Application /Registration Video Recording	Pre-Selections (1 <sup>st</sup> ) Round	Semi-Finals (2 <sup>nd</sup> ) Round	Solo Finals	Chamber Ensemble Finals	Grand Final (Concerto)
No limitation, free choice repertoire	a) One étude by F. Chopin (Op. 10 or Op. 25) <b>or</b> One étude by Liszt	a) One of the following compositions by F. Busoni • “All’Italia!” (In modo napolitano) [“To Italy!” (In a Neapolitan Mode)], BV 249 • “Meine Seele bangt und hofft zu Dir” (Choralvorspiel) [“My soul trembles and hopes of thee” (Chorale Prelude)], BV 249 • Two other Elegies, BV 249 • Sonatina (No. 1), BV 257 • Sonatina Seconda, BV 259 • Sonatina “In diem nativitatist Christi MCMXVII”, BV 274 • Toccata: Preludio, Fantasia, and Ciaccona, BV 287 • Indianisches Tagebuch (Indian Diary) (I), n.1-2-3-4, BV 267 • Preludes, Op. 37, BV 181: a choice of 6 preludes • Fantasie nach Johann Sebastian Bach, BV 253 • 10 Variationen über ein Präludium von Chopin (Klavierübung Teil 5), BV 213a	a) One of the J. S. Bach/F. Busoni transcriptions  b) A sonata by L.v. Beethoven, M. Clementi, J. Haydn or W.A. Mozart –  (other than the one eventually presented in the Pre-Selections round)	Candidates must present one of the following quintets:  • R. Schumann Quintet for Piano and Strings in E-flat Major, Op. 44 • J. Brahms Quintet for Piano and Strings in F Minor, Op. 34 • C. Franck Quintet for Piano and Strings in F Minor, FWV 7 • A. Dvorák Quintet No. 2 for Piano and Strings in A Major, Op. 81 • D. Shostakovich Quintet for Piano and Strings in G Minor, Op. 57	One of the following concerti for piano and orchestra: • W.A. Mozart Concerti for piano and orchestra: K. 466, K. 456, K. 467, K. 491, K. 595, K. 488 • L.v. Beethoven Concerti for Piano and Orchestra, Nos. 3, 4, and 5 • B. Bartók Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 2 • F. Chopin Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, Nos. 1 and 2 • M. Ravel Concerto for Piano and Orchestra in G Major • S. Rachmaninoff Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, Nos. 3 and 4 • S. Rachmaninoff Variations Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini, Op. 43 • P.I. Tchaikovsky Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, No. 1 • S. Prokofiev Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, Nos. 2, 3, and 5 • F. Liszt Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, Nos. 1 and 2 • C. Saint-Saëns Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, Nos. 2 and 5 • R. Schumann Concerto for Piano and Orchestra in A Minor, Op. 54 • A. Scriabin Concerto for Piano and Orchestra, Op. 20
	b) One étude by C. Debussy, B. Bartók (Op. 18), Rachmaninoff, Prokofiev, Stravinsky, Scriabin, or Ligeti		c) One or more piano works of contemporary music selected and indicated by the Ferruccio Busoni International Piano Competition within the end of December 2018		
	c) One or more pieces of the candidate’s choice		d) Other works of the candidate’s own choice – except those presented in the Pre-Selections round		
		b) Other works of the candidate’s choice			

49. “Competition Rules,” Concorso Busoni 2019.

## Long-Thibaud-Crespin International Competition

As one of the oldest music contests, this competition was originally known as the Concours Marguerite Long-Jacques Thibaud. The Long-Thibaud Competition was also one of the first thirteen members of the WFIMC. Founded by pianist Marguerite Long (1874-1966) and violinist Jacques Thibaud (1880-1953), this competition has been held in France since 1943 and was thus originally for pianists as well as violinists. In 2011, in honor of the French soprano Régine Crespin (1927–2007), it was renamed and expanded to include singers.<sup>50</sup> The competition now rotates annually between violin, piano, and voice.

The most recent year of the Long-Thibaud-Crespin Competition was 2019. Following preliminary auditions in different cities throughout the world during April to July 2019, forty-five competitors were invited to Paris for the public competition held from November 8 to November 16, 2019.<sup>51</sup> The first two public rounds (“Qualifying Auditions” and “Semi-Finals”) took place at the Salle Cortot of the École Normale de Musique de Paris, France. Information regarding the third round (“Finale Recital”) is below. The jury totaled nine members. Martha Argerich was the President of the Jury, but she did not appear until the final (fourth) concerto round.

This competition is the biggest and the most important competition in France. Not surprisingly, many piano students who study in France want to participate in this competition. In the 2019 edition, more than a third of the competitors in the public first round Qualifying Auditions (“Éliminatoires”) were students of the Conservatoire national

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50. “Foundation History,” Thibaud, <http://www.long-thibaud-crespin.org/en/foundation.html>.

51. “The Program,” Thibaud, <http://www.long-thibaud-crespin.org/en/contest/piano-2019.html>.

supérieur de musique et de danse de Paris [referred to henceforth in this document as the “Paris Conservatoire”].<sup>52</sup>

The competition officially consists of two stages: the non-public “pré-sélection” audition and the public auditions (Qualifying Auditions, Semi-Finals, and two final auditions/rounds of “Finale Recital” and “Finale Concerto”).<sup>53</sup>

The pré-sélection audition repertoire (see below Table 6) required: one Chopin etude; a second movement from either a Mozart or a Haydn sonata; and one free-choice piece selected by the competitors.

For the first public round, the Qualifying Auditions, every competitor had to play Haydn’s Variations in F Minor, Hob. XVII/6 and one free choice selection. Performance time for the first public round was a maximum of twenty minutes.<sup>54</sup>

After the public first round, twelve competitors were selected for the semi-final round (the second public round), known as the “demi final” in French. In this round, competitors had up to forty minutes of performance time. The repertoire in the semi-final round included the first movement of a piano quintet, one work from a list of French composers, and one or more free choice repertoire (see Table 6).<sup>55</sup>

Six competitors were selected for the “Two Final Auditions” (last two rounds). These rounds were held at the Auditorium of Radio France. All finalists were required to play a one-hour solo recital and a concerto with orchestra. The repertoire of the solo

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52. “Piano 2019: Long-Thibaud-Crespin,” *Concours Long-Thibaud-Crespin* (Paris, 2019): 25-47.

53. “The Program,” Thibaud, <http://www.long-thibaud-crespin.org/en/contest/piano-2019.html>.

54. Ibid.

55. Ibid.

recital included one commissioned work by Michaël Jarrell, at least one work from Debussy and/or Ravel, and one free choice piece (see Table 6).<sup>56</sup> Each finalist had to perform the commissioned work first; the rest of the program order could be decided by the contestant.

Contestants had to submit two concerti (see Table 6) from the concerto list of repertoire requirements. After the artistic director Bertrand Chamayou announced the Finalists, he also announced which concerto was assigned to each Finalist by the jury.

After four days of final rounds, the results of the competition were announced two hours after the last competitor performed. Six prizes and four additional special prizes were also announced by the jury members.

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56. "The Program," Thibaud.

Table 6

*Repertoire Requirements of Concours International Long-Thibaud-Crespin 2019<sup>57</sup>*

<b>Pre-Selection Audition (non-public audition in different cities)</b>			
One Chopin Etude; a slow movement of Mozart/Haydn sonata; and free choice repertoire. (Total 20 minutes)			
<b>Qualifying Auditions</b>	<b>Semi-Finals</b>	<b>Finale/Auditions: Recital (1 hour)</b>	<b>Finale/Auditions: Concerto</b>
<p>(20 minutes)</p> <p>1. Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)</p> <p>Variations in F Minor, Hob. XVII/6</p> <p>2. Any work(s) of the candidate's choosing</p> <p>(complete work(s) - not isolated movements)</p>	<p>1. A quintet movement chosen from the following: Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)     Quintet for Piano and Strings in F Minor, Op. 34.     I. Allegro non troppo César Franck (1822-1890)     Quintet for Piano and Strings in F Minor, FWV 7.     I. Molto moderato quasi lento Anton Dvořák (1841-1904)     Quintet for Piano and Strings No. 2 in A Major, Op.81.     I. Allegro ma non tanto</p> <p>2. One or more works to choose from the following (10 minutes minimum):</p> <p>(Only complete work(s) - Not isolated movements)</p> <p>Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921)     -Allegro appassionato for Solo Piano, Op. 70     -Etude en forme de valse for Solo Piano, Op. 52, No. 6     -Les cloches de las Palmas for Solo Piano, Op. 111, No. 4 Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)     -Nocturne No. 1 for Solo Piano in E-flat Minor, Op. 33, No. 1     -Nocturne No. 6 for Solo Piano in D Major, Op. 63     -Nocturne No. 7 for Solo Piano in C Minor, Op. 74     -Nocturne No. 13 for Solo Piano in B Minor, Op. 119     -Barcarolle No. 5 for Solo Piano in F Minor, Op. 66 Emmanuel Chabrier (1841-1894)     -Ten Picturesque Pieces – “Paysage”     -Ten Picturesque Pieces – “Sous-Bois”     -Ten Picturesque Pieces – “Idylle” Dédodat de Séverac (1872-1921)     -In Languedoc – IV. Coin de cimetière au printemps     -Cerdana – IV. Les muletiers devant le Christ de Llivia Paul Dukas (1865-1935)     -La plainte, au loin, du faune Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992)     - Vingt regards sur l'Enfant-Jésus – No. 6, Par lui tout a été fait     - Vingt regards sur l'Enfant-Jésus – No. 10, Regard de l'esprit de joie     - Vingt regards sur l'Enfant-Jésus – No. 15, Le baiser de l'Enfant-Jésus Catalogue d'oiseaux (1958)     - Le chocard des Alpes Henri Dutilleux (1916-2013)     -3 préludes (1973-1988) – No. 3: Le jeu des contraires Pierre Boulez (1925-2016)     -Douze notations     -Incises (2001 revised version)</p> <p>3. Any work(s) of the candidate's choosing (complete work(s) - not isolated movements)</p>	<p>1. Michaël Jarrell (1958)     Étude No. 2 (Réminiscences), between 5 and 8 minutes     Commissioned by the contest.</p> <p>2. Candidates to choose from one or more pieces for solo piano by</p> <p>Claude Debussy (1862-1918) and/or Maurice Ravel (1875-1937) (10 minutes minimum)</p> <p>3. Any work(s) of the candidate's choosing</p> <p>(complete work(s) - not isolated movements)</p>	<p>Candidates must select two concerti. Upon announcement of the finalists, the jury will choose the concerto to be performed by each candidate.</p> <p>Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)     -Concerto No. 1 in C Major for piano and orchestra, Op. 15</p> <p>Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)     -Concerto No. 24 in C Minor, for piano and orchestra, K. 491</p> <p>Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849)     -Concerto No. 2 in F Minor for piano and orchestra, Op. 21</p> <p>Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943)     -Concerto No. 1 in F-sharp Minor, for piano and orchestra, Op. 1</p> <p>Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921)     -Concerto No. 5 in F Major, for piano and orchestra, Op. 103</p> <p>Béla Bartók (1881-1945)     -Concerto No. 3 for piano and orchestra, Sz. 119</p>

57. “Piano 2019,” Thibaud, <http://www.long-thibaud-crespin.org/en/contest/piano-2019.html#c596>.

### CHAPTER III – USE OF REPERTOIRE IN COMPETITIONS

This chapter will explore how the sampled competitions categorized the repertoire requirements and how each competition designated repertoire in each round. Additionally, reference will be made to the difficulty level of each repertoire piece in every competition round.

#### The Difficulty Level of Repertoire

Every competition has its own character and its own repertoire design. Each contestant should choose a competition that meshes as well as possible with his own artistic temperament and technical capabilities. The first consideration for the contestants is the repertoire of the competitions.

Once the contestant decides upon the competition in which to participate, he must select repertoire from a multitude of possibilities. The difficulty level of the repertoire sometimes is the key point in how competitors choose their repertoire. Shiori Kuwahara, the Second Prize winner of the 2019 Busoni Competition, said that she changed her repertoire one day before the deadline because she did not think that she could master the difficulty of the piece she originally selected.<sup>58</sup>

In competitions, the organizers usually group the repertoire by period or style. Examples can easily be seen in the Concours Géza Anda application's video recording where competitors must choose: a movement/work by Haydn, Mozart, Clementi, or Beethoven; a movement/work of a Romantic selection; as well as a movement/work of a late 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup>-century composition.<sup>59</sup> Or another example of style-grouping of

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58. Shiori Kuwahara, interviewed by author, Bolzano, August 29, 2019.

59. General conditions of participation, Concours Géza Anda.

repertoire is found in both the Telekom Beethoven (Table 2) and Vienna Beethoven competitions, where late Beethoven sonatas are grouped together, and one must be chosen by the contestant.<sup>60</sup>

It is hard to find a competition that groups the repertoire by its level of difficulty. Indeed, it is hard to say that a late Beethoven Sonata is more difficult than an early Beethoven Sonata, or that a Schubert Sonata is more difficult than a Mozart Sonata. They all have different demands. In Maurice Hinson's *Guide to the Pianist's Repertoire*, much of the repertoire is given a designated difficulty level (levels explained further below). Using the Busoni 2018/19 competition's semi-final round as an example, the difficulty level of the repertoire is here classified by Hinson with the following designations:

Table 7  
*Repertoire Difficulty Level of Selected Works by Busoni*<sup>61</sup>

Busoni's Works	Hinson Difficulty Level	Frequency of Selection by Competitors
"All'Italia!" (In modo napolitano) ["To Italy!" (In a Neapolitan Mode)], BV 249	M-D	3
"Meine Seele bangt und hofft zu Dir" (Choralvorspiel) ["My soul trembles and hopes of thee" (Chorale Prelude)], BV 249	M-D	0
Two other Elegies from BV 249	M-D	2
Sonatina (No. 1), BV 257	M-D	0
Sonatina Seconda, BV 259	M-D to D	4
Sonatina "In diem nativitatis Christi MCMXVII," BV 274	M-D	1
Toccata: Preludio, Fantasia, and Ciaccona, BV 287	D	3
Indianisches Tagebuch (Indian Diary) (I), n.1-2-3-4, BV 267	M-D	2
Preludes, Op. 37, BV 181: a choice of 6 preludes	M-D	3
Fantasie nach Johann Sebastian Bach, BV 253	M-D	1
Ten Variationen über ein Präludium von Chopin (Klavierübung Teil 5), BV 213a	D	7

In the Busoni Competition, this group of repertoire was categorized by composer, and the competition required all contestants to play one of Busoni's works in this round.

60. Wasserscheid, Nachtsheim, Semrau, Meier-Krüger, Telekom Beethoven, 8-11. "Repertoire," 16th International Beethoven Piano Competition Vienna, <https://beethoven-comp.at/repertoire/>.

61. Maurice Hinson, 149-152.

In Hinson's book, this repertoire falls however into different difficulty levels. Two of them are "D" (Difficult), one of them is "M-D" (Moderately Difficult) to "D", and the rest are "M-D."

Different difficulty levels of repertoire on the list also influence the choice of repertoire of contestants; the top three repertoire choices in the 2019 Busoni competition are those pieces with "D" markings.<sup>62</sup> Apparently, many contestants wish to make a good impression on the jury and audiences with a more difficult piece.

In the first round of the Telekom Beethoven Competition, the "Item 3" category (see Table 2) is a group consisting of Beethoven's Fantasy, Variations, Rondos, and Bagatelles.<sup>63</sup> The difficulty level (see below Table 8) ranges from "Int." (Intermediate) to "M-D."<sup>64</sup> Although this group appears to be easier compositions, the category is more likely based on the performance time of each piece. Competitors have only forty-five minutes of performance time in the first round and must include a late Beethoven Sonata and a Bach Prelude and Fugue. It is impossible for the competition to put any additional piece longer than twenty minutes in Item 3.

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62. "Competition Rules," Concorso Busoni 2019.

63. Wasserscheid, Nachtsheim, Semrau, Meier-Krüger, 8-11.

64. Maurice Hinson, 91-97.

Table 8

*Difficulty Level and Timings of Telekom Beethoven Competition Item 3<sup>65</sup>*

Works from Item 3	Hinson Difficulty Level	Timings	Frequency of Selection
Seven Bagatelles, Op. 33	M-D	20 min.	1
Six Variations on an Original Theme in F Major, Op. 34	M-D	14 min.	2
Two Rondos in C Major, Op. 51, No. 1, and No. 2	Int. to M-D	14 min.	0
Fantasy in G Minor/B Major, Op. 77	M-D	8 min.	4
Eleven Bagatelles, Op. 119	Int.	15 min.	2
Six Bagatelles, Op. 126	M-D	15 min.	9
Andante favori in F Major, WoO 57	M-D	7 min.	3
Ten Variations in B-flat Major on 'La stessa, la stessissima' from the opera <i>Falstaff</i> by Antonio Salieri, WoO 73.	Not Designated	10 min.	0
Seven Variations on the quartet 'Kind, willst du ruhig schlafen?' from Peter Winter's opera <i>Das Unterbrochene Opferfest</i> , WoO 75	Int.	11 min.	0
32 Variations in C Minor, WoO 80	M-D	13 min.	3
Rondo a Capriccio in G Major, Op. 129 ( <i>Rage over a Lost Penny</i> ), and Polonaise in C Major, Op. 89	D	12 min.	0

For a WFIMC competition, the repertoire difficulty would usually not be lower than Moderately Difficult. Even though there are some easier pieces listed in the repertoire choices, contestants typically automatically skip the easier choice(s). Of course, difficulty level of repertoire is not the only or the top priority of contestants when choosing their competition repertoire. There are still other aspects that need to be considered. But undeniably, many contestants believe if they could master a more difficult piece, they would have a better chance to advance in a competition.

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65. Maurice Hinson, 91-97.

## The Designation of Repertoire in Different Rounds

Although the WFIMC has some guidelines on repertoire for their member competitions, it still allows each competition to make its own designation of repertoire. Some similar characteristics between different competitions exist, but most of them have their own specific design style for the repertoire requirements. Additionally, the names of each round vary some from competition to competition (see Table 9).

Table 9

### *Designation of Different Names for Rounds in Sampled Competitions*

Competitions	Telekom Beethoven	Géza Anda	Busoni	Long-Thibaud-Crespin
Rounds				
Preliminary (Non-Public)	Qualification Round / (Application) Video	(Application) Video	(Application) Video	Live Pre-Selections (auditions in different cities)
Preliminary (Public)	N/A	N/A	Pre-Selections (100)	N/A
First Round	First Round (25)	First Round: Auditions (30)	Semi-Finals (27)	Qualifying-Auditions/ Éliminatoires (45)
Second Round	Second Round (12)	Second Round: Recitals (13)	Solo Finals (12)	Semi-Finals/ Demi finale (12)
Third Round (Semi-Finals)	Semi-Finals with Chamber Music (6)	Third Round: Semi-Finals (6)	Chamber Ensemble Finals (6)	N/A
Finals	Finale (3)	Fourth Round: Final Concert (3)	Grand Final (3)	Finale Recital (6) Finale Concerto (6)

(Numbers in the above table equal the total contestants selected for the respective round)

### Preliminary Round (Non-Public)

The preliminary non-public round often associated with the competition application itself is the actual first round of the competition although it is never named “First Round.” It is given different names by the various competitions (see Table 9 above), and contestants also thus call it various names such as video round, pre-selection round, qualification round, audition round, etc. Most of the WFIMC member competitions have this round, but some may not.<sup>66</sup> It could be said that the main aim of this particular round is for filtering the contestants. For example, hundreds of pianists always apply for the Warsaw International Chopin Competition every five years. It would

66. World Federation of International Music Competitions, <https://wfimc-fmcim.org/>.

not be possible to allow all of them to compete in Warsaw. The preliminary non-public video submitted with the Chopin Competition application is thus important. It allows pianists from all over the world to have an opportunity to participate and be invited for the public competition. Each competition must also use the preliminary round though to eliminate the pianists they do not feel are worthy enough for the competition in that particular year. Like the Chopin Competition, many competitions request contestants to send a video as the preliminary round. Other competitions still maintain the traditional live audition for the preliminary round, although it is often held in several different countries as does the Long-Thibaud-Crespin Competition.<sup>67</sup>

For this initial non-public round, competitions use different elements to ensure that the contestants they select have basic performance technique and a good understanding of music. Usually either one or more etudes, or a Classical sonata, are required in this round. In 2019, out of the fifty-nine piano competitions that were part of the WFIMC, forty-one required at least one etude in the preliminary (non-public) round.<sup>68</sup>

Different competitions have their own thoughts on what they consider interesting and important, as well as what they wish to listen to more than once. For the Telekom Beethoven Competition, it focuses on Beethoven, and thus the qualification round (application video recording) is in large part the repertoire of Beethoven.<sup>69</sup> For the Géza Anda Competition, the video recording selection to be submitted with the application requires three movements/works of different periods which permits competitors to show

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67. World Federation of International Music Competitions, <https://wfimc-fmcim.org/>.

68. Ibid.

69. Wasserscheid, Nachtsheim, Semrau, Meier-Krüger, 8-11.

their various abilities on different repertoire.<sup>70</sup> The Busoni Competition does not have any limitation on the video recording repertoire, as seen earlier in Table 5. For this competition, an important factor is how contestants organize their repertoire.<sup>71</sup> Regarding the Long-Thibaud-Crespin Competition (Table 6), they requested a slow movement from a classical sonata, a Chopin etude, as well as free choice repertoire for the preliminary live audition.

### First Round

Once again, different competitions give different names for different rounds, such as “First Round” or other substitutes. Here the first round means the first phase of performance that is open to the public.

In the WFIMC regulations, it specifies that the first public round shall not be less than twenty minutes.<sup>72</sup> Most of the competitions would not set a long performance time for the first live round because there are still a rather large number of contestants in this round. They do not have enough time to listen to longer programs. However, in some competitions, such as the International Robert Schumann Piano Competition and the Concours Géza Anda, their repertoire requirements’ performance time for the first public round totals much longer than twenty minutes. The competition chooses though not to hear all the first-round public music offered by the contestant. In 2018, the Concours Géza Anda jury decided which pieces from the prepared pieces they wanted to hear in the

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70. General conditions of participation, Concours Géza Anda.

71. Peter Paul Kainrath, interview by author, Bolzano, August 31, 2019.

72. “WFIMC Recommendations,” Heritage and Governance, accessed by October 22, 2019, <https://wfimc-fmcim.org/heritage-and-governance/>.

public first round. In the International Robert Schumann competition in Zwickau, on the other hand, the competitors may choose the pieces within four categories they would like to perform in this first round.

The first public round is an important round for competitors as it is often the first impression for the jury, and most definitely for the audience. If the competitors present themselves well, they might have a chance to last longer in the competition. Ashok Gupta, a British pianist who participated in the 2017 International Telekom Beethoven Competition, earned the honor of being one who passed the first round into the second round. But a serious memory problem occurred in his second public round. Somehow though, he still survived until the semi-final round. Jury member Lilya Zilberstein indicated, “We already heard his first round, and I know how good he is, so I couldn’t forget it after the first round, even though he was not so perfect in the second.”<sup>73</sup> Another jury member Akiko Ebi also stated, “For me, he played the best in the first round, then in the Semi-Finals, and then in the second round. He had many supporters in the jury.”<sup>74</sup>

Regarding first round repertoire, some of the competitions might purposely assign some (relatively) shorter piece options in order to fit the time limitation of the first round. For example, the time limitation of the First Round International Telekom Beethoven Competition (Table 2) is forty-five minutes. They do allow the last three Beethoven Sonatas in this first public round, but the *Hammerklavier* Sonata in B-flat Major, Op. 106, is reserved for the longer second round.<sup>75</sup> Other competitions have a similar (relatively)

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73. Lilya Zilberstein, interview by author, Bonn, December 10, 2017.

74. Akiko Ebi, interview by author, Bonn, December 8, 2017.

75. Wasserscheid, Nachtsheim, Semrau, Meier-Krüger, 8-11.

shorter piece requirement in the first round, but without options. For example, the Busoni Competition (Table 5) has only one assigned/obligatory piece in the “Pre-Selections” first (public) round; while in the second round (“Semi-Finals”), there are three obligatory group choices for the more expansive time.<sup>76</sup> As another example of a competition having a first round mandatory shorter piece, the 2019 Long-Thibaud-Crespin Piano Concours (Table 6) had every competitor in the first round play the same obligatory piece: Haydn’s Variations in F Minor, Hob. XVII: 6. On the other hand, for the rest of the first public round, Long-Thibaud-Crespin contestants could play whatever they wished as long as it did not exceed the time limitation (twenty minutes total).<sup>77</sup>

## Second Round

In the second public round there are already fewer competitors, yet the performance time per competitor is often longer as mentioned above. The Long-Thibaud-Crespin second round (“Semi-Finals”) is forty minutes. In the Telekom Beethoven, Géza Anda, and Busoni competitions, the second round consists of an hour-long program (including intervals between pieces). Given the hour-long program, the Géza Anda Concours (Table 3) appropriately named this second round “Recitals.” The Busoni competition calls it the “Solo Finals” round (or “Solo Finale” in Italian), reflecting its ample weight as well.

As previously relayed, the longer time permits longer pieces in this second round. In the Telekom Beethoven Competition (Table 2), the aforementioned *Hammerklavier*

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76. “Competition Rules,” Concorso Busoni 2019.

77. “Piano 2019,” Thibaud.

Sonata is possible as well as the lengthy *Diabelli* Variations by Beethoven.<sup>78</sup> This similar design of more time allotted and thus lengthier work possibilities in the second round also appears in some other competitions such as the International Schumann Piano Competition in Zwickau and the Warsaw International Chopin Piano Competition.

While the Busoni Competition's second round (Solo Finals) has more obligatory composers and genres (Table 5), it also gives many free-choice opportunities, for example: one Bach/Busoni transcription; one classical sonata; one contemporary work; and one free choice piece.<sup>79</sup> Competitors thus have more freedom to choose what they would like to present. Another competition that is similar in this way is the International Paderewski Piano Competition in Bydgoszcz, Poland. The second round ("Second Stage") repertoire allows for some free choice, provided that three different periods are represented.<sup>80</sup>

In the Géza Anda Competition, interestingly, the second round ("Recitals") has the exact same repertoire choices as the first round. The jury selects the repertoire for the second round after consultation with the contestant, and without duplicating music performed in the first round. As the classical through contemporary eras are represented (Table 3), it gives the opportunity for the contestant to show the variety of musical character, rather than just one or two composers/styles. A similar competition, the Concours International de Piano d'Épinal in France, also combines first round and second

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78. Wasserscheid, Nachtsheim, Semrau, Meier-Krüger, 8-11.

79. "Competition Rules," Concorso Busoni 2019.

80. "Rules and Scores," Paderewski Piano Competition, <http://konkurspaderewskiego.pl/en/competition/the-11th-competition/rules-and-tunes/>.

round repertoire choices (no duplication allowed between the two rounds).<sup>81</sup> Also the Scottish International Piano Competition in Glasgow has combined first and second round repertoire choices while also allowing for some free choice.<sup>82</sup> The difficulty for competitors in the Géza Anda Competition, however, is: 1) both the first round and second round repertoire must only be from the required list of pieces without any free choice repertoire; and 2) the jury members ultimately decide what repertoire will be played in the second round. Additionally, the Géza Anda jury has, at times, asked contestants to start from a second movement which could heighten the difficulties.<sup>83</sup>

In the Long-Thibaud-Crespin Competition (Table 6), as mentioned previously, each competitor has forty minutes to perform in its second round (“Semi-Finals”). It includes chamber music (one movement of a specified quintet by Brahms, Franck, or Dvořák) in this round, thus giving chamber music an earlier appearance than the other competitions sampled. The Géza Anda Competition does not feature chamber music, although it does require a Mozart concerto. (The chamber repertoire choices for the Beethoven Telekom and the Busoni Competition will be discussed in the relevant “Third Round” section below.) The Long-Thibaud-Crespin also features in its second round at least one French composer’s work from a lengthy list of choices, as well as work(s) of free choice.<sup>84</sup> As with the Beethoven Telekom competition, the jury for the Long-

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81. “Program of the Competition,” Épinal International Piano Competition, <https://www.concours-international-piano-epinal.org/competition-2019/program-of-the-competition/>.

82. “Repertoire,” Scottish International Piano Competition, <http://www.scottishinternationalpianocompetition.com/the-2017-competition-2/tickets/>.

83. Daumand Liepiņš, interview by author, Zurich, June 6, 2018.

84. “Piano 2019,” Thibaud.

Thibaud-Crespin evaluates the contestant's solo ability (in various styles) as well as the ensemble ability in the same round.

### Third Round

Most of the competitions have six competitors selected for this round. Some competitions have guaranteed cash prizes at this stage. Dating back to at least 1966 when the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition featured piano quintets in the Semi-Finals, piano competitions started to add chamber music in the competition repertoire. Some competitions combine solo repertoire and chamber music in the same round; others maintain separate rounds for chamber music. In the 2017 Telekom Beethoven Competition, chamber music was included with solo repertoire to form a one-hour recital in the third/semi-final round. Perhaps due to time limitations, only the third and fourth movements of Beethoven's Sonata in C Major for Piano and Violoncello, Op. 102, No. 1, were included in the required repertoire and thus performance. In 2019, this competition adjusted the program by giving more emphasis to chamber music by adding an additional round in which a contemporary solo piano work since 1980 (maximum ten minutes in length) would be paired with a choice from five Beethoven trios, thereby also providing more chamber repertoire options.<sup>85</sup> Competitors would then play the Beethoven trio in entirety, instead of only playing two movements as in the 2017 competition edition.

Chamber music repertoire also appears in the third round of the Busoni competition. The Busoni competition named this round the "Chamber Ensemble Finals."

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85. "Repertoire," Deutsch Telekom, November 2, 2018, <https://www.telekom-beethoven-competition.de/itbcb-en/participation/repertoire>.

In this chamber/third round, the Busoni competition provides a choice of five piano quintets. No solo repertoire is included in this round.<sup>86</sup> For the 2014/15 Busoni competition, this round featured concerti instead of chamber music. The Busoni contestants needed to prepare two piano concerti in 2014/15, with one to be played in the first concerto round, and then if they were chosen for the Grand Final, they played their other concerto selection.<sup>87</sup>

The Géza Anda 2018 Competition had the same designation as the Busoni competition 2014/15 with two concerto rounds in the third/semi-final round and no chamber music such as a sonata, trio, or quintet. In this semi-final round, the competition provided four Mozart piano concerti (Table 3) for competitors' choice.<sup>88</sup>

## Final

The WFIMC repertoire rules mention that the member competitions should “present a final round with orchestra, unless the competition’s discipline makes this requirement unsuitable.”<sup>89</sup> Thus, all the member competitions have at least one concerto designated for the last round of the competition.

In the final round of the Long-Thibaud-Crespin Competition in 2019, all six finalists had to play a one-hour solo recital (“Finale Recital”) and one concerto with orchestra (“Finale Concerto”). However, these events were held on separate days. The

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86. “Competition Rules,” Concorso Busoni 2019.

87. “Competition Rules,” Concorso Busoni 2015.

88. General conditions of participation, Concours Géza Anda.

89. “WFIMC Statutes,” Heritage and Governance, accessed by October 22, 2019, <https://wfimc-fmcim.org/heritage-and-governance/>.

other three sampled competitions (Telekom Beethoven, Géza Anda, and Busoni) had only three finalists in the final stage, performing only one concerto without any other program although the Busoni does utilize the wording “Chamber Ensemble Finals” and “Grand Final” for its last two rounds.

## Chamber Music

In recent decades, collaborative piano programs have grown in popularity in many music conservatories as well as in piano competitions. Mrs. Ylda Novik, a pianist, teacher, and a critic who was based in Chevy Chase, Maryland, interviewed the jury members of the 1973 University of Maryland International Piano Competition, which only included solo repertoire. She asked jury members if the competition repertoire should include an ensemble. Elliott Galkin, jury member, conductor, and music critic, answered, “The idea of a competition that would involve all the other facets of musicianship could be devised as an interesting experiment.”<sup>90</sup> Although the early days of piano competitions were mostly focused on solo repertoire, the idea of developing ensemble skills and even incorporating them into competitions, developed gradually.

Pianist Beveridge Webster said in 1980:

I think that there has been a remarkable expansion in chamber music groups of all types, and these of course very often include pianists... You may have noticed that more and more of the front-ranking pianists are indulging in chamber music, and sometimes in what you might call joint recitals with very celebrated artists. Very often a concert career can become closely related to this.<sup>91</sup>

In recent international piano competitions, it is more common to see chamber music repertoire requirements. In tandem with this trend, pianists are no longer only required to be a perfect soloist; the ability to cooperate with others is also very important.

Of the fifty-nine WFIMC piano competitions, twenty-three of them require contestants to play chamber music with ensemble groups hired by the respective

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90. Ylda Novik, “What the Judges Say,” *The American Music Teacher* (June/July 1974): 14-15.

91. Bob Doerschuk, “Conservatory Education: Behind the Scenes at Juilliard and Eastman,” *Contemporary Keyboard* 6 (July 1980): 32.

competition. Some require contestants to collaborate in a duo with a singer or an instrumentalist, while others require contestants to play as part of a trio or quintet (mostly with strings).

Table 10a

*Chamber Music Formations in Current WFIMC Piano Competitions (2017-2020)*

Ensemble Types	Appearance in WFIMC Piano Competition
Duo	9
Trio	3
Quartet	1
Quintet	12
Others	2

Table 10b

*Specific Competitions and Chamber Ensemble Types*

Competition	Ensemble Types
International Edvard Grieg Piano Competition 2020	Duo for Piano and Violin
Ferruccio Busoni International Piano Competition 2019	Quintet for Piano and Strings
International Telekom Beethoven Competition Bonn 2019	Duo for Piano and Violin
Johann Nepomuk Hummel International Piano Competition 2020	Trio for Piano and Strings
Honens Piano Competition 2018	1) Duo, Piano collaborates with an instrumentalist/ Piano collaborates with a singer. 2) Piano collaborates with Woodwind Quintet
Cleveland International Piano Competition 2020	Quintet for Piano and Strings
Van Cliburn Piano Competition 2017	Quintet for Piano and Strings
Concours de Genève 2018	Mozart's Quintet KV 452 for Piano, Oboe, Clarinet, Horn, and Bassoon
Hamamatsu International Piano Competition 2019	Quintet for Piano and Strings
International Maj Lind Piano Competition 2017	Quintet for Piano and Strings
Hong Kong International Piano Competition 2019	Duo for Piano and Guitar
International Piano Competition Prize Jaén 2020	Quintet for Piano and Strings
Leeds International Piano Competition 2018	1) Piano Quintet or Trio (with strings), 2) Duo (with Violin or Cello)
Concours Long-Thibaud-Crespin 2019	Quintet for Piano and Strings
International Mozart Competition Salzburg 2020	Concerto performed with String Quartet
The Gurwitz 2020 International Piano Competition	Commissioned Chamber Ensemble Piece for Piano, Clarinet, and World Music Instruments (percussion)
Paloma O'Shea Santander International Piano Competition 2018	Quintet for Piano and Strings
Seoul International Music Competition 2019	Duo for Piano and Clarinet
Sydney International Piano Competition 2020	Duo for Piano and Violin/Cello
International Franz Liszt Piano Competition 2020	Trio for Piano and Strings
Concours International de Piano Clara Haskil 2019	Duo for Piano and Violin
Aram Khachaturian International Competition 2020	Duo for Piano and Violin
Arthur Rubinstein International Piano Master Competition 2020	Quintet for Piano and Strings

## Contemporary Repertoire and Commissioned Works

The “Member Competition Recommendations” of the WFIMC states, “The repertoire list should, if possible, include a commissioned work, in order to enlarge the repertoire of the competition’s discipline.”<sup>92</sup> Thus, many of the member competitions have at least one commissioned work listed in their required repertoire list. Some of the World-Federated International Music Competitions do not have a commissioned work, but they require a performance of contemporary music composed in either the late-twentieth century or early-twenty-first century.

Commissioned works usually are required in the second or third round. Contemporary music choices also typically appear in the second or third round. For jury members as for anyone else, newly commissioned works are not familiar repertoire. This fact allows contestants to interpret music in very different ways, although the composer might dispute this point. It is more difficult for jury members to thus judge a performance as right or wrong, or stylistically appropriate. They can only try to follow the score or perhaps check a YouTube recording in advance, but the most common way to judge is by their instincts and cumulated musical knowledge. One good thing is that commissioned works are not the only elements in a competition round, unless it is a competition focused on contemporary music such as the International Piano Competition of Orléans, France.

For the 2017 Telekom Beethoven competition, the contemporary works were featured in the semi-final (third) round. Contestants had to choose one or more

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92. “WFIMC Recommendations,” Heritage and Governance, accessed by October 22, 2019, <https://wfimc-fmcim.org/heritage-and-governance/>.

unspecified works out of a list of ten major twentieth-century composers, as well as one additional contemporary work by any composer given it was composed after 1980.<sup>93</sup>

In the 2018 Géza Anda Competition, contemporary repertoire was in the first and/or second round (depending on the jury members' request). The competition required either two of four Bartók works, or a contemporary work from the last sixty years.<sup>94</sup>

For the 2018/19 Busoni competition, in the Solo Finals (second) round, there were twelve options of contemporary music (Table 4). These twelve contemporary works were also selected by the Concours international de piano d'Orléans (France), a competition for contemporary music as previously referenced. The date of composition of the works is from 2002 to 2018.<sup>95</sup>

The Long-Thibaud-Crespin Competition required one commissioned work in the final recital round: Étude No. 2 (*Réminiscences*) by Michaël Jarrell (b. 1958, Geneva, Switzerland). Contestants received the music a few months before the competition. In the semi-final round, contestants also could choose contemporary pieces by Messiaen, Dutilleux, and Boulez, from a selection of French composers ranging from Saint-Saëns up to Boulez (Table 6).<sup>96</sup>

Many competitions offer commissioned works that feature the specific country's character. For example, the commissioned work of the 2020 International Edvard Grieg Piano Competition was composed by Ørjan Matre, a Norwegian composer; and the

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93. Wasserscheid, Nachtsheim, Semrau, Meier-Krüger, 8-11.

94. General conditions of participation, Concours Géza Anda.

95. "Orléans Concours International," Concorso Busoni.

96. "Piano 2019," Thibaud.

contemporary work of the 2017 Tbilisi (Georgia, Eurasia) International Piano Competition was composed by Mikheil Shugliashvili, a Georgian composer.

Currently, there are twenty-eight federated piano competitions that require a commissioned work out of a total of fifty-nine piano competitions.

Table 11

*The Use of Commissioned Piano Works in WFIMC*

Competition	Commissioned Work	Contemporary Work
International Maria Canals Barcelona		Composed after 1990
International Edvard Grieg Piano Competition 2020	Notturmo (2020) by Ørjan Matre (Norwegian composer)	
Ferruccio Busoni International Piano Competition 2019		Twelve contemporary works after 2002
International Telekom Beethoven Competition Bonn 2019		Composed after 1980
Queen Elisabeth Piano Competition 2020	Two required works by Pierre Jodkowski (sent after the Pre-Selections) and Bruno Mantovani (assigned following Semi-Finals)	Two etudes by specified composers in first round: 1. One etude 1894-1918 2. One etude 1969-2003
George Enescu International Piano Competition 2020		Three works: 1. 20 <sup>th</sup> -century work 2. Enescu work 3. Scriabin or Debussy Etude
Paderewski International Piano Competition 2019	<i>Moving frames</i> composed by Michał Dobrzyński (Polish composer)	
Dublin International Piano Competition 2018	One work from Irish composers: Ann Cleare, Deirdre Gribbin, Brian Irvine, and Conor Linehan	
Cleveland International Piano Competition 2020	One commissioned work (not yet announced)	
Concours International de Piano d'Épinal 2019	Composed by Elise Bertrand (French composer)	
Concours de Genève 2018	Composed by Victor Cordero (Swiss composer)	Works after 1950
Scottish International Piano Competition 2020	One commissioned work (not yet announced)	
Hamamatsu International Piano Competition 2019	Composed by Fuyuhiko Sasaki (Japanese composer)	20 <sup>th</sup> -century works (includes Japanese composers)
International Maj Lind Piano Competition 2017	Composed by Kaija Saariaho (Finnish composer)	
Hong Kong International Piano Competition 2019	Composed by Chen Yi (Chinese composer)	
International Piano Competition Istanbul	Composed by Ali Darmar (Turkish composer)	
International Piano Competition Prize Jaén 2020	Composed by Sebastián Maríné (Spanish composer)	
International Piano Competition for Young Pianists in Memory of Vladimir Horowitz 2021	A piece by a Ukrainian composer	20th/21st -century works
Concours musical international de Montréal l'édition Piano (2017)	A piece by a Canadian composer	
ARD Music Competition	Composed by Pascal Dusapin (French composer)	
Concours Long-Thibaud-Crespin 2019	Composed by Michaël Jarrell (Swiss composer)	
Unisa International Music Competition	A prescribed South African work for piano	
Concours international de piano d'Orléans		All contemporary works
BNDES International Piano Competition of Rio de Janeiro 2017		One contemporary piece written since 1980
International Mozart Competition Salzburg 2020	Composed by Krzysztof Meyer (Polish composer)	
The Gurwitz 2020 International Piano Competition	Composed by Ethan Wickman (American composer)	Work written after 1950

<b>Competition</b>	<b>Commissioned Work</b>	<b>Contemporary Work</b>
Paloma O'Shea Santander International Piano Competition 2018		A 20 <sup>th</sup> -century work (from early to late)
China Shenzhen International Piano Concerto Competition 2020	Composed by Zhang Guangyi (Chinese composer)	
Sydney International Piano Competition 2020		Australian composers' works
Takamatsu International Piano Competition 2018	Composed by Noriko Koide (Japanese composer)	
Tbilisi International Piano Competition 2017	A work by Mikheil Shugliashvili (Georgian composer)	
Isangyun Competition 2019		Works by Isang Yun
Valencia International Piano Competition "Iturbi Prize" 2015		Works after 1940
Gian Battista Viotti International Music Competition 2019		Works in 20 <sup>th</sup> century
Concours International de Piano Clara Haskil 2019	Composed by Thierry Escaich (French composer)	
International M. K. Čiurlionis Piano and Organ Competition 2020		One or several selected pieces by 19 <sup>th</sup> -21 <sup>st</sup> century composers
Aram Khachaturian International Competition 2020		20 <sup>th</sup> -century work
Zhuhai International Mozart Competition for Young Musicians 2019	A Chinese work	
Concours Géza Anda 2018		One contemporary work from last sixty years
Arthur Rubinstein International Piano Master Competition 2020	Composed by Israeli composer	
"Giorgos Thymis" International Piano Competition 2019		20 <sup>th</sup> or 21 <sup>st</sup> century* – One work by an important composer of the competitor's choice.

## Obligatory Piece

Unless a competition permits entirely free-choice repertoire, it is common to see piano competitions request contestants to perform some obligatory pieces. Some competitions have a wider range of choice. For example, in the “Solo Finals” (second) round of the 2019 Busoni Competition, it requested competitors select a sonata from the Classical period rather than specifying a particular sonata or composer. One of many contrasting examples of a single obligatory work is the 2019 Long-Thibaud-Crespin. It required everyone play Haydn’s Variations in F Minor, Hob. XVII: 6, which also meant that the jury and the audience listened to the same piece forty-three times.

Pianist Gary Graffman, who himself benefitted from experiences such as the Leventritt competition, has stated: “The competition should be geared to help individual contestants achieve their best, rather than to demand that they conform to stringent regulations.”<sup>97</sup> Graffman has further expressed his thoughts on repertoire requirements of competitions:

The imposed material is sometimes spelled out so specifically that no leeway is possible. All contestants *must* be prepared to play, say, the Chopin G Minor Ballade. Why on earth should this be necessary? If the judges want to hear a big Chopin piece, it shouldn’t make any difference which one it is. Aside from the obvious unfairness, of one contestant’s having played that ballade since he was ten and another one’s having to learn it especially for the occasion (although the latter may have played the other three ballades since she was ten), it must also be horribly boring for the jury. Naturally, each contestant’s abilities to play different kinds of repertoire should be explored in depth. But it seems to me that this can best be done through requirements that are broad, rather than specific.<sup>98</sup>

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97. Gary Graffman, *I Really Should be Practicing* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1981), 89-90.

98. Ibid.

Indeed, although one specific obligatory piece may make it easier for the jury to compare and judge, it also could be very boring for the jury and the audience. In recent piano competitions, many of them have required obligatory pieces, but they do not force every contestant to play the same one. If competitions give more options regarding the choice of repertoire requirements, contestants could select their best one from the competition repertoire list, and this choice would also allow jury members and audiences a break from listening to the same piece numerous times, thereby increasing the interest in competitions and piano-playing.

## CHAPTER IV – CHOICE OF REPERTOIRE BY COMPETITORS AND INFLUENTIAL FACTORS IN PERFORMER REPERTOIRE CHOICES

This chapter focuses on how competitors choose their repertoire within the delineations of repertoire requirements. Four WFIMC competitions (Bonn Beethoven, Géza Anda, Busoni, and Long-Thibaud-Crespin) are examined in this light. In consideration are performance styles, how competitors design their repertoire in each round, individual jury members' thoughts, and the effects of specific pieces on the listener.

### Performer's Technique and Interpretive Style

Every pianist has a different hand shape. It is one reason, among others of course, why each person is an expert at different technical skills. For example, a pianist with a large hand can generally play octaves easily due to the hand's naturally wide expansion. Thus, Maurice Hinson in his *Guide to the Pianist's Repertoire* advises pianists considering the Chopin Etude in B Minor, Op. 25, No. 10: "Small hands should forget this one!"<sup>99</sup> Although a large-handed pianist can usually play octaves easily, other technique problems, such as playing Mozart which necessitates transparent, intricate, and delicate finger-work, could be a challenge. And if the fingers are thick, they also can have difficulty negotiating between the black keys.

Japanese pianist Shiori Kuwahara (see Table 51), Second Prize winner of the 2018/19 Busoni competition, mentioned: "Actually, my technique is not so good. Not like the typical Korean young pianists."<sup>100</sup> When she selected the Busoni piece (Table 5

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99. Maurice Hinson, 184.

100. Shiori Kuwahara, interview by author, Bolzano, August 29, 2019.

and Table 7) and the contemporary work (Table 4), she avoided choosing a very technical piece.<sup>101</sup> Individual technical skills are not the only consideration. Although Kuwahara may not have a “perfect technique,” she knows her interpretive skills:

I think I’m not so good on technique, but I have energy. Usually most Japanese girls are very small and very thin (or tiny). They don’t have much energy or power. So, my character is kind of Russian or German—very energetic and powerful. And I like to choose the pieces which have a big story or embedded meanings, like Liszt or Rachmaninoff. I like them. Also, I think these pieces could easily tell what kind of personality I have.<sup>102</sup>

For the Vienna Beethoven Piano Competition and the Telekom Beethoven Competition, both competition titles include the name of Beethoven, so it is apparent that his music is featured. Pianists who would like to participate in Beethoven competitions are attracted to Beethoven’s music and believe themselves to have the musical character for interpreting Beethoven. Alberto Ferro, the First Prize and Audience Prize winner of the 2017 International Telekom Beethoven Piano Competition, said that he thought at the time of the competition he interpreted Beethoven’s music better than other music. But, as he is still young, his musical personality might change in the future.<sup>103</sup>

Another Telekom Beethoven competitor, Bruno Vlahek, said that the reason why he entered this competition was because Beethoven was his favorite composer.<sup>104</sup>

Takayoshi Suzuki and Daiki Kato also expressed their love for Beethoven’s music.<sup>105</sup>

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101. Shiori Kuwahara, interview by author, Bolzano, August 29, 2019.

102. Ibid.

103. Alberto Ferro, interview by author, Munich, September 8, 2019.

104. Bruno Vlahek, interview by author, Bonn, December 6, 2017.

105. Sources: Takayoshi Suzuki, interview by author, Bonn, December 3, 2017; and Daiki Kato, interview by author, Bonn, December 8, 2017.

Performers try, when possible, to select the repertoire with which they feel a close connection, so they can present these masterworks well to their audience. Seung-Hyuk Na, a South Korean competitor in the 2018/19 Busoni competition, stated that he liked choosing pieces with a minor key and that had some meaning for him.<sup>106</sup>

Brahms Quintet [in F Minor, Op. 34]. Okay, they [the Busoni competition] had like five [quintet] choices. Schumann, Brahms, Dvořák, Franck and Shostakovich. As I said earlier, I really love the minor key. Ridiculous, right? Well, it is off-topic, but I really love the minor key, which is not just “Oh! So sad!” But it is like finding hope during the performance. I really love those kinds of feelings. And the *Chorale* [Bach/Busoni, *Choralvorspiel No. 5 “Ich ruf zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ,”* BWV 639] was like exactly what I just said.

Okay. For [the] Schumann [Quintet in E-flat Major, Op. 44]: Schumann is not suitable for me. That’s like happy, happy! [He starts to sing the melody of the Schumann Quintet.] Well, I already know the masterpiece, but it was not my taste.<sup>107</sup>

Each performer’s technique and interpretive style influence their choice of repertoire.

In a WFIMC competition, competitors are well-educated musicians; they all have their own thoughts on different repertoire choices. Sometimes their choices could help them build a good impression in front of the jury and audience, sometimes they may not. Repertoire choices that highlight a performer’s strengths can be helpful. One contestant of the Long-Thibaud-Crespin Competition thought, in retrospect, that his strategy of selecting the repertoire was not very good. At the organized individual comment meeting time with jury members, he learned that his choice did not show his strong points to the audience.

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106. Seung-Hyuk Na, interview by author, Bolzano, September 2, 2019.

107. Ibid.

After talking to the jury members, they told me my choice in the first round, I mean the Scherzo [Chopin, Scherzo No. 3 in C-sharp Minor, Op. 39], was not the best one because it doesn't show my strong points. It is a brilliant piece, but it doesn't also show the other sides of myself. So, it was not the best choice. And it's true that I didn't choose it in a strategic way; I chose what I wanted to play. I mean, you have to like the piece, otherwise, even if it is a good one for the competition, you cannot play it.<sup>108</sup>

Pianist, teacher, and writer Dean Elder wrote in his report on the 1976 Montréal International Competition that “[t]oo often it is the academically-correct rather than the artistically-inspired player who wins first prize.”<sup>109</sup> Although many competitions are trying to look for some special pianist with a unique voice, a good technique is basically an indispensable element for entering a competition.

### Repertoire Specifications

Some competitions have one obligatory piece that every competitor needs to play, such as in the 2019 Long-Thibaud-Crespin Competition where, as has been mentioned, every contestant was required to play Haydn's Variations in F Minor, Hob. XVII: 6 in the public first round.<sup>110</sup> Some competitions, such as the International Telekom Beethoven Piano Competition, organize obligatory groups of pieces for competitors, who then select from the group (see Table 2).<sup>111</sup> The grouping of repertoire in each round by various

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108. Ryutaro Suzuki, interview by author, Paris, November 12, 2019.

109. Dean Elder, “Report from Montreal,” *Clavier* 15 (November 1976): 33.

110. “Piano 2019,” Thibaud.

111. Wasserscheid, Nachtsheim, Semrau, Meier-Krüger, 8-11.

competitions could be based on composers, genres, periods, style, or the length of repertoire.

#### Telekom Beethoven Competition 2017

In both the Vienna Beethoven and Telekom Beethoven competitions, the repertoire is based on Beethoven and grouped by time period.<sup>112</sup> In a composer-specific competition like these two, competitors generally do not have much choice, except in the fact that they are hopefully choosing a composer whose works they generally love. For Beethoven's sonatas in the first (public) round of the Telekom Beethoven Competition, competitors could only choose one of the three late sonatas, Op. 109, Op. 110 and Op. 111. Six competitors out of twenty-four total in the Telekom Beethoven Competition were invited to interview for this research. All interviewed kept a previously learned late Beethoven sonata for this particular competition.<sup>113</sup>

A first round such as the Telekom Beethoven though is actually easier for the jury than other competitions. It is easier to compare competitors when they are all performing a few pieces of the same style (i.e. late Beethoven sonatas) or even some first rounds with free choice that might result in the same piece, instead of one contestant playing a Mozart sonata and another contestant playing a Liszt Transcendental Etude. One of the jury members Lilya Zilberstein said, "It is clear that [the three late Beethoven sonatas]

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112. Sources: Jan Jiracek von Arnim, *Internationaler Beethoven Klavierwettbewerb Wien 28. Mai – 8 Juni 2017* (Wien: mdw – Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst Wien, 2017); and Wasserscheid, Nachtsheim, Semrau, Meier-Krüger, 8-11.

113. Sources: Alberto Ferro, interview by author, Bonn, September 8, 2019; Bruno Vlahek, interview by author, Bonn, December 6, 2017; Takayoshi Suzuki, interview by author, Bonn, December 3, 2017; Daiki Kato, interview by author, Bonn, December 8, 2017; Ronaldo Rolim, interview by author, Bonn, December 9, 2017; and Marijan Đuzel, interview by author, Bonn, December 5, 2017.

appeared in the first round, so we could directly see the ability of the contestants, because it is difficult.”<sup>114</sup>

Aside from the three late Beethoven sonatas, two other items were required in the first round of the Telekom Beethoven Competition (Table 2). Contestants had to select a prelude and fugue from the *Well-Tempered Clavier* by J. S. Bach, as well as one other Beethoven composition (either one of eleven specific works such as: the Seven Bagatelles, Op. 33, and the Andante favori in F Major WoO 57; or both the Rondo a capriccio in G Major, Op. 129, and the Polonaise in C Major, Op. 89.).

The second round required either another Beethoven sonata (with the exclusion of a listed group of Beethoven sonatas that included No. 1 in F Minor, Op. 2, No. 1, and the Op. 14 sonatas, among others) or the Diabelli Variations in C Minor, Op. 120. Additionally, the second round offered the choice of one or more works by nineteenth-century composers (Brahms, Czerny, Haydn, Hummel, Liszt, Felix Mendelssohn, Moscheles, Reger, Ries, Richard Strauss, Schubert, Robert Schumann, or Carl Maria von Weber). Thus, in this round, competitors could play two or more pieces, depending on the length of each piece. Japanese competitor Tomoki Kitamura met the standard length of a one-hour recital by playing only two pieces in this round: Beethoven’s Sonata in E Minor, Op. 90; and Brahms’ Sonata in F Minor, Op. 5. Because Brahms’ Sonata, Op. 5, is about thirty-eight minutes long, Kitamura could not fit in more pieces in this round. Italian competitor Alberto Ferro was the only competitor to play four pieces in this round.<sup>115</sup>

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114. Lilya Zilberstein, interview by author, Bonn, December 10, 2017.

115. Zweite Wettbewerbsrunde, Zentrale der Deutschen Telekom AG, Großer Saal, International Telekom Beethoven Piano Competition, 17:00 bis 20:20, December 5, 2017.

Performing more pieces could also give jury members the opportunity to better evaluate a contestant's breadth of style.

In the semi-final (third) round of the Telekom Beethoven Competition, there were four groups of music for competitors' choice (Table 2). Each competitor could play four or more pieces, depending on the length of the pieces. Two groups were contemporary music (see Table 2). Some contestants selected four contemporary pieces in this round along with their choice of a Beethoven sonata and the required Beethoven chamber work (to be touched upon later).<sup>116</sup>

In the Finale (fourth) round, contestants chose one of three selection groups: Beethoven Piano Concerti No. 1 and No. 3 as the first possible grouping; No. 2 and No. 4 as the second possibility; No. 5 and Beethoven's transcription for piano and orchestra (Op. 61a) of the Concerto for Violin and Orchestra in D Major, Op. 61, as the final possible group (see Table 2). Contestants had to prepare one group of concerti, and the pairing of each group influenced the contestant's final choice. As they could not always select their two favorite concerti due to the pairing in each group, they had to think even more carefully about which group they could learn and perform. Spanish contestant Bruno Vlahek said he loved the Beethoven Concerto No. 5 in E-flat Major and really wanted to perform it in the competition, but he really did not want to learn the violin concerto transcription, which was in the same group with Concerto No. 5. He thus gave

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116. Zweite Wettbewerbsrunde, Zentrale der Deutschen Telekom AG, Großer Saal, International Telekom Beethoven Piano Competition, 17:00 bis 20:20, December 5, 2017.

up choosing the third concerto group and selected the first concerto group instead (see Table 39, Vlahek's Repertoire for the Telekom Beethoven Competition.)<sup>117</sup>

#### Concours Géza Anda 2018

For the 2018 Géza Anda Competition, as previously described, the first round and second round shared the same repertoire choices although duplication is not permitted. The grouping of repertoire was based on composers from different time periods. While there are a total of eleven composers, not counting the possible contemporary free-choice selection, contestants had to choose one of the provided selections from each of six composers (Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann, and Brahms), as well as choose between designated works from: Chopin or Liszt; Debussy or Ravel; and Bartók or the free-choice contemporary work. Additionally, the contestant may decide what selection he or she will begin with in the first round. Then, to reiterate an earlier point, the jury decides from the remaining learned selections, after consultation with the contestant, exactly what will be performed thereafter for the first round, as well as for the second round (see Table 3).<sup>118</sup>

The Géza Anda Competition has more variety in repertoire and, at the same time, a very heavy repertoire requirement. Lithuanian contestant Daumants Liepiņš said the program he selected for this competition lasted about six to seven hours in length, and with that in mind, he first selected what he could from his old repertoire. When it was not

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117. Bruno Vlahek, interview by author, Bonn, December 6, 2017.

118. General conditions of participation, Géza Anda Competition 2018.

possible to use his old repertoire, then he simply had to learn new repertoire.<sup>119</sup> South Korean contestant Honggi Kim first started thinking about the Géza Anda Competition about one year prior when he saw the repertoire list which to him seemed feasible. He did not actually commit to doing the competition until five or six months before the start date when the application was due, but he then did utilize seasoned repertoire such as his concerti as well as learned new solo works.<sup>120</sup>

#### International Ferruccio Busoni Piano Competition 2018/19

For the Busoni competition, the repertoire choice was quite free for competitors. Apart from the chamber round and concerto round, every round had group(s) of choice and free-choice repertoire. The “Pre-Selections” round (first public round) designated a group of Chopin etudes, a group of twentieth-century etudes, and one free-choice piece. Competitors had to select one etude from each group. The total performance time of the Pre-Selections (first) round was twenty minutes (see Table 5).<sup>121</sup> Chinese contestant Xiaoya Wan decided to play Liszt’s “Dante” Sonata (*Après une lecture du Dante: Fantasia quasi Sonata*) as her free-choice piece, since she felt the most confident with it. As this work is about seventeen minutes long, it only left around three minutes for the other two etudes. Thus, Wan selected Chopin’s Etude in G-flat Major, Op. 25, No. 9, and Prokofiev’s Etude in C Minor, Op. 2, No. 4. Both etudes, as it turns out, are not often

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119. Daumants Liepiņš, interview by author, Zurich, June 6, 2018.

120. Honggi Kim, interview by author, Zurich, June 11, 2018.

121. “Competition Rules,” Concorso Busoni 2019.

selected by competitors at such competitions. The performance time for these two etudes together is only three minutes, so it fit the remaining time perfectly (see Table 50).<sup>122</sup>

In the semi-final round (second round), apart from the obligatory Busoni works, contestants could choose their own repertoire (keeping a total minimum of forty minutes and maximum of forty-five minutes). Most of the contestants featured a variety of style periods in this round, and few of the contestants chose only one long piece or a set. For example, Chinese contestant Zi Xu was one of the few who played only Liszt's Piano Sonata in B Minor, S. 178, after the obligatory Busoni piece.<sup>123</sup>

Three obligatory groups comprise the "Solo Finals" (third) round, with a required total program time of between fifty-five to sixty minutes for each contestant. The obligatory groups (with choices within each of the three groups) were: Bach/Busoni transcriptions; classical sonatas by designated composers (see Table 5); and specific contemporary works (see Table 4). For the remaining performance time, contestants could perform anything other than pre-selection (first round) repertoire.<sup>124</sup> Most of the competitors chose nineteenth-century works or early twentieth-century compositions in order to show variety and contrast in musical interpretation from the other selections.

Long-Thibaud-Crespin 2019

In the "Qualifying Auditions" round (the public first round), the performance time limit was twenty minutes, including the required Haydn Variations in F Minor, Hob.

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122. Xiaoya Wan, interview by author, Bolzano, August 31, 2019.

123. "Competition Rules," Concorso Busoni 2019.

124. Ibid.

XVII: 6. The rest of the time was free choice repertoire.<sup>125</sup> The timing of the Haydn Variations is ten minutes with repeats, so little time remained. Most contestants could only fit in one free-choice piece. Of course, no one chose a Classical piece in this round, given that everyone was already performing the Haydn.<sup>126</sup>

In the semi-final (second) round, the performance time limit was forty minutes. All Semi-Finalists had to play the first movement of a piano quintet chosen from a quintet selection group (Brahms' Piano Quintet in F Minor, Op. 34; Franck's Piano Quintet in F Minor, FWV 7; or Dvořák's Piano Quintet No. 2 in A Major, Op. 81). Additionally, contestants had to choose one or more compositions from a French-composer group (excluding Debussy and Ravel). Then, the remaining time was dedicated to works of the candidate's choosing (see Table 6). Some contestants chose the one minimum work from the required French list and two free-choice compositions. Other contestants chose two from the required French list and one free-choice piece (see Table 34 and 35).<sup>127</sup>

In the Final Recital round, the performance time was one hour for each candidate. The six finalists had to play: the commissioned work, *Étude No. 2 (Réminiscences)*, by Michaël Jarrell (a Swiss composer) at the beginning of the round; one minimum ten-minute work from Debussy or Ravel; and the rest were free choice (see Table 6). As the Jarrell and the Debussy/Ravel works combined might only be seventeen or eighteen minutes, candidates had more remaining time to program as they wished in this round.

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125. "Piano 2019," Thibaud.

126. Tristan Labouret, *Piano 2019 Long-Thibaud-Crespin* (Paris: Long-Thibaud-Crespin, 2019): 25-47.

127. Ibid.

Some chose pieces from different time periods, and some chose pieces from different genres (see Table 37).

### The Expectation of Individual Jury Members

Jury members of a WFIMC piano competition are mostly active musicians and/or music professors in universities and conservatories. Some of them are musicians but not necessarily pianists, and some of them might not be a musician or a pianist. One jury member of the Concours Géza Anda was a journalist. Competition organizers sometimes wish to have different viewpoints represented, particularly as the life of a musician might entail input from the press. Musicians do not only perform for professional musicians, they also play for music reviewers, CD company managers, etc.<sup>128</sup>

Each jury member for competitions is unique; they each have their own thoughts on music. In fact, if a competition changed their jury members to another set of members, the results might be totally different. In this research, several jury members of the sampled competitions talked about their thoughts regarding competitions and their criteria for selecting the competitors. Some of their thoughts were similar, yet some were not.

For all the sampled competitions, it was evident that jurors are always looking for someone who has a special voice. They are looking not only for a good pianist with the necessary technical skills, but a true musician. In an interview at the Telekom Beethoven Competition, Polish juror Ewa Kupiec gave an example: “When it comes to the very last sonatas [of Beethoven], you have to be a musician, not just a pianist. The repertoire is

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128. Wei-Tsu Fan, 119-128.

demanding, but we're looking for a musician."<sup>129</sup> Austrian jurist Till Fellner, who was the president of the jury members for the Busoni competition also said this, "For me, it is important that if he/she is a musician or not. I'm looking for an artist, for a musician, or the personality of potential artists. And second, to be able to realize what he feels or what he thinks. Number one is always the music."<sup>130</sup>

Peter Paul Kainrath, the artistic director of the Busoni competition, is also the vice-president of the WFIMC. He expressed his expectations for the winner:

I think it is the same for everybody. We're always trying to find a unique voice. The unique voice on a very high level—a professional speaker, knowledgeable of the text, the understanding of the historical period. We're looking for the pianist who is able to create an atmosphere for the audience. The audience is made by music. The audience comes because of the music. Impressive from stage.<sup>131</sup>

The above information gathered from different professional jury members shows that they are expecting someone who is a unique musician. Of course, in WFIMC competitions, everyone is at a high level, and everyone has their own unique voice, so one might argue that the results of the competitions are determined by the jury's collective taste. For example, Italian pianist Alberto Ferro was already the winner of the 2014/15 Busoni Competition, the 2016 Queen Elisabeth International Piano Competition, and the 2017 Telekom Beethoven Competition. But there were still many competitions in which he participated but did not win a prize. In the 2018 Géza Anda Competition, South Korean contestant Yeon-Min Park said, "Competition is really just a game; we have to

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129. Ewa Kupiec, interview by author, Bonn, December 6, 2017.

130. Till Fellner, interview by author, Bolzano, September 5, 2019.

131. Peter Paul Kainrath, interview by author, Bolzano, August 31, 2019.

meet the jury's taste. It is not about the level of playing. We have to give, for example, the food they would like to eat. Just that."<sup>132</sup>

Lithuanian pianist Georgijs Osokins was one of the competitors in the 2018/19 Busoni Competition. He passed the semi-final round with seven "yes" votes and four "no" votes; and in the solo final round, he did not pass due to only five "yes" votes, yet "six" no votes.<sup>133</sup> Vietnam pianist Dang Thai Son, one of the jury members of the Busoni Competition 2019, mentioned the following in his interview:

I have to say that it is very rare that what I think is 100% the same as other jurors. So, we have to accept that we are different, even on [the matter of] who is good and who is bad. The majority decides the list. Sometimes the contestants are not the same as my voting list. I don't care about the bottom, but if the contestant is having very high marks are on my list and didn't pass, I feel really pained. Like in the second round, one of my top contestants, Osokins [Georgijs Osokins, Latvian contestant]—he didn't pass. I understand why he could not pass because he has a really strong personality, a strong ego. Some like it, some hate it. So, he got an average score. It's not very high.<sup>134</sup>

No matter the competition results, for pianists developing their career it is still important for them to show the audience their own personality via performance. The repertoire choice of a pianist could reflect his or her own preference of music, and the performance itself could show the audience the performer's personality. In a competition, if one contestant's personality has attracted most of the jury members, then he or she would have more of a chance to survive longer in the competition. Dong Thai Son commented on this topic:

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132. Yeon-Min Park, interview by author, Zurich, June 11, 2018.

133. "Final Voting," Ferruccio Busoni Piano Competition, October 5, 2019, <https://www.concorsobusoni.it/en/prizes-ferruccio-busoni-international-piano-competition>.

134. Dang Thai Son, interview by author, Bolzano, September 3, 2019.

Not only in the Busoni Competition, but the choice of repertoire in [any] competition is really important. Even if they have their own rules of selection, sometimes free choice. But especially when there is a category, that is a really good clue. For example, like the jury, we want to see a profile of each one [each contestant]. So, they have to give the general impression. So, the profile has to show their different sides. Some contestants think that they have a kind of pianistic ability, and they make very effective choices so there is a kind of brilliance shining, but only on one side. We cannot see the musicality, where the lyric part is, the deepness of the musicality. It is better if the program has more variety, different types of music. It would be better.

Sometimes, not only here, but in other competitions, I could see that an excellent contestant chose an all unknown program and relied heavily on the contemporary music. I don't care, of course, I could see the reason that he could not pass the first round. And then the feedback from the jury is mostly very tough for them—to judge the contestant generally.<sup>135</sup>

Another jury member of the Busoni Competition, Nicolas Hodges, also said something related to repertoire choice: “What they choose to play—obviously, it also affects whether they play well, because they might choose a piece that is not suited to them. Then they make themselves a bad deal.”<sup>136</sup> If a contestant does not choose a work that show well their abilities, it will be difficult for them to be advanced to the next level of the competition.

In the 2019 Long-Thibaud-Crespin Piano Competition, the requirement of the lesser-known French repertoire and the quintet movement in the semi-final round (second round) limited the contestants' choice (see Table 6).<sup>137</sup> The Busoni Competition's semi-finals (second round), in contrast, only had the requirement of a Busoni piece, thereby giving the contestant more freedom. Yet, the Long-Thibaud-Crespin semi-final

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135. Dang Thai Son, interview by author, Bolzano, September 3, 2019.

136. Nicolas Hodges, interview by author, Bolzano, September 3, 2019.

137. “Piano 2019,” Thibaud.

repertoire conundrum could also present an opportunity to choose well, not only from the required list, but also for the remaining time. Jury member Yulianna Avdeeva of the 2019

Long Thibaud competition commented:

On the one hand, it is important that the participant also chooses which kind of pieces he or she feels comfortable with. So, it means one should go for the pieces where you can present yourself in the best way which you feel musically that you have. That music would be the easiest way to express yourself. That's why I would say the choice of repertoire is very important, even more than what is required.<sup>138</sup>

Avdeeva also mentioned something about the choice of the French repertoire of the Long-Thibaud-Crespin Competition:

[The unique thing about the repertoire requirement of the Long-Thibaud Competition is] the amount of the French composers in the second round, where you have to play some French music. But ... it can be something more contemporary, it can be some more classic. I mean Fauré is a little bit older composer, a more romantic style; and you go really contemporary style, like Boulez. I think it is great, even in this specific field [of] French music. The field is very big. So, everybody can really make their own choice.<sup>139</sup>

Most of the contestants wish to be selected as a winner by jury members. The Long-Thibaud competition does organize, as mentioned previously, a meeting time with jury members for individual feedback. However, one should not try to simply cater to the jury. Everyone has their own unique style and must continue to develop it. It is impossible to please everyone. Of course, it is always useful to receive constructive feedback from jury members, but one must be confident in one's own performance first.

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138. Yulianna Avdeeva, interview by author, Paris, November 9, 2019.

139. Ibid.

## Well-Known and Lesser-Known Repertoire

Some well-known pieces always appear in the selection pool of competitions. Even though the competitions allow contestants to play free-choice repertoire, many famous pieces will still be repeated in a competition. For example, in the semi-final (second) round of the 2018/19 Busoni Competition, Liszt's *Dante* Sonata was performed seven times.<sup>140</sup> The president of the jury, Till Fellner, attributed it to coincidence and added that the same phenomenon of well-known masterpieces having duplicate performances also occurs with the annual school entrance/audition exams.<sup>141</sup>

Playing a well-known piece presents a higher risk in the competition. Sometimes contestants have no choice. In the Telekom Beethoven Competition, everyone must play a late Beethoven sonata, thus they all have the same risk. For jury members, this kind of organization process makes comparison, and therefore narrowing the pool of candidates, easier.<sup>142</sup> It is well-known that it is more difficult to compare apples to oranges, than it is to compare different varieties of apples. Sometimes contestants acknowledge this situation and commit to playing a well-known piece in a competition regardless. At times, the results of this happenstance are as mentioned above with the Liszt *Dante* Sonata being repeated seven times in the semi-final round of the 2018/19 Busoni competition. Definitely, the audience and jurors have the opportunity to deepen their acquaintance and knowledge of such a work and to observe the candidates' abilities in a more generally refined level of discernment.

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140. "Competition Rules," Concorso Busoni 2019.

141. Till Fellner, interview by author, Bolzano, September 5, 2019.

142. Sources: Ewa Kupiec, interview by author, Bonn, December 6, 2017; Lilya Zilberstein, interview by author, Bonn, December 10, 2017.

Many different reasons exist for choosing specific repertoire. The performance time for Liszt's *Dante* Sonata is typically about seventeen minutes. For the semi-final round of the Busoni Competition, the round offered forty to forty-five minutes for each contestant. If a contestant wished to play three or more pieces in this round, the *Dante* Sonata was a good choice. After playing the obligatory Busoni piece and the *Dante* Sonata, about ten minutes would be left for contestants to program one or more pieces. Italian contestant Giovanni Bertolazzi chose Liszt's *Dante* Sonata as one of the pieces of his semi-final round. Apart from the Liszt *Dante* sonata and the Busoni piece, he also programmed Debussy and Stravinsky in this round. The variety of the repertoire shows his ability to master different characters and styles of music.<sup>143</sup> Also Liszt's *Dante* Sonata showcases a difficult octave technique, different characters in many sections, and a flashy ending. Some of the contestants performed this sonata at the end of their program, thereby building a climax and exciting the audience.<sup>144</sup>

Some contestants choose lesser-known repertoire for the competitions to avoid repetition of pieces in one competition, to avoid the risk of playing famous pieces, or for other reasons. Russian contestant Alexander Panfilov said that when he chose his repertoire, he tried to choose pieces which could demonstrate his skills. He also chose to avoid well-known pieces:

Well, when the piece is too famous, and every person has their own opinion about how exactly you should play it, or there is a cliché, then I think it is not so good for a competition. So, I try to avoid pieces that are too famous, as well as the ones that are too unknown, because people

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143. Giovanni Bertolazzi, interview by author, Bolzano, September 3, 2019.

144. Emanuil Ivanov, interview by author, Bolzano, September 3, 2019.

might get confused by it. And so [that] the jury won't think that you are hiding something when playing some quasi-unknown repertoire.<sup>145</sup>

Bulgarian contestant Emanuil Ivanov selected one piece [*Sonatina Concertante* in F-sharp Minor, Op. 28] from the Bulgarian composer Pancho Vladigerov, not known by many people, for his semi-final round of the Busoni Competition.<sup>146</sup> While it is a work he already knew, he explained that “it’s really a beautiful piece, and I wanted to show it.”<sup>147</sup>

A well-known piece for competition is usually a piece with demanding technique and big, effective sonorities capitalizing on the resonance of the piano. Even if contestants already know there is a higher chance of other entrants also performing the work, the desire to perform the deservedly well-known work remains. Another reason to perform such a work is because contestants are mostly younger conservatory pianists who might not yet have a vast repertoire. For these aspiring professionals, it is important to build their repertoire with the major composers first, instead of always learning some unknown twentieth-century pieces. With these thoughts in mind, it is interesting to examine the repertoire choices by actual competitors in the sampled competitions found in the following tables:

- Beethoven Bonn Telekom Competition 2017 (Tables 12 to 20);
- Concours Géza Anda 2018 (Tables 21 to 23);
- Busoni Competition 2018/19 (Tables 24 to 31); and
- Long-Thibaud-Crespin Concours 2019 (Tables 32 to 38).

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145. Alexander Panfilov, interview by author, Paris, November 10, 2019.

146. “Competition Rules,” Concorso Busoni 2019.

147. Emanuil Ivanov, interview by author, Bolzano, September 3, 2019.

## Chart of Repertoire Choices by Competitors from Sampled Competitions

### International Telekom Beethoven Piano Competition Bonn 2017

Table 12

*Choice of Item 1: A Prelude and Fugue by J.S. Bach*<sup>148</sup>

Bach Well-Tempered Clavier Prelude and Fugues Presented (with respective Bach-Werke-Verzeichnis number)	Number of Submissions
No. 3 in C-sharp Major, BWV 848, WTC I	1
No. 4 in C-sharp Minor, BWV 849, WTC I	2
No. 7 in E-flat Major, BWV 852, WTC I	2
No. 9 in E Major, BWV 854, WTC I	1
No. 15 in G Major, BWV 860, WTC I	1
No. 17 in A-flat Major, BWV 862, WTC I	1
No. 18 in G-sharp Minor, BWV 863, WTC I	1
No. 20 in A Minor, BWV 865, WTC I	1
No. 22 in B-flat Minor, BWV 867, WTC I	1
No. 1 in C Major, BWV 870, WTC II	1
No. 2 in C Minor, BWV 871, WTC II	1
No. 3 in C-sharp Major, BWV 872, WTC II	2
No. 5 in D Major, BWV 874, WTC II	1
No. 7 in E-flat Major, BWV 876, WTC II	1
No. 9 in E Major, BWV 878, WTC II	2
No. 15 in G Major, BWV 884, WTC II	1
No. 16 in G Minor, BWV 885, WTC II	1
No. 19 in A Major, BWV 888, WTC II	1
No. 24 in B Minor, BWV 893, WTC II	2

Table 13

*Choice of Item 2: Beethoven Sonatas Op. 109, Op. 110, and Op. 111*<sup>149</sup>

Beethoven Sonata, Opus Number	Number of Submissions
No. 30 in E Major, Op. 109	9
No. 31 in A-flat Major, Op. 110	7
No. 32 in C Minor, Op. 111	8

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148. Erste Wettbewerbsrunde, Telekom Beethoven Competition, December 1-3, 2017.

149. Ibid.

Table 14

*Choice of Item 3: Beethoven Works (Not Sonata)*<sup>150</sup>

Title of the Work(s) and Opus/WoO (without opus) Number	Number of Submissions
Seven Bagatelles, Op. 33	1
Six Variations on an Original Theme in F Major, Op. 34	2
Two Rondos in C Major, Op. 51, No. 1; and in G Major Op. 51, No. 2	0
Fantasy in G Minor/B Major, Op. 77	4
Eleven Bagatelles, Op. 119	2
Six Bagatelles, Op. 126	9
Andante Favori in F Major, WoO 57	3
Ten Variations on 'La stessa, la stessissima' from the Opera <i>Falstaff</i> by Antonio Salieri in B-Flat Major, WoO. 73	0
Seven Variations on the Quartet 'Kind, willst du ruhig schlafen?' from Peter Winter's Opera <i>Das unterbrochene Opferfest</i> , WoO 75	0
32 Variations in C Minor, WoO 80	3
Rondo a Capriccio in G Major, Op. 129; and Polonaise in C Major, Op. 89	0

Table 15

*Choice of Item 4: One of the Beethoven Sonatas or 33 Variations on a Waltz by Anton Diabelli in C Major, Op. 120*<sup>151</sup> (only shows second round participants' choices)

Beethoven Sonata, Opus Number	Number of Submissions in Second Round
No. 2 in A Major, Op. 2, No. 2	0
No. 3 in C Major, Op. 2, No. 3	0
No. 4 in E-flat Major, Op. 7	0
No. 7 in D Major, Op. 10, No. 3	1
No. 8 in C Minor, Op. 13 ( <i>Pathétique</i> )	0
No. 11 in B-flat Major, Op. 22	0
No. 12 in A-flat Major, Op. 26	0
No. 13 in E-flat Major, Op. 27, No. 1	0
No. 14 in C-sharp Minor, Op. 27, No. 2	0
No. 15 in D Major, Op. 28	2
No. 16 in G Major, Op. 31, No. 1	0
No. 17 in D Minor, Op. 31, No. 2	2
No. 18 in E-flat Major, Op. 31, No. 3	0
No. 21 in C Major, Op. 53	2
No. 23 in F Minor, Op. 57	2
No. 25 in G Major, Op. 79	0
No. 26 in E-flat Major, Op. 81a	0
No. 27 in E Minor, Op. 90	1
No. 28 in A Major, Op. 101	0
No. 29 in B-flat Major, Op. 106	1
33 Variations on a Waltz by Anton Diabelli in C Major, Op. 120	0

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150. Erste Wettbewerbsrunde, Telekom Beethoven Competition, December 1-3, 2017.

151. Zweite Wettbewerbsrunde, Telekom Beethoven Competition, December 4-5, 2017.

Table 16

*Choice of Item 5: One or More Works by Germanic Composers.*<sup>152</sup>

Composers	Repertoire	Numbers of Submissions in Semi-Finals
J. Brahms	Sonata No. 3 in F Minor, Op. 5	2
	Variations of a Theme by Robert Schumann in F-sharp Minor, Op. 9	1
	Variations on an Original Theme in D Major, Op. 21, No. 2	1
	Klavierstücke, Op. 119	1
	Sonata No. 2 in F-sharp Minor, Op. 2	1
F. Liszt	Spanish Rhapsody, S. 254	1
	Sonata in B Minor, S. 178	1
	Hungarian Rhapsody in C-sharp Minor, S. 244/12	1
Felix Mendelssohn	Fantasy on "The Last Rose of Summer" in E Major, Op. 15	1
	Variations sérieuses in D Minor, Op. 54	1
R. Schumann	Symphonic Etudes, Op. 13	1
	Sonata No. 2 in G Minor, Op. 22	1
	Humoreske in B-flat Major, Op. 20	1
	Fantasy in C Major, Op. 17	2
	Gesänge der Frühe, Op. 133	1
Richard Wagner	Isoldes Liebestod	1

Table 17

*Choice of Item 6: One of Beethoven Sonatas*<sup>153</sup>

Beethoven Sonata, Opus Number	Number of Submissions in Semi-Finals
No. 1 in F Minor, Op. 2, No. 1	2
No. 24 in F-sharp Major, Op. 78	1
No. 6 in F Major, Op. 10, No. 2	2
No. 22 in F Major, Op. 54	1

Table 18

*Choice of Item 7: One or More Contemporary Works*<sup>154</sup>

Composer	Repertoire	Number of Submissions in Semi-Finals
B. Bartók	Im Freien, Sz. 81	1
	Sonata, Sz. 80	1
S. Prokofiev	Sonata No. 3 in A Minor, Op. 28	1
	Sonata No. 8 in B-flat Major, Op. 84	1
	Sonata No. 6 in A Major, Op. 82	1
A. Berg	Sonata, Op. 1	3
A. Schoenberg	Six Little Piano Pieces, Op. 19	1
D. Shostakovich	Prelude and Fugue No. 24 in D Minor, Op. 87	1
	Sonata No. 1, Op. 12	1
A. Webern	Variations, Op. 27	1

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152. Zweite Wettbewerbsrunde, Telekom Beethoven Competition, December 4-5, 2017.

153. Semifinale, Telekom Beethoven Competition, December 7, 2017.

154. Ibid.

Table 19

*Choice of Item 8: A Contemporary Work Composed After 1980<sup>155</sup>*

Composer	Repertoire	Number of Submissions in Semi-Finals
John Corigliano	Fantasia on an Ostinato (1985)	1
Toru Takemitsu	Les yeux clos II (1988)	1
Virko Baley	Pajarillo (2001)	1
Pascal Dusapin	Etude No. 2 (1999)	1
Lowell Liebermann	Nocturne No. 8, Op. 85 (2003)	1
Fabian Fiorini	Tears of Lights (2015)	1

Table 20

*Choice of Item 10: Two Concerti by Beethoven*

Beethoven Piano Concerti	Number of Submissions in Finale
No. 1 in C Major, Op. 15; and No. 3 in C Minor, Op. 37	1
No. 2 in B-flat Major, Op. 19; and No. 4 in G Major, Op. 58	2
No. 5 in E-flat Major, Op. 73; and Concerto for Violin and Orchestra in D Major, Op. 61 (Piano Version)	0

For the final round, the contestants had prepared one of the above pairings of two concerti (see Table 20). At the actual time of the final round, the president of the jury allowed the three finalists to each choose their respective preferred concerto from their pre-selected pairing to perform on the final stage. As a result, the three concerto performances were No. 2, No. 3, and No. 4.<sup>156</sup>

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155. Semifinale, Telekom Beethoven Competition, December 7, 2017.

156. Finale und Preisverleihung 2017, Telekom Beethoven Competition, December 9, 2017.

## Concours Géza Anda 2018

There was no program for the audition round. The competition organizer provided a competition program from the “Recitals” round (second round). Candidates each had an interview with jury members one-and-a-half-hours before their respective performance to decide which repertoire would be presented.

Table 21  
*Repertoire Choice of Recital Round*<sup>157</sup>

Composer	Repertoire	Number of Submissions in Recital Round
J. Haydn	Sonata in E-flat Major, Hob. XVI: 52	3
	Sonata in E-flat Major, Hob. XVI: 49	1
Mozart	Sonata No. 2 in F Major, K. 280	2
	Sonata No. 13 in B-flat Major, K. 333	1
Beethoven	Sonata No. 7 in D Major, Op. 10, No. 3	2
	Sonata No. 18 in E-flat Major, Op. 31, No. 3	1
	Sonata No. 28 in A Major, Op. 101	1
F. Chopin	Etude in C-sharp Minor, Op. 10, No. 4	1
	Etude in G-flat Major, Op. 10, No. 5	1
	Etude in A-flat Major, Op. 10, No. 10	1
	Etude in E-flat Major, Op. 10, No. 11	1
	Etude in B Minor, Op. 25, No. 10	1
	Scherzo No. 2 in B-flat Minor, Op. 31	1
R. Schumann	Fantasy in C Major, Op. 17	3
	Humoreske, Op. 20	2
	Fantasy Pieces, Op. 12	1
	Symphonic Etudes, Op. 13	3
F. Schubert	Sonata No. 19 in C Minor, Op. posth, D. 958	1
	Sonata No. 20 in A Major, Op. posth, D. 959	2
J. Brahms	Paganini Variations Op. 35, Book I	1
F. Liszt	Sonata in B Minor, S. 178	3
M. Ravel	Valses nobles et sentimentales	1
C. Debussy	5 Preludes from Preludes, Book I	1
	Images, Book II	1
L. Berio	Six Encores for Piano	1
B. Bartók	Improvisations on Hungarian Peasant Songs, Op. 20	1
G. Ligeti	Etude No. 4, <i>Fanfares</i>	1
	Etude No. 5, <i>Arc en ciel</i>	1
	Etude No. 13, <i>L'escalier du Diable</i>	1
	Etude No. 16, <i>Pour Irina</i>	1
Shchedrin/Pletnev	Two pieces from <i>Anna Karenina</i>	1
Un Suk Chin	Toccata	1

157. Klavierrezital, Im Grossen Saal der Musikschule Konservatorium Zurich MKZ, *Concours Géza Anda 2018*, June 6-7, 2018.

Table 22

*Choice of Semi-Final Round Repertoire*<sup>158</sup>

Mozart Piano Concerti	Number of Submissions
No. 23 in A Major, K. 488	3
No. 20 in D Minor, K. 466	2
No. 24 in C Minor, K. 491	1

Table 23

*Choice of Final Round Repertoire*<sup>159</sup>

Concerti	Number of Submissions
Beethoven Concerto No. 4 in G Major, Op. 58	1
J. Brahms Concerto No. 1 in D Minor, Op. 15	2

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158. Mozart-Prüfung, Musikkollegium Winterthur, *Concours Géza Anda 2018*, June 9-10, 2018.

159. Schlusskonzert, Tonhalle Maag Zurich, *Concours Géza Anda 2018*, June 12, 2018.

## Ferruccio Busoni International Piano Competition 2018/19

Twenty-seven contestants were selected for the Semi-Finals (first round, see CHAPTER III Table 9) in 2019, although only twenty-two contestants came to Bolzano for the Semi-Finals. The competition program included all repertoire selections from every live round (from Semi-Finals to the Grand Final).

### 1. Competitors' Choice of Semi-Final Repertoire

Table 24

#### a) *One Composition by Busoni*<sup>160</sup>

Busoni's Works	Number of Submissions
"All'Italia!" (In modo napolitano) ["To Italy!" (In a Neapolitan Mode)], BV 249	3
"Meine Seele bangt und hofft zu Dir" (Choralvorspiel) ["My soul trembles and hopes of thee" (Chorale Prelude)], BV 249	0
Two other Elegies, BV 249	2
Sonatina (No. 1), BV 257	0
Sonatina Seconda, BV 259	4
Sonatina "In diem nativitatis Christi MCMXVII," BV 274	1
Toccata: Preludio, Fantasia, and Ciaccona, BV 287	3
Indianisches Tagebuch (Indian Diary) (I), n.1-2-3-4, BV 267	2
Preludes, Op. 37, BV 181: a choice of 6 preludes	3
Fantasia nach Johann Sebastian Bach, BV 253	1
10 Variationen über ein Präludium von Chopin (Klavierübung Teil 5), BV 213a	7

Table 25

#### b) *Works of Candidates' Choice*<sup>161</sup>

Composer	Repertoire	Number of Submissions
J.S. Bach	Chromatische Fantasie und Fugue in D Minor, BWV 903	1
	Fantasia and Fugue, BWV 904	1
D. Scarlatti	Sonata in F-sharp Major, K. 319/L. 35	1
	Sonata in A Minor, K. 208/L. 238	1
	Sonata in F Major, K. 107/L. 474	1
	Sonata in F Minor, K. 466/L. 118	1
J.P. Rameau	La Poule	1
J. Haydn	Andante with Variations in F Minor Hob. XVII/6	1
W.A. Mozart	Sonata in C Minor, K. 457	1
L.v. Beethoven	Sonata No. 13 in E-flat Major, Op. 27, No. 1	1
F. Chopin	24 Preludes, Op. 28	1
	Rondo à la mazur in F Major, Op. 5	1
	Scherzo No. 2 in B-flat Minor, Op. 31	1
	Scherzo No. 3 in C-sharp Minor, Op. 39	1
	Fantasia in F Minor, Op. 49	1
	Mazurka in C-sharp Minor, Op. 41, No. 4	1
	Mazurka in C-sharp Minor, Op. 50, No. 3	1
	Grande Polonaise in E-flat Major, Op. 22	1
	Barcarolle in F-sharp Major, Op. 60	1
	Sonata No. 2 in B-flat Minor, Op. 35	1

160. Competition Repertoire, Busoni 2019.

161. Ibid.

Composer	Repertoire	Number of Submissions
R. Schumann	Humoreske, Op. 20	1
	Sonata No. 2 in G Minor, Op. 22	1
	Romanzen, Op. 28, Nos. 1 and 2	1
	Carnaval, Op. 9	3
	Toccata, Op. 7	1
J. Brahms	Sonata No. 2 in F-sharp Minor, Op. 2	1
F. Schubert	Four Impromptus, Op. 90	1
C. Debussy	Images, Book I, L. 110	1
	L'Isle Joyeuse	1
	Prelude No. 5, " <i>Les collines d'Anacapri</i> ," Book I	1
	Prelude No. 6, " <i>Des pas sur la neige</i> ," Book I	1
	Prelude No. 1, " <i>Brouillards</i> ," Book II	1
	Prelude No. 7, " <i>La terrasse des audiences du clair de lune</i> ," Book II	1
	Prelude No. 8, " <i>Ondine</i> ," Book II	1
	Prelude No. 12, " <i>Feux d'artifice</i> ," Book II	1
M. Ravel	Valses nobles et sentimentales	1
	Gaspard de la Nuit: Scarbo	2
F. Liszt	Après une lecture du Dante: Fantasia quasi Sonata	7
	Sonata in B Minor, S. 178	1
	Transcendental Etude No. 4 in D Minor, S. 139, " <i>Mazeppa</i> "	1
	Fantastic Rondo on a Spanish Theme, S. 252, " <i>The Smuggler</i> "	1
I. Stravinsky/ G. Agosti	L'oiseau de feu	2
I. Stravinsky	Three movements from <i>Petrushka</i>	1
D. Shostavovich	Prelude and Fugue No. 15, Op. 87	1
	Sonata No. 2	1
I. Albeniz	Almería ( <i>Iberia</i> , Book II)	1
A. Scriabin	Sonata No. 2 in G-sharp Minor, Op. 19	1
	Sonata No. 4 in F-sharp Major, Op. 30	1
	Poème Tragique, Op. 34	1
M.A. Balakirev	Islamey	1
S. Prokofiev	Four Etudes for Piano, Op. 2	1
	Sarcasms, Op. 17	1
P. Tchaikovsky/ S. Rachmaninov	Lullaby	1
S. Rachmaninov	Variations sur un thème de Borelli, Op. 42	1
	Prelude in F-sharp Minor, Op. 23, No.1	1
	Prelude in E-flat Major, Op. 23, No.6	1
	Prelude in C Minor, Op. 23, No.7	1
	Prelude in E-flat Minor, Op. 23, No.9	1
M.A. Hamelin	Etude No. 3 "after Paganini-Liszt" from cycle "12 Etudes in all the Minor Keys"	1
P. Vladigerov	Sonatina Concertante in F-sharp Minor, Op. 28	1

## 2. Competitors' Choice of Solo Finals (Second Round) Repertoire

Table 26

### a) *One of the J.S. Bach/F. Busoni Transcriptions*<sup>162</sup>

Bach/Busoni's Works	Number of Submissions
Choralvorspiel No. 2, "Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme," BWV 645	3
Choralvorspiel No. 3, "Nun komm der Heiden Heiland," BWV 659	5
Choralvorspiel No. 4, "Nun freut euch, liebe Christen," BWV 734	1
Choralvorspiel No. 5, "Ich ruf zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ," BWV 639	7
Choralvorspiel No. 6, "Herr Gott, nun schleuss den Himmel auf," BWV 617	1
Choralvorspiel No. 7, "Durch Adams Fall ist ganz verderbt," BWV 637	1
Chaconne in D Minor, BWV 1004	5
Tocatta, Adagio, and Fugue in C Major, BWV 564 - Adagio	3
Prelude and Fugue in D Major, BWV 532	2

Table 27

### b) *A Sonata by Beethoven, Clementi, Haydn, or Mozart—other than the one eventually presented in the pre-selection round*<sup>163</sup>

Composer	Repertoire	Number of Submissions
F. Haydn	Sonata No. 59 in E-flat Major, Hob.XVI: 49/L. 59	1
	Sonata No. 62 in E-flat Major, Hob.XVI: 52/L. 62	1
	Sonata No. 10 in G Major, Hob.XVI: 40/L. 54	1
	Sonata No. 46 in E Major, Hob.XVI: 31/	1
	Sonata No. 60 in C Major, Hob.XVI: 50/	1
W.A. Mozart	Sonata No. 4 in E-flat Major, K. 282	1
	Sonata No. 12 in F Major, K. 332	1
	Sonata No. 18 in D Major, K. 576	1
L.v. Beethoven	Sonata No. 2 in A Major, Op. 2, No. 2	1
	Sonata No. 3 in C Major, Op. 3, No. 2	1
	Sonata No. 18 in E-flat Major, Op. 31, No. 3	2
	Sonata No. 21 in C Major, Op. 53	1
	Sonata No. 23 in F Minor, Op. 57	2
	Sonata No. 26 in E-flat Major, Op. 81	1
	Sonata No. 27 in E Minor, Op. 90	1
	Sonata No. 28 in A Major, Op. 101	1
	Sonata No. 30 in E Major, Op. 109	1
	Sonata No. 31 in A-flat Major, Op. 110	3
	Sonata No. 32 in C Minor, Op. 111	4

162. Competition Repertoire, Busoni 2019.

163. Ibid.

Table 28

*c) One or More Piano Works of Contemporary Music Selected and Indicated by the Ferruccio Busoni International Piano Competition Within the End of December 2018*

Contemporary Repertoire	Number of Submissions
Thomas Adès (UK): Mazurkas for piano, Op. 27 (2009). ca. 8 min. Editions Faber Music UK	8
Régis Campo (France): Hommage à Georges Cziffra (2009) ca. 8 min. Éditions Lemoine	4
Philippe Schoeller (France): Prélude 1 - Omaggio a Cy Twombly & Prélude 3 - Ritualis Vincent van Gogh (2018) ca. 8 min. Éditions Archipel	1
Mikel Urquiza (Spain): Contrapluma (2016) ca. 6 min. Editions Suvini Zerboni	3
Lorenzo Pagliei (Italy): Uno: Courbes (2005/2006) ca. 6 min. Editions Suvini Zerboni	2
Deqing Wen (China): Love Song, River Chant (2006) ca. 9 min. SME Editions—Mauro Ursprung	0
Augusta Read (USA): Two Thoughts About the Piano (2017) ca. 5 min. Editions Nimbus Music Publishing	4
Olga Neuwirth (Austria): Trurl-Tichy-Tinkle for Piano (2016) ca. 9 min. Editions Ricordi Berlin	0
Bettina Skrzypczak (Poland): Daphnes Lied (Daphne's Song) (2002) ca. 9 min. Editions Ricordi Berlin	0
Francesco Filidei (Italy): Berceuse (2018) ca. 6 min. Editions Ricordi Milano—Annamaria Macchi	3
Alex Nante (Argentina): Invocation (2017) ca. 8 min. Éditions Durand Salabert Eschig—Isabella Vasilotta	1
Philippe Manoury (France): Nouvelles études: Vitesses paradoxales / Suspensions – Effondrements (2017) ca. 8 min. Éditions Durand Salabert Eschig—Isabella Vasilotta	0

Table 29

*d) Other Works of the Candidate's Own Choice—except those presented in the pre-selection round<sup>164</sup>*

Composer	Repertoire	Number of Submissions
F. Chopin	Sonata No. 3 in B Minor, Op. 58	2
	24 Preludes, Op. 28	1
	Etude in E Major, Op. 10, No. 3	1
	Etude in E-flat Minor, Op. 10, No. 6	1
R. Schumann	Kreisleriana, Op. 16	1
	Humoreske, Op. 20	1
	Novellette No. 8, Op. 21	1
J. Brahms	Sonata No. 1 in C Major, Op. 1	1
	Seven Fantasies, Op. 116	1
	Variations and Fugue on a Theme by Handel, Op. 24	1
F. Liszt	Sonata in B Minor, S. 178	1
	Réminiscences de Don Juan, S. 418	1
M. Ravel	La Valse	1
	Gaspard de la Nuit	2
G. Fauré	Nocturne No. 1 in E-flat Minor, Op. 33, No. 1	1
C. Saint-Saëns/V. Horowitz	Danse Macabre	1
A. Scriabin	Sonata No. 2 in G-sharp Minor, Op. 19	1
	Sonata No. 9, Op. 68, <i>Black Mass</i>	1
	Valse, Op. 38	1
S. Prokofiev	Sonata No. 6 in A Major, Op. 82	3
	Sonata No. 7 in B-flat Major, Op. 83	4
I. Stravinsky	Three Movements from <i>Petrushka</i>	1
S. Rachmaninov	Sonata No. 2 in B-flat Minor, Op. 36	2
	6 moments musicaux, Op. 16	1
M.P. Mussorgsky	Pictures at an Exhibition	1

### 3. Chamber Ensemble Round

Table 30

*Competitors' Choice of Chamber Ensemble Finals<sup>165</sup>*

Composer	Chamber Repertoire	Number of Submissions
R. Schumann	Quintet for Piano and Strings in E-flat Major, Op. 44	7
J. Brahms	Quintet for Piano and Strings in F Minor, Op. 34	4
C. Franck	Quintet for Piano and Strings in F Minor, FWV 7	8
A. Dvorák	Quintet for Piano and Strings No. 2 in A Major, Op. 81	4
D. Shostakovich	Quintet for Piano and Strings in G Minor, Op. 57	3

164. Competition Repertoire, Busoni 2019.

165. Ibid.

#### 4. Grand Final (Concerto)

Table 31

*Competitors' Choice of Grand Final*<sup>166</sup>

Composer	Piano Concerto Repertoire	Number of Submissions
W.A. Mozart	Concerto No. 20 in D Minor, K. 466	1
	Concerto No. 18 in B-flat Major, K. 456	0
	Concerto No. 21 in C Major, K. 467	0
	Concerto No. 24 in C Minor, K. 491	0
	Concerto No. 27 in B-flat Major, K. 595	0
	Concerto No. 23 in A Major, K. 488	0
L. . Beethoven	Concerto No. 3 in C Major, Op. 37	0
	Concerto No. 4 in G Major, Op. 58	0
	Concerto No. 5 in E-flat Major, Op. 73	0
B. Bartók	Concerto No. 2 in G Major, Sz. 95, BB 101	0
F. Chopin	Concerto No. 1 in E Minor, Op. 11	1
	Concerto No. 2 in F Minor, Op. 21	0
M. Ravel	Concerto in G Major	0
S. Rachmaninoff	Concerto No. 3 in D Minor, Op. 30	5
	Concerto No. 4 in G Minor, Op. 40	0
	Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini, Op. 43	1
P.I. Tchaikovsky	Concerto No. 1 in B-flat Minor, Op. 23	8
S. Prokofiev	Concerto No. 2 in G Minor, Op. 16	3
	Concerto No. 3 in C Major, Op. 26	4
	Concerto No. 5 in G Major, Op. 55	0
F. Liszt	Concerto No. 1 in E-flat Major, S. 124	1
	Concerto No. 2 in A Major, S. 125	0
C. Saint-Saëns	Concerto No. 2 in G Minor, Op. 22	2
	Concerto No. 5 in F Major, Op. 103	0
R. Schumann	Concerto in A Minor, Op. 54	0
A. Scriabin	Concerto in F-sharp Minor, Op. 20	0

166. Competition Repertoire, Busoni 2019.

Long-Thibaud-Crespin 2019

1. Qualifying Audition Round

a. Required Haydn Variations in F Minor, Hob. XVII/6<sup>167</sup>

Table 32

b. *Free Choice*<sup>168</sup>

Composer	Title of Work	Number of Submissions
D. Scarlatti	Sonata in F Minor, K 204a/P.170	1
F. Busoni	10 Variations on a Prelude of Chopin, BV 213a	1
	Elegy, No. 4, "Turandots Frauengemach," BV 249	1
F. Chopin	Scherzo No. 3 in C-sharp Minor, Op. 39	1
	Scherzo No. 4 in E Major, Op. 54	1
	Ballade No. 1 in G Minor, Op. 23	2
	Ballade No. 2 in F Major, Op. 38	1
	Ballade No. 4 in F Minor, Op. 52	3
	Fantasy in F Minor, Op. 49	1
F. Liszt	Années de pèlerinage II–Venezia e Napoli: "Tarantella", S. 162/3	1
	Etude transcendente No. 4, "Mazeppa"	1
	Études d'exécution transcendante, S. 139, No. 5, "Feux follets"	1
	Funérailles from Harmonies poétiques et religieuses	1
C. Gounod/F. Liszt	Faust Waltz, S. 407	1
R. Schumann	8 Novelletten, Op. 21	1
	Toccata in C Major, Op. 7	1
J. Brahms	Paganini Variations, Op. 35, <i>Book II</i>	1
M. Ravel	Miroirs (selected pieces)	1
C. Debussy	Prelude, <i>Livre II</i> – "Les tierces alternées," "Feux d'artifice"	1
C. Saint-Saëns	Etude, Op. 111, No. 6, Toccata d'après le cinquième concerto	1
L.J. Paderewski	Miscellanea Op. 16, No. 3	1
G. Enesco	Piece on the Name of Fauré, IGE 18	1
T. I. Tchaikovsky	Six Pieces (Six morceaux) for Solo Piano, Op. 19	1
S. Prokofiev	Sonata No. 3 in A Minor, Op. 28	3
S. Rachmaninoff	Moment musical, Op.16 No.6 in C Major	1
	Etude-Tableau, Op. 39, No. 8, in D Minor, No. 9 in D Major	1
A. Scriabin	Sonata No. 2 in G-sharp Minor, Op. 19	2
	Sonata No. 4 in F-sharp Major, Op. 30	3
	Sonata No. 5 in F-sharp Major, Op. 53	1
	Vers la flamme, Op. 72	1
	Fantasy in B Minor, Op. 28	1
I. Albeniz	Iberia-Fête-dieu à Seville	1
H. Dutilleux	Chorale et variations	1
E. Granados	Goyescas, Book I, No. 1 "Los Requebros"	1
B. Bartók	3 Burlesques, Op. 8	1
	Sonata, Sz. 80	2
	3 Etudes, Op. 18	1
G. Ligeti	Etude No. 13, "L'escalier du diable," Book II	1
B. Smetana/H. de Kaan	"Vltava" from the Symphonic Poem, <i>La Moldau</i>	1
I. Stravinsky/G. Agosti	L'oiseau de feu	1

167. "Piano 2019," Thibaud.

168. Labouret, Piano 2019 Long-Thibaud-Crespin, 25-47.

## 2. Semi-Final Round

Table 33

### a) Chamber Music<sup>169</sup>

Composer	Chamber Repertoire	Number of Submissions
J. Brahms	Quintet for Piano and Strings in F Minor, Op. 34	20
C. Franck	Quintet for Piano and Strings in F Minor, FWV 7	8
A. Dvorák	Quintet for Piano and Strings No. 2 in A Major, Op. 81	18

Table 34

### b) One or More Works from French Composers<sup>170</sup>

Composer	Title of Work	Number of Submissions
C. Saint-Saëns	Allegro appassionato for Solo Piano, Op.70	2
	Etude en forme de valse for Solo Piano, Op. 52, No. 6	7
	Les cloches de las Palmas for Solo Piano, Op. 111, No. 4	7
G. Fauré	Nocturne No. 1 for Solo Piano in E flat Minor, Op. 33, No.1	2
	Nocturne No. 6 for Solo Piano in D Major, Op. 63	5
	Nocturne No. 7 for Solo Piano in C Minor, Op. 74	1
	Nocturne No. 13 for Solo Piano in B Minor, Op. 119	1
	Barcarolle No. 5 for Solo Piano in F Minor, Op. 66	3
E. Chabrier	Ten Picturesque Pieces – “Paysage”	2
	Ten Picturesque Pieces – “Sous-Bois”	1
	Ten Picturesque Pieces – “Idylle”	5
Déodat de Séverac	In Languedoc – IV. Coin de cimetière au printemps	0
	Cerdana – IV. Les muletiers devant le Christ de Livia	7
P. Dukas	La plainte, au loin, du faune	4
O. Messiaen	Vingt regards sur l’Enfant-Jésus –No. 6. Par lui tout a été fait	4
	Vingt regards sur l’Enfant-Jésus – No. 10. Regard de l’esprit de joie	4
	Vingt regards sur l’Enfant-Jésus – No. 15. Le baiser de l’Enfant-Jésus	9
	“Le chocard des Alpes” from <i>Catalogue d’oiseaux</i>	0
H. Dutilleux	3 Préludes (1973-1988) – “Le jeu des contraires”	3
P. Boulez	Douze notations	3
	Incises (2001 revised version)	3

169. Labouret, Piano 2019 Long-Thibaud-Crespin, 25-47.

170. Ibid.

Table 35

c) Any Works of Candidates' Choosing<sup>171</sup>

Composer	Repertoire	Number of Submissions
J.S. Bach	Toccatà in C Minor, BWV 911	1
	Partita No. 1 in B-flat Major, BWV 825	1
J.S. Bach/F. Busoni	Toccatà, Adagio, and Fugue, BWV 564	1
J. Brahms/F. Busoni	Chorale Prelude "Herzlich tut mich verlangen" in A Minor, Op. 122, No. 5	1
W.A. Mozart	Sonata No. 18 in D Major, K. 576	1
L.v. Beethoven	Sonata No. 6 in F Major, Op. 10, No. 2	1
	Sonata No. 26 in E-flat Major, Op. 81a, "Les Adieux"	2
	Sonata No. 27 in E Minor, Op. 90	1
	Fantasy in G Minor/B Major, Op. 77	1
R. Schumann	Three Romances, Op. 28	1
	Abegg Variations, Op. 1	1
	Sonata No. 2 in G Minor, Op. 22	2
F. Mendelssohn	Variations sérieuses, Op. 54	1
F. Chopin	Polonaise, Op. 44	1
	Scherzo No. 2 in B-flat Minor, Op. 31	1
	Scherzo No. 3 in C-sharp Minor, Op. 39	1
	Scherzo No. 4 in E Major, Op. 54	2
F. Liszt	Jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este, from <i>Années de pèlerinage</i>	1
	Après une Lecture de Dante. Fantasia quasi Sonata, S. 161/7	3
	Mephisto Waltz, No. 1, S. 514	2
	Spanish Rhapsody, S. 254	2
	Ballade, No. 2 in B Minor S. 171	2
	Totentanz, S. 525	1
	Scherzo and March, S. 177	1
	Der Wanderer (Extrait des douze Lieder de Schubert, S. 558)	1
F. Liszt/V. Horowitz	Hungarian Rhapsody, No. 19	1
M. Ravel	Valses nobles et sentimentales	1
C. Debussy	<i>Images II</i>	1
	Etude No. 5: pour les octaves	1
	L'Isle joyeuse	1
S. Rachmaninov	Variations on a Theme of Corelli, Op. 42	1
	Prelude in D Minor, Op. 23, No. 3	1
	Prelude in E Minor, Op. 32, No. 4	1
I. Stravinsky	Trois mouvements de Petrouchka	2
I. Albeniz	Iberia-No. 6 "Triana"	1
A. Berg	Sonata Op. 1	1
A. Scriabin	Sonata No. 2 in G-sharp Minor, Op. 19	1
	Sonata No. 5 in F-sharp Major, Op. 53	1
	Etude Op. 65, No. 1	1
B. Bartók	Sonata, Sz. 80	1
G. Ligeti	3 Burlesques, Opus 8c: No. 1 Quarrel	1
	Etude No. 5, "Arc-en-ciel"	1
	Etude No. 13, "L'escalier du diable"	1

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171. Labouret, Piano 2019 Long-Thibaud-Crespin, 25-47.

### 3. Finale: Recital (shows only the choice of six finalists)

a) Commissioned Work by Michaël Jarrell (1958), Etude No. 2, “*Réminiscences*”.<sup>172</sup>

Table 36

b) *Pieces by Debussy and/or Ravel (10 minutes minimum)*<sup>173</sup>

Composer	Repertoire	Number of Submissions by Finalists
C. Debussy	Estampes	1
	<i>Images, Book I</i>	1
M. Ravel	Miroirs	2
	Valses nobles et sentimentales	2

Table 37

c) *Free Choice Repertoire*<sup>174</sup>

Composer	Repertoire	Number of Submissions by Finalists
J.S. Bach	Partita No. 2 in C Minor, BWV 826	1
	Capriccio on the departure of a beloved brother, BWV 992	1
	15 Inventions, BWV 772-786	1
J.P. Rameau	Nouvelles suites en la - Allemande - Les Trois Mains - Gavotte et six doubles	1
W.A. Mozart	Sonata No. 9 in D Major, K. 311	1
F. Liszt	Après une lecture du Dante, Fantasia quasi Sonata	1
	Variations on a Theme of Bach S. 180	1
R. Schumann	Kreisleriana, Op. 16	1
J. Brahms	7 Fantaisies, Op. 116	1
C. Franck	Prélude, Chorale, and Fugue	1

### 4. Final Concerto Round

Table 38

*Concerto Chosen by Finalists*<sup>175</sup>

Composer	Repertoire	Number of Submissions by Finalists
L.v. Beethoven	Concerto No. 1 in C Major, Op. 15	3
F. Chopin	Concerto No. 2 in F Minor, Op. 21	1
C. Saint-Saëns	Concerto No. 5 in F Major, Op. 103	1
B. Bartók	Concerto No. 3, Sz. 119	1

172. “Piano 2019,” Thibaud.

173. Ibid.

174. Ibid.

175. Ibid.

## Choice of Repertoire by Individual Contestants

The choice of repertoire is one of the most important parts of a competition, not just for international competitions, but for any kind of music competitions. This researcher selected some contestants from the sampled competitions and interviewed them regarding their thoughts on competition repertoire choice.

It was rare that a contestant prepared a whole new repertoire for a particular competition. As WFIMC competitions require a large quantity of repertoire, it would be extremely difficult to prepare all new repertoire in one year, or even, in shorter time. Some contestants did select a large amount of new repertoire for a competition, but, at the same time, they maintained previously learned repertoire in their competition program.

### International Telekom Beethoven Piano Competition Bonn 2017

- a. **Bruno Vlahek**, a concert pianist and professor at Katarina Gurska Conservatory, Madrid:

I mean for this kind of competition, actually you prepare your whole life. I mean, the repertoire is so big, you cannot specifically prepare just for this competition because you have to play two Beethoven piano concertos, three Beethoven sonatas, chamber music, romantic pieces, contemporary works, [and a] prelude and fugue by Bach. So, it is the repertoire you actually have for your life. Of course, when you know you want to come to this competition, you start to prepare hard.<sup>176</sup>

Vlahek had chosen most of his previously learned (“old”) repertoire for the Telekom Beethoven Competition. Apart from the semi-final round repertoire, he chose Beethoven Sonata No.1 in F Minor, Op. 2, No.1; and Schoenberg Six Little Pieces, Op. 19. And for the final round Beethoven Concerto No. 1 in C Major. These were newly

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176. Bruno Vlahek, interviewed by author, Bonn, December 6, 2017.

learned pieces (“new” pieces) for this particular competition; the others were “old” repertoire. “First of all, you have to select the pieces that you really play well, and the pieces I know well, and I feel well when playing them. It is important, you have to show the best of yourself,” Bruno Vlahek said.<sup>177</sup>

Table 39

*Vlahek’s Repertoire for 2017 Telekom Beethoven*<sup>178</sup>

Round	Composer	Title of Work	New/Old
First	J.S. Bach	Prelude and Fugue in G Major, BWV 884, WTC II	Old
	L.v. Beethoven	Fantasy in G Minor/B Major, Op. 77	Old
		Sonata No. 32 in C Minor, Op. 111	Old
Second	L.v. Beethoven	Sonata No. 23 in F Minor, Op. 57	Old
	J. Brahms	Variations on a Theme of Robert Schumann in F-sharp Minor, Op. 9	Old
	F. Liszt	Rhapsody Espagnole, S. 254	Old
Semi-Finals	L.v. Beethoven	Sonata No. 1 in F Minor, Op. 2, No. 1	New
	A. Schoenberg	Six Little Pieces, Op. 19	New
	L.v. Beethoven	Sonata for Piano and Cello in C Major Op. 102/1	Old
	L. Bernstein	Touches	Old
	I. Stravinsky	Firebird	Old
Final	L.v. Beethoven	Concerto No. 1 in C Major, Op. 15	New
		Concerto No. 3 in C Minor, Op. 37	Old

b. **Alberto Ferro**, currently a student at the "Vincenzo Bellini" Institute of Music in Catania, Italy.

First Prize winner of the 2017 Telekom Beethoven, Alberto Ferro used much of his old repertoire in this competition. Especially in the final round, as previously stated, the jury president left the decision to the finalists as to which concerto they preferred to play with orchestra. Ferro did not hesitate to choose the Beethoven Concerto No. 4 in G Major, Op. 58, instead of No. 2 in B-flat Major, Op. 19, because the latter was a newly learned piece. And he had already performed No. 4 with different orchestras. Ferro also

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177. Bruno Vlahek, interviewed by author, Bonn, December 6, 2017.

178. Ibid.

said that if he learned something new for a competition, he would always look for chances to perform the new piece before he attended any competition.<sup>179</sup>

Table 40

*Ferro's Repertoire for 2017 Telekom Beethoven*<sup>180</sup>

Round	Composer	Title of Work	New/Old
First	J.S. Bach	Prelude and Fugue No. 3 in C Sharp Major, BWV 848, WTC I	Old
	L.v. Beethoven	32 Variations in C Minor, WoO 80	New
		Sonata No. 32 in C Minor, Op. 111	Old
Second	L.v. Beethoven	Sonata No. 17 in D Minor, Op. 31, No. 2 "Tempest"	Old
	F. Mendelssohn	Variations sérieuses in D Minor, Op. 54	Old
	F. Liszt	Hungarian Rhapsody, S. 244, No. 12	Old
	R. Schumann	Gesänge der Frühe, Op. 133	New
Semi-Finals	L.v. Beethoven	Sonata No. 6 in F Major, Op. 10, No. 2	New
	A. Webern	Variations, Op. 27	New
	L.v. Beethoven	Sonata for Piano and Cello in C Major, Op. 102/1	New
	A. Berg	Sonata Op. 1	New
	F. Fiorini	Tears of Lights (2015)	Old
	D. Shostakovich	Sonata, No.1, Op. 12	Old
Final	L.v. Beethoven	Concerto No. 2 in B-flat Major, Op. 19	New
		Concerto No. 4 in G Major, Op. 58	Old

c. **Daiki Kato**, a student studying at Showa University, Japan.

Japanese contestant Daiki Kato learned almost all his entire repertoire for this particular competition shortly before it took place. Thus, many of his works were new to him. In his opinion, he thinks that if he has the confidence to learn a new piece, no matter if it is difficult, he believes he could do it.<sup>181</sup>

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179. Alberto Ferro, interview by author, Munich, September 8, 2019.

180. Ibid.

181. Daiki Kato, interview by author, Bonn, December 8, 2017.

Table 41

*Kato's Repertoire for 2017 Telekom Beethoven*<sup>182</sup>

Round	Composer	Title of Work	New/Old
First	J.S. Bach	Prelude and Fugue No. 5 in E Major, BWV 874	New
	L.v. Beethoven	Fantasy in G Minor/B Major, Op. 77	New
		Sonata No. 30 in E Major, Op. 109	Old
Second	L.v. Beethoven	Sonata No. 21 in C Major, Op. 53	New
	F. Mendelssohn	Fantasie on "The Last Rose of Summer" in E Major, Op. 15	New
	R. Schumann	Symphonic Etudes, Op. 13	New
Semi-Finals	B. Bartók	Im Freien, Sz. 81	Old
	L.v. Beethoven	Sonata for Piano and Cello in C Major Op. 102/1	New
	A. Berg	Sonata Op. 1	New
	G. Ligeti	Etude No. 4, "Fanfares"	New
		Etude No. 13, "L'escalier du diable"	New
Final	L.v. Beethoven	Concerto No. 5 in E-flat Major, Op. 73	Old
		Concerto for Violin and Orchestra in D Major, Op. 61 (Piano Version)	New

d. **Marijian Ćuzel**, a student studying at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Brussels, Belgium.

Ćuzel tried to program old pieces first. Thus, in his first-round repertoire, all selections were old. For the second round, contestants had to play a sixty-minute program. He chose Beethoven Sonata No. 29 in B-flat Major, Op. 106 (forty-seven minutes) for the second round, and thus still needed thirteen minutes. Ćuzel chose the Schumann Toccata. Then, he thought he needed some lighter pieces to fit in, so he decided to play *Abendmusik* (*Bunte Blätter*, Op. 99, No. 12) to fit the the atmosphere and the tonality.<sup>183</sup>

For the semi-final round, unless it was an obligatory piece, the others were all carry-over pieces from earlier studies. When Ćuzel chose the pieces, he thought about his affinities first. Most of his repertoire was challenging. So, if they went well, he felt "everything would be excellent."<sup>184</sup>

182. Daiki Kato, interview by author, Bonn, December 8, 2017.

183. Marijian Ćuzel, interviewed by author, Bonn, December 3, 2017.

184. Ibid.

For the final round, Ćuzel selected Beethoven’s Concerto No. 5 and the Piano Concerto, Op. 61a (after the Violin Concerto, Op. 61). Ćuzel had played the Beethoven Concerto No. 3 before, but he liked No. 5 and the “Violin Concerto” (Op. 61a) more and thus preferred them.<sup>185</sup>

Table 42

*Ćuzel’s Repertoire for 2017 Telekom Beethoven*<sup>186</sup>

Round	Composer	Pieces	New/Old
First	J.S. Bach	Prelude and Fugue in E-flat Major, BWV 852, WTC I	Old
	L.v. Beethoven	Six Bagatelles, Op. 126	Old
		Sonata No. 32 in C Minor, Op. 111	Old
Second	L.v. Beethoven	Sonata No. 29 in B Major, Op. 106	Old
	R. Schumann	Abend Musik	New
		Toccata Op. 7	Old
Semi-Finals	L.v. Beethoven	Sonata No. 1 in F Minor, Op. 2, No. 1	Old
		Sonata for Piano and Cello in C Major, Op. 102: 1 <sup>st</sup> mvt.	New
	B. Bartók	3 Etudes, Op. 18	Old
		Im Freien, Sz. 81	Old
	D. Kempf	Hommage à Bartók	New
Final	L.v. Beethoven	Concerto No. 5 in E-flat Major, Op. 73	Old
		Concerto for Violin and Orchestra in D Major, Op. 61a (Piano Version)	New

e. **Ronaldo Rolim**, a student currently finishing the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts at Yale School of Music, in New Haven, Connecticut, USA.

Ronaldo Rolim’s main consideration in choosing his repertoire was “how to balance the rounds as well as the amount of pieces” he had previously learned with pieces he would have to learn.<sup>187</sup>

In Rolim’s preparation time, he said it was impossible to practice everything he had to play with the same level of focus every day. Thus, he had to pick specific things that he needed to fix. Beethoven’s *Hammerklavier* Sonata No. 29 in B-flat Major, Op.

185. Mariĵian Ćuzel, interviewed by author, Bonn, December 3, 2017.

186. Ibid.

187. Ronaldo Rolim, interview by author, Bonn, December 9, 2017.

106, is by far the most demanding of all the pieces he played, and no matter how ready he was, it always felt like a great challenge.<sup>188</sup>

After the competition, he said he would perhaps reconsider, and program the Brahms Klavierstücke, Op. 119, instead of the Beethoven Op. 106. His initial thought was Schumann's *Waldszenen*, Op. 82, but his performance time in that case would go beyond sixty minutes. Despite that, he thought he was mostly happy with the repertoire selections.<sup>189</sup>

Table 43

*Rolim's Repertoire for 2017 Telekom Beethoven*<sup>190</sup>

Round	Composer	Piece	New/Old
First	J.S. Bach	Prelude and Fugue in C-sharp Major, BWV 872, WTC II	New
	L.v. Beethoven	Andante favori, WoO 57	Old
		Sonata No. 31 in A-flat Major, Op. 110	Old
Second	J. Brahms	Klavierstücke, Op. 119	New
	L.v. Beethoven	Sonata No. 29 in B-flat Major, Op. 106	Old
Semi-Finals	L.v. Beethoven	Sonata for Piano and Cello, Op. 102/1	New
		Sonata No. 6 in F Major, Op. 10, No. 2	Old
	Virko Baley	Pajarillo	New
	S. Prokofiev	Sonata No. 8 in B-flat Major, Op. 84	Old
Final	L.v. Beethoven	Concerto No. 3 in C Minor, Op. 37	Old
		Concerto No. 1 in C Major, Op. 15	New

## Concours Géza Anda 2018

For this competition, contestants had to interview with the jury before their performance. For the first round (“Auditions”), each selected his first piece to begin the “Audition” round, and for the remainder of the round, the jury decided the other selections. Regarding the second round (“Recitals”), each contestant spoke with the jury members and indicated what they wished to present. Despite this conversation, jury

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188. Ronaldo Rolim, interview by author, Bonn, December 9, 2017.

189. Ibid.

190. Ibid.

members might not allow contestants to play, however, what they wanted. Thus, the contestants sometimes had to debate with the jury members.

a. **Honggi Kim**, a student at the Frankfurt Musikhochschule, Germany.

Kim is the Schumann Prize winner of the Concours Géza Anda 2018 and one of the semifinalists. He said that for himself, when he was looking for a competition to participate in, first he would look at the repertoire to check if he already had the required repertoire. If he did, then he would attempt the competition.<sup>191</sup>

Table 44

*Kim's Repertoire for Géza Anda 2018*<sup>192</sup>

Round	Composer	Title of Work	New/Old
Auditions and Recitals	J. Haydn	Sonata in E-flat Major, Hob. XVI: 52	Old
	W.A. Mozart	Sonata No. 18 in D Major, K. 576	Old
	L.v. Beethoven	Sonata No. 28 in A Major, Op. 101	Old
	F. Schubert	Sonata No. 21 in B-flat Major, D. 960	New
	R. Schumann	Humoreske, Op. 20	Old
	J. Brahms	8 Klavierstücke, Op. 76	Old
	F. Chopin	Three Etudes: G-flat Major, Op. 10, No. 5; A-flat Major, Op. 10, No. 10; E-flat Major, Op. 10, No. 11	Old
		Sonata No. 3 in B Minor, Op. 58	Old
	M. Ravel	Gaspard de la nuit	Old
	Carl Vine (b. 1954)	Sonata No. 1 (1990)	Old
Semi-Finals	W.A. Mozart	Concerto No. 20 in D Minor, K. 466	Old
Final	L.v. Beethoven	Concerto No. 4 in G Major, Op. 58	Old
Concerts	F. Chopin	Concerto No. 1 in E Minor, Op. 11	Old

b. **Daumants Liepiņš**, student, Ingesund School of Music/Karistad University.

Contestant Daumants Liepiņš stated that the Concours Géza Anda required a huge amount of repertoire, and it would be quite difficult to prepare a great amount of new repertoire. Liepiņš also said for his repertoire selection strategies, he considered old repertoire first. If the old repertoire timing did not work well or fit within the time

191. Honggi Kim, interview by author, Zurich, June 11, 2018.

192. Ibid.

requirements of each round, then he discussed with his teacher about which new repertoire was suitable for competition.<sup>193</sup>

Table 45

*Liepiņš' Repertoire for Géza Anda 2018*<sup>194</sup>

Round	Composer	Title of Work	New/Old
Auditions and Recitals	J. Haydn	Sonata in E-flat Major, Hob. XVI: 52	Old
	W.A. Mozart	Sonata No. 13 in B-flat Major, K. 333	Old
	L.v. Beethoven	Sonata No. 7 in D Major, Op. 10, No. 3	Old
	F. Schubert	Sonata No. 22 in A Major, D. 959	New
	R. Schumann	Fantasiestücke, Op. 12	New
	J. Brahms	Sonata No. 3 in F Minor, Op. 5	Old
	F. Chopin	Three Etudes: E Major, Op. 10, No. 3; G-flat Major, Op. 10, No. 5; A Minor, Op. 25, No. 11	Old
		Sonata No. 3 in B Minor, Op. 58	Old
	F. Liszt	Sonata in B Minor	Old
	C. Debussy	Estampes	Old
		L'Isle Joyeuse	New
	Shchedrin Pletnev	Two Pieces from Anna Karenina	Old
Semi-Finals	W.A. Mozart	Concerto Concerto No. 20 in D Minor, K.466	Old
Final Concerts	L.v. Beethoven	Concerto No. 4 in G Major, Op. 58	Old
	J. Brahms	Concerto No. 1 in D Minor, Op. 15	New

c. **Yeon-Min Park**, student at the Hannover University of Music, Drama, and Media.

Yeon-Min Park's strategy for participating in competitions was to send the application first. If she passed the preliminary round (video selection/application), she would then consider if she could prepare properly for the particular competition. For this competition, she said she did not have enough time to prepare well enough, thus she experienced a memory slip in the first round.<sup>195</sup> Luckily, she was selected for the recital round (second round) and for the semi-final round.

193. Daumants Liepiņš, interview by author, Zurich, June 6, 2018.

194. Ibid.

195. Yeon-Min Park, interview by author, Zurich, June 11, 2018.

Table 46

*Park's Repertoire for Géza Anda 2018*<sup>196</sup>

Round	Composer	Title of Work	New/Old
Auditions and Recitals	J. Haydn	Sonata in E-flat Major, Hob. XVI: 49	Old
	W.A. Mozart	Sonata No. 14 in C Minor, K. 457	Old
	L.v. Beethoven	Sonata No. 18 in E-flat Major, Op. 31, No. 3	Old
	F. Schubert	Impromptus, Op. 90	Old
	R. Schumann	Humoreske, Op. 20	Old
	J. Brahms	Klavierstücke, Op. 118	New
	F. Chopin	Three Etudes: C-sharp Minor, Op. 10, No. 4; D-flat Major, Op. 25, No. 8; B Minor, Op. 25, No. 10	Old
		Sonata No. 3 in B Minor, Op. 58	Old
	M. Ravel	Gaspard de la nuit	Old
	Unsuk Chin	Toccata	Old
Semi-Finals	W.A. Mozart	Concerto No. 23 in A Major, K. 488	New
Final Concerts	L.v. Beethoven	Concerto No. 4 in G Major, Op. 58	Old
	P.I. Tchaikovsky	Concerto No. 1 in B-flat Minor, Op. 23	Old

## ii. Ferruccio Busoni International Piano Competition 2018/19

Unlike the Telekom Beethoven and Géza Anda competitions which had so many obligatory pieces, the Busoni Competition had more freedom in the repertoire choice. More freedom in repertoire choice also means more organization is required regarding program order.

a. **Emanuil Ivanov**, currently a student at Royal Birmingham Conservatoire.

Emanuil Ivanov (First Prize winner of the 2018/19 Busoni Competition) previously used old repertoire in competitions. Ivanov had placed the old repertoire in the first round of the 2019 Busoni competition (semi-final round). He said old repertoire was a more secure choice in order to survive. He played the Busoni BV 249 first because he felt it was the best selection to play first in order to warm up his hands. The second piece he played was a Bulgarian piece, Vladigerov's *Sonatina Concertante* in F-sharp Minor, Op. 28. He said it was dangerous to play it in the competition because it is a lesser-known piece. But as it was his old repertoire, and since he wanted to present it to audience, he decided to choose it. He put the Liszt *Dante* Sonata at the end of the round because it had

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196. Yeon-Min Park, interview by author, Zurich, June 11, 2018.

a virtuosic ending, and since he was also the last contestant of the day, he thought the *Dante* probably would be a good ending.<sup>197</sup>

The solo final round pieces were mostly new. For the contemporary work (see CHAPTER II Table 4), Ivanov did not really concern himself about the modern piece because one of his pianist friend told him that in a competition, the commissioned works (or the contemporary pieces) were never the key point of winning a competition. And as he wanted to learn the Beethoven Sonata No. 18 in E-flat Major, Op. 31, No. 3, he chose it as one of the solo final round pieces. He also selected the Brahms Variations, Op. 24, which was an “old” piece which he learned one year prior. He decided to mix the shorter piece and longer piece, fast tempo and slow tempo, tonality wise. Brahms was a good ending.<sup>198</sup>

Ivanov prepared for the Chamber Ensemble Finals for six months. He had collaborated with his friends at Birmingham where he studied. He chose Franck’s Quintet for Piano and Strings in F Minor, FWV 7, because he thought Brahms and Shostakovich were much deeper and complex for him, and he thought Franck suited him better.<sup>199</sup>

For the Grand Final round, most contestants chose to play Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninoff Concerto No. 2, or Prokofiev’s Concerti. He did not want to do the same, and he wanted to add some more concerti in his concerto repertoire list, so he decided to play Saint-Saëns Concerto No. 2 in G Minor, Op. 22.<sup>200</sup>

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197. Emanuil Ivanov, interview by author, Bolzano, September 3, 2019.

198. Ibid.

199. Ibid.

200. Ibid.

Table 47

*Ivanov's Repertoire for Busoni Competition 2018/19*<sup>201</sup>

Round	Composer	Title of Work	Old/New
Pre-Selections (2018)	F. Chopin	Etude in F Major, Op. 10, No. 8	New
	S. Rachmaninov	Etude in D Major, Op. 39, No. 9	New
	A. Scriabin	Sonata in No. 5 in F-sharp Major, Op. 53	Old
Semi-Finals (2019)	F. Busoni	Elegie "All'Italia! In modo Napolitano," BV 249	New
	P. Vladigerov	Sonatina concertante, Op. 28	Old
	F. Liszt	Après une Lecture de Dante. Fantasia quasi Sonata	Old
Solo-Final (2019)	T. Adès	Mazurkas for Piano, Op. 27	New
	L.v. Beethoven	Sonata No. 18 in E-flat Major, Op. 31, No. 3	New
	Bach/Busoni	Choralvorspiel No. 3 "Nun komm der Heiden Heiland," BWV 659	New
	J. Brahms	Variations on a Theme by Handel, Op. 24	New
Chamber Ensemble Finals (2019)	C. Franck	Quintet in F Minor, FWV 7	New
Grand Final (2019)	C. Saint-Saëns	Concerto No. 2 in G Minor, Op. 22	New

b. **Seung-Hyuk Na**, a student studying at Seoul National University, College of Music.

Other contestants, such as South Korean competitor Seung-Hyuk Na, said his original thoughts were to place the Bach/Busoni Chaconne, BWV 1004, in the semi-final round. He felt that this piece was one of his best pieces, but his teacher suggested that he place this in the pre-selection round. Instead of thinking about the semi-final or the final round, one should always think about how to pass the first round.<sup>202</sup>

In the semi-final round, unlike other participants, Na only played two works—Busoni's *Sonatina Seconda*, BV 259, and Schubert's Four Impromptus, Op. 90. Busoni was chosen from one of the obligatory pieces that every competitor must play. Na thought the Schubert Four Impromptus could show the jury his own character, although he knew this would be a big risk for not choosing more variety repertoire, that he might be eliminated, but he still wanted to give it a try. Fortunately, he succeeded and advanced to the next round.<sup>203</sup>

201. Emanuel Ivanov, interview by author, Bolzano, September 3, 2019.

202. Seung-Hyuk Na, interview by author, Bolzano, September 2, 2019.

203. Ibid.

Table 48

*Na's Repertoire for Busoni Competition 2018/19*<sup>204</sup>

Round	Composer	Title of Work	Old/New
Pre-Selections (2018)	F. Chopin	Etude in E-Flat Major, Op. 10, No. 10	Old
	A. Scriabin	Etude in D-sharp Minor, Op. 8, No. 12	Old
	Bach/Busoni	Chaconne, BWV 1004	Old
Semi-Finals (2019)	F. Busoni	Sonatina Seconda, BV 259	New
	F. Schubert	Four Impromptus, Op. 90	Old
Solo-Final (2019)	Bach/Busoni	Choraltvorspiel No. 5, "Ich ruf zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ," BWV 639	New
	S. Rachmaninov	Moments Musicaux, Op. 16 (I-II-III-IV)	Old
	F. Filidei	Berceuse	New
	L.v. Beethoven	Sonata No. 32 in C Minor, Op. 111	Old
Chamber Ensemble Finals (2019)	J. Brahms	Quintet for Piano and Strings in F Minor, Op. 34	New
Grand Final (2019)	P.I. Tchaikovsky	Concerto No. 1 in B-flat Minor, Op. 23	Old

c. **Giorgi Gigashvili**, concert pianist and student at Tbilisi Z. Paliashvili Central Music School

Georgian contestant Giorgi Gigashvili, the Third Prize and Audience Prize winner, had selected an almost entirely new repertoire for this competition. Apart from the Prokofiev Concerto No. 3 in C Major, Op. 26, which he had learned two years prior, the other pieces were all learned in less than one year specifically for the Busoni Competition. When he was selecting the repertoire, he decided the entire repertoire by himself, and his teacher helped him arrange the order. Gigashvili said "I like the music which is not based on technique. I like the pieces which are based on the brain, and lots of voicing, or orchestra voicing."<sup>205</sup> For his first-round repertoire, he felt that he was good at playing Shostakovich's music, so he programed it in the first round in order to feel more comfortable. Also, it was important to impress the jury members, he chose the Liszt etude to showcase his technique ability. Thus, in the very first round (Semi-Finals) of 2019

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204. Seung-Hyuk Na, interview by author, Bolzano, September 2, 2019.

205. Giorgi Gigashvili, interview by author, Bolzano, September 2, 2019.

Busoni Competition, the jury could see both his personal character and his high level of technique.<sup>206</sup>

The solo final round was the hardest part of this competition, it required an hour long program. Gigashvili felt Scriabin and Prokofiev was a strength, and Beethoven Sonata No. 30 in E Major, Op. 109, was his favorite sonata. Therefore, he decided to program these works. For the contemporary piece, he chose it without any specific reason (he just liked it, no special reason).<sup>207</sup>

Table 49

*Gigashvili's Repertoire for Busoni Piano Competition 2018/19*<sup>208</sup>

Round	Composer	Title of Work	Old/New
Pre-Selections (2018)	Gigashvili did not need to do the pre-selection round because he was one of the First Prize winners of another WFIMC competition.		
Semi-Finals (2019)	F. Busoni	Toccata: Preludio, Fantasia, and Ciaccona, BV 287	New
	D. Shostakovich	Sonata No. 2 in B Minor, Op. 61	Old
	F. Liszt	Transcendental Etude No. 4 in D Minor "Mazeppa"	New
Solo-Final (2019)	Bach/Busoni	Choralevorspiel No. 3, "Nun komm der Heiden Heiland," BWV 659	New
	A. Scriabin	Sonata No. 9 in F Major, Op. 68, "Black Mass,"	New
	L.v. Beethoven	Sonata No.30 in E Major, Op. 109	New
	M. Urquiza	Contrapluma	New
	S. Prokofiev	Sonata No. 7 in B-flat Major, Op. 83	New
Chamber Ensemble Finals (2019)	D. Shostakovich	Quintet for Piano and Strings in G Minor, Op. 57	New
Grand Final (2019)	S. Prokofiev	Concerto No. 3 in C Major, Op. 26	Old

d. **Xiaoya Wan**, student from Central Music Conservatoire of Beijing.

Wan was the only pianist who chose to play Mozart in this competition. The Busoni Competition offered plenty of free choice repertoire. Wan liked Mozart's music a lot, so she programmed Mozart in her competition repertoire for each round, and she organized the order of the repertoire in tonality, such as minor and major alternation. She

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206. Giorgi Gigashvili, interview by author, Bolzano, September 2, 2019.

207. Ibid.

208. Ibid.

placed old repertoire in the semi-final round in order to make herself feel more comfortable.<sup>209</sup>

Wan stated that the most challenging thing for her to prepare in this competition was the choice of repertoire. She had once harmed her hand due to too much practice, and she had thus changed her repertoire selections from Tchaikovsky Concerto No. 1 in B-flat Minor to Mozart Concerto No. 20 in D Minor, K 466, and from the Schumann Quintet to Shostakovich's Quintet.<sup>210</sup>

Table 50

*Wan's Repertoire for Busoni Competition 2018/19<sup>211</sup>.*

Round	Composer	Title of Work	Old/New
Pre-Selections (2018)	F. Chopin	Etude in G-flat Major Op. 25, No. 9	New
	S. Prokofiev	Etude in C Minor, Op. 2, No. 4	New
	F. Liszt	Après une lecture du Dante: Fantasia quasi Sonata	Old
Semi-Finals (2019)	W.A. Mozart	Sonata in C Minor, K. 457	Old
	S. Prokofiev	Sarcasms, Op. 17	Old
	F. Busoni	10 Variationen über ein Präludium von Chopin, BV 213a	New
Solo Finals (2019)	R. Campo	Hommage à Georges Cziffra	New
	Bach/Busoni	Toccat, Adagio, and Fugue in C Major, BWV 564- Adagio	New
	W.A. Mozart	Sonata in E-flat Major, K. 282	Old
	J. Brahms	Sonata in C Major, Op. 1	New
Chamber Ensemble Finals (2019)	D. Shostakovich	Quintet for Piano and Strings in G Minor, Op. 57	Old
Grand Final (2019)	W.A. Mozart	Concerto No. 20 in D Minor, K. 466	Old

e. **Shiori Kuwahara**, concert pianist and student studying at Berlin University of the Arts

Kuwahara prepared for this competition for one year right after she found out that she had passed the pre-selection round. In this round, she programmed old repertoire. When Kuwahara was choosing the repertoire for this competition, she talked to her professor to get some advice, although Kuwahara made the final decision. In the semi-final round, only the Busoni *Elegies* (BV 249, one of the obligatory pieces of the

209. Xiaoya Wan, interview by author, Bolzano, August 31, 2019.

210. Ibid.

211. Ibid.

competition) was new. The Liszt *Dante* Sonata and Stravinsky *Petrouchka* were already part of her repertoire. The performance order that she chose for the semi-final round was Liszt, Busoni, and then Stravinsky. “When I tried to decide the order, I found it very smooth that I play *Dante* first, and Busoni *Elegies*, No. 4 and No. 7, then Stravinsky. So, that’s how I decided the order.”<sup>212</sup>

In the “Solo Finals” third round, the Beethoven Sonata No. 32 in C Minor, Op. 111, and Bach/Busoni Chaconne, BWV 1004, were old repertoire for Kuwahara, while Campo and Ravel were new pieces for her. The reason for choosing Ravel *La Valse* was because her professor suggested that she needed different style of music in her competition repertoire instead of just German and Russian works. The Chamber Ensemble Finals and Grand Final round used old repertoire: Schumann’s Quintet for Piano and Strings, Op. 44, and Rachmaninov’s Concerto No. 3 in D Minor, Op. 30.<sup>213</sup>

Table 51

*Kuwahara’s Repertoire for Busoni Competition 2018/19*<sup>214</sup>

Round	Composer	Title of Work	Old/New
Pre-Selections (2018)	F. Chopin	Etude in C Major, Op. 10, No. 1	Old
	S. Rachmaninov	Etude in C Minor, Op. 39, No. 1	Old
	J. Brahms	Variations on a Theme of Paganini, Op. 35, Book II	Old
Semi-Finals (2019)	F. Liszt	Après une Lecture du Dante. Fantasia quasi Sonata	Old
	F. Busoni	Elegies No. 7 and No. 4, BV 249	New
	I. Stravinsky	Three movements from Petrushka	Old
Solo Finals (2019)	Bach/Busoni	Chaconne, BWV 1004	Old
	L.v. Beethoven	Sonata No. 32 in C Minor, Op. 111	Old
	R. Campo	Hommage à Georges Cziffra	New
	M. Ravel	La Valse	New
Chamber Ensemble Finals (2019)	R. Schumann	Quintet for Piano and Strings in E-flat Major, Op. 44	Old
Grand Final (2019)	S. Rachmaninov	Concerto No. 3 in D Minor, Op. 30	Old

212. Shiori Kuwahara, interview by author, Bolzano, August 29, 2019.

213. Ibid.

214. Ibid.

f. **Giovanni Bertolazzi**, student of Institute Musicale “Vincenzo Bellini” of Catania

Bertolazzi tried to select repertoire that he liked and that was also close to his personality. He also attempted to choose music that had meaning relative to the title.<sup>215</sup>

In general, Bertolazzi preferred to play the most powerful piece at the end of each round and to start the round with something that was comfortable to him.<sup>216</sup>

Table 52

*Bertolazzi's Repertoire for Busoni Competition 2018/19*<sup>217</sup>

Round	Composer	Title of Work	Old/New
Pre-Selections (2018)	F. Chopin	Etude in C Major Op.10, No. 1	Old
	S. Rachmaninov	Etude-Tableau in C-sharp Minor, Op. 33, No. 9	Old
	J. Brahms	Intermezzo in A Major, Op. 118, No. 2	Old
	F. Liszt	Hungarian Rhapsodie No. 12 in C-sharp Minor	Old
Semi-Finals (2019)	F. Busoni	Sonatina “In diem nativitatis Christi MCMXVII,” BV 274	New
	F. Liszt	Après une Lecture du Dante. Fantasia quasi Sonata	Old
	C. Debussy	Brouillards from Preludes	New
		Ondine from Preludes	Old
	I. Stravinsky/ G. Agosti	L'oiseau de feu	New
Solo Finals (2019)	A. Nante	Invocation	New
	L.v. Beethoven	Sonata No. 21 in C Major, Op. 53	Old
	Bach/Busoni	Choralevorspiel No. 2 “Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme,” BWV 645	New
	S. Rachmaninov	Sonata No. 2 in B-flat Minor, Op. 36	New
Chamber Ensemble Finals (2019)	R. Schumann	Quintet for Piano and Strings in E-flat Major, Op. 44	New
Grand Final (2019)	S. Prokofiev	Concerto No. 2 in G Minor, Op. 16	New

### Long-Thibaud-Crespin 2019

Some competitors thought that the Long-Thibaud-Crespin Competition had some strange repertoire requirements. In the pre-selection audition, the competition required a slow movement of a Mozart or Haydn sonata, yet for the Qualifying Auditions (public first round), everyone had to play Haydn Variations in F Minor, Hob. XVII/6. For the semi-final round, there was a group of French composers' works for the competitors'

215. Giovanni Bertolazzi, interview by author, Bolzano, September 3, 2019.

216. Ibid.

217. Ibid.

choice. Some of this repertoire does not often appear in regular concert repertoire. And in the final concerto round, there were only six concerti for competitors' choice, and some of the concerti were not common for competition pianists. For example, the Long-Thibaud-Crespin Competition had Chopin Concerto No. 2 in F Minor on the concerto list instead of No. 1 in E Minor, and Bartók Concerto No. 3 instead of No.1 or No. 2.<sup>218</sup>

b. **Alexander Panfilov**, currently studying privately with someone in Vienna.

Russian contestant Alexander Panfilov, who has around fifteen years' experience in piano competitions and is also a frequent prize winner of international piano competitions, prepared for this competition for about three months. It was not easy for him to include old repertoire into the competition rounds because the competition repertoire seemed irregular to him.<sup>219</sup>

For the designation of the competition program, Panfilov thought that first his selections should work as a concert program; and second, it should be something that essentially demonstrated his skills. When he was organizing the program order, he based it on the standard ordering of a concert program. Panfilov tried to finish with something loud, something that built to a huge climax. Generally, he put the program in chronological order.<sup>220</sup>

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218. "Piano 2019," Thibaud.

219. Alexander Panfilov, interview by author, Paris, November 10, 2019.

220. Ibid.

Table 53

*Panfilov's Repertoire for Long-Thibaud-Crespin 2019*<sup>221</sup>

Round	Composer	Title of Work	New/Old
Pre-Selections	W.A. Mozart	Sonata in D Major, K. 576, II. <i>Adagio</i>	Old
	S. Rachmaninov	Etudes Op. 39, Nos. 1, 2, 3, and 6	Old
Qualifying Audition	J. Haydn	Variations in F Minor, Hob. XVII/6	New
	S. Rachmaninov	Etude-Tableau in D Minor, Op. 39, No. 8; and Etude-Tableau in D Major, Op. 89, No. 9	Old
Semi-Finals	A. Dvořák	Piano Quintet No. 2 in A Major, Op. 81	New
	G. Fauré	Nocturne No. 7 in C-sharp Minor, Op. 74	New
	C. Saint-Saëns	"Les cloches de las palmas," Étude pour piano seul, Op. 111, No. 4	New
	G. Ligeti	Etude No. 5, "Arc-en-ciel"	Old
Final Recital		Etude No. 13, "L'escalier du diable"	Old
	M. Jarrell	Etude No. 2, "Réminiscences"	New
	C. Debussy	Estampes	Old
	M. Mussorgsky	Pictures at an Exhibition	Old
Final Concerto	L.v. Beethoven	Concerto No. 1 in C Major, Op. 15	Old
	S. Rachmaninov	Concerto No. 1 in F-Sharp Minor, Op. 1	New

b. **Wei-Ting Hsieh**, currently a student studying at the Paris Conservatoire.

Taiwanese contestant Wei-Ting Hsieh had selected mostly her old repertoire for this competition. At the time of the competition, she was currently a student studying at the Paris Conservatoire. She learned four new pieces particularly for this competition though. Hsieh did not choose the repertoire as if she were designing her own concert program. Instead, she considered the timing limitation first, and then determined the older repertoire she could use.<sup>222</sup>

In the interview which took place after the competition's semi-final round, Hsieh said she thought that the Mozart sonata she had chosen for this round probably was not a good choice, as it seemed too weak for a competition program.<sup>223</sup>

221. Alexander Panfilov, interview by author, Paris, November 10, 2019.

222. Wei-Ting Hsieh, interview by author, Paris, November 13, 2019.

223. Ibid.

Table 54

*Hsieh's Repertoire for Long-Thibaud-Crespin 2019*<sup>224</sup>

Round	Composer	Title of Work	New/Old
Pre-Selections	W.A. Mozart	Sonata No. 18 in D Major, K. 576, II. <i>Adagio</i>	Old
	F. Chopin	Etude in A Minor, Op. 25, No. 11	Old
	C. Debussy	Images, Book I	Old
Qualifying Audition	J. Haydn	Variations in F Minor, Hob. XVII/6	New
	E. Granados	"Los Requeiebros," from <i>Goyescas</i> , Book I	Old
Semi-Finals	A. Dvořák	Piano Quintet No. 2 in A Major, Op. 81	New
	W.A. Mozart	Sonata No. 18 in D Major, K. 576	Old
	O. Messiaen	"Le baiser de l'Enfant-Jésus," No. 15 from <i>Vingt Regards sur l'Enfant-Jésus</i>	New
	B. Bartók	"Quarrel," from 3 Burlesques, Op. 8c	Old
Final Recital	M. Jarrell	Étude No. 2 (Réminiscences)	New
	O. Messiaen	Première Communion de la Vierge, No. 11 from <i>Vingt Regards sur l'Enfant-Jésus</i>	Old
	C. Debussy	Images, Book I	Old
	F. Chopin	Sonata No. 2 in B-flat Minor, Op. 35	Old
Final Concerto	F. Chopin	Concerto No. 2 in F Minor, Op. 21	Old
	B. Bartók	Concerto No. 3, Sz. 119	Old

c. **Jean-Baptiste Doulcet**, a graduate of the Paris Conservatoire.

Jean-Baptiste Doulcet is a French contestant who won the Fourth Prize and Audience Prize of the 2019 Long-Thibaud-Crespin Piano Competition. He related that when he was choosing the competition repertoire, he had to play the maximum amount of pieces he already knew well such as the first round Bartók, second round Berg Sonata, etc. For this competition, Doulcet learned nine new pieces.<sup>225</sup>

Doulcet was assigned by the jury to play Bartók Piano Concerto No. 3 in the final round. This concerto was totally new for him; he had only prepared it in three weeks.<sup>226</sup> He played well in the concerto final round with the orchestra, but due to the short preparation time, Doulcet did not develop a deeper relationship with this concerto. His final round performance was not as astonishing as his first and semi-final rounds.

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224. Wei-Ting Hsieh, interview by author, Paris, November 13, 2019.

225. Jean-Baptiste Doulcet, interview by author, Paris, November 17, 2019.

226. Ibid.

Doulcet talked about his performance in the Long-Thibaud-Crespin Competition the day following the prize announcements:

The Semi-Finals for me was one of the best performances I did in my life. That's what I felt. I don't know what happened actually. I was focused, of course, but I don't know what happened. I felt like it was—I couldn't do more than that.

I passed to the [Semi-] Finals, and then the Finale Recital. I felt that was one of the worst moments in my life on stage.... Stress, the emotions. The Jarrell [commissioned work Étude No. 2, *Réminiscences*] was kind of tricky. I was very focused on Bach, I was afraid of Bach. You never know. You know, memory stuff—it's stupid, but you have to think about that always.

Because of stress. Because you're playing in this hall. A lot of very important people. And then when Bach was done, I started to go to Debussy and Brahms. The kind of easy way [following the order]. But then I disconnected my brain to my fingers, and I was thinking about myself: can I reach the end of the recital? And when you have this feeling in your brain, that's the most horrible thing because this is—the—mistake, the bad sound, the—everything—because things are not connected anymore. That was a hard moment, that Debussy and the first half of Brahms [Op. 116]. And I feel the last three pieces of Brahms I focused again and finished the thing. That was the thing, but then I didn't have this feedback from people at all.<sup>227</sup>

Table 55

*Doulcet's Repertoire for Long-Thibaud-Crespin 2019*<sup>228</sup>

Round	Composer	Title of Work	New/Old
Pre-Selections	J. Haydn	Sonata in E-flat Major, Hob. XVI: 52, II. <i>Adagio</i>	New
	F. Chopin	Etude in F Major, Op. 25, No. 3	New
	A. Berg	Sonata, Op. 1	Old
Qualifying Audition	J. Haydn	Variations in F Minor, Hob. XVII/6	New
	B. Bartók	Trois Burlesques, Op. 8	Old
Semi-Finals	J. Brahms	Quintet for Piano and Strings in F Minor, Op. 34	New
	H. Dutilleux	Prélude No. 3 "Le jeu des contraires" from <i>Trois préludes</i>	New
	G. Fauré	Nocturne No. 1 in E-flat Minor, Op. 33, No. 1	New
	A. Berg	Sonata, Op. 1	Old
Finale Recital	M. Jarrell	Étude No. 2 ( <i>Réminiscences</i> )	New
	J.S. Bach	Capriccio in B-flat Major, BWV 992	Old
	C. Debussy	Estampes	New
	J. Brahms	Seven Fantasies, Op. 116	Old
Finale Concerto	W.A. Mozart	Concerto No. 24 in C Minor, K. 491	Old
	B. Bartók	Concerto No. 3, Sz. 119	New

227. Jean-Baptiste Doulcet, interview by author, Paris, November 17, 2019..

228. Ibid.

d. **Keigo Mukawa**, student currently studying at the Paris Conservatoire.

Japanese pianist Keigo Mukawa participated for a second time in the Long-Thibaud-Crespin Competition. The last time he participated was in 2016, and he did not pass the pre-selection round.<sup>229</sup> This time though, Mukawa was the Second Prize winner of Long-Thibaud-Crespin 2019.

Mukawa chose mostly French music for his competition repertoire. He also likes German music a lot, but he knew he could play French music better as he is a student study in Paris. In order not to take a risk, most of his repertoire in each round was French music. Mukawa also felt that he was good at Baroque music, which was the reason why he chose to play Bach Partita No. 2 in C Minor, BWV 826, in the final recital round.<sup>230</sup>

In the Finale Concerto round, luckily, Mukawa was assigned by the jury to play Saint-Saëns' Concerto No. 3, which was one of his older repertoire pieces. Mukawa thought there was less pressure and more comfort in performing the old repertoire.<sup>231</sup> Compared to Doulcet, who was assigned to play the newly-learned concerto (although the jury is unaware of these factors), Mukawa was luckier.

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229. Keigo Mukawa, interview by author, Paris, November 17, 2019.

230. Ibid.

231. Ibid.

Table 56

*Mukawa's Repertoire for Long-Thibaud-Crespin 2019*<sup>232</sup>

Round	Composer	Title of Work	New/Old
Pre-Selections	F. Chopin	Etude in A-flat Major, Op. 25, No.1 [Aeolian Harp]	Old
	W.A. Mozart	Sonata No. 8 in D Major, K. 311(284c), II. <i>Rondo and Polonaise</i>	Old
	F. Liszt	Legend S. 175, No. 2, "St. François de Paule marchant sur le flots"	Old
Qualifying Audition	J. Haydn	Variations in F Minor, Hob. XVII/6	New
	C. Debussy	2 Préludes, Livre II: Les tierces alternées and Feux d'artifice	New
Semi-Finals	C. Franck	Quintet for Piano and Strings in F Minor, FWV 7	Old
	P. Boulez	<i>Incises</i> (version revised in 2001)	New
	F. Liszt	Ballade No. 2 in B Minor, S. 171	Old
Finale Recital	M. Jarrell	Étude No. 2 ( <i>Réminiscences</i> )	New
	J.S. Bach	Partita No. 2 in C Minor, BWV 826	Old
	M. Ravel	Miroirs	Old
Finale Concerto	C. Saint-Saëns	Concerto No. 5 in F Major, Op. 103, " <i>L'Égyptien</i> "	Old
	F. Chopin	Concerto No. 2 in F Minor, Op. 21	New

e. **Shotaro Nishimura**, a student studying at the Academy Pianistica di Imola, Italy.

Japanese contestant Shotaro Nishimura was one of the selected contestants to participate in the public auditions of Long-Thibaud-Crespin 2019.<sup>233</sup>

In the public first round (qualifying audition), apart from the obligatory piece, he chose Liszt's Etude Transcendentale No. 4, "*Mazeppa*," which was one of his older repertoire pieces. In the semi-final round, Nishimura chose Messiaen's "*Le baiser de l'Enfant-Jésus*" from *Vingt Regards sur l'Enfant-Jésus*. Although he had previously learned music of other French composers such as Saint-Saëns and Chabrier, he had never before learned any Messiaen. However, he still wanted to take the challenge and learn the Messiaen piece as he really wanted to perform it.<sup>234</sup>

Of the entire Long-Thibaud-Crespin Competition repertoire Nishimura selected/performed, he thought Beethoven's Sonata No. 29 in B-flat Major, Op. 106, was the most difficult piece. Although it was old repertoire for him, and he had already

232. Keigo Mukawa, interview by author, Paris, November 17, 2019.

233. Shotaro Nishimura, interview by author, Paris, November 10, 2019.

234. Ibid.

performed it many times, he felt that every time he performed this work, it was always a big challenge.<sup>235</sup>

Table 57

*Nishimura's Repertoire for Long-Thibaud-Crespin 2019*<sup>236</sup>

Round	Composer	Title of Work	New/Old
Pre-Selections	F. Chopin	Etude in C Major, Op. 10, No.1	Old
	J. Haydn	Sonata in E-flat Major, Hob. XVI: 52, II. <i>Adagio</i>	Old
	F. Liszt	Scherzo and March, S. 177	Old
Qualifying Audition	J. Haydn	Variations in F Minor, Hob XVII/6	New
	F. Liszt	Transcendental Etude, No. 4, "Mazeppa"	Old
Semi-Finals	A. Dvořák	Quintet for String and Piano No. 2 in A Minor, Op. 81	New
	O. Messiaen	"Le baiser de l'Enfant-Jésus," No. 15 from <i>Vingt Regards sur l'Enfant-Jésus</i>	New
	F. Liszt	Scherzo and March, S. 177	Old
Finale Recital	M. Jarrell	Étude No. 2 (Réminiscences)	New
	M. Ravel	"Oiseaux tristes" [Sad birds] from <i>Miroirs</i>	New
		"Alborada del gracioso" from <i>Miroirs</i>	Old
	L.v. Beethoven	Piano Sonata No. 29 in B-flat Major, Op. 106	Old
Finale Concerto	L.v. Beethoven	Concerto No. 1 in C Major, Op. 15	Old
	B. Bartók	Concerto No. 3, Sz. 119	New

f. **Ryutaro Suzuki**, concert pianist who resides in Paris.

Ryutaro Suzuki graduated from the Paris Conservatoire a few years ago. He did not have a lot of time to prepare for the Long-Thibaud-Crespin 2019 competition due to the business of performing different recitals in Japan and elsewhere.<sup>237</sup>

For his Long-Thibaud-Crespin Competition repertoire, he essentially chose old repertoire. He had four new pieces for this competition: two obligatory competition pieces (the Haydn variations for the qualifying audition, and the commissioned work); one work chosen from the list of French composers in the semi-final round (Séverac's

235. Shotaro Nishimura, interview by author, Paris, November 10, 2019.

236. Ibid.

237. Ryutaro Suzuki, interview by author, Paris, November 12, 2019.

“*Les muletiers devant le Christ de Livia*” from *Cerdaña*); and the Rachmaninoff Concerto No. 1 in F-sharp Minor, Op. 1, for the Finale Concerto round.<sup>238</sup>

Suzuki chose his competition repertoire based on his favorite works. In his opinion, even if a piece was suitable for competition and he did not like it, it would not work for the competition. It was very challenging for him to prepare the entire repertoire to perfection in such a short time, especially the Rachmaninoff Piano Concerto No. 1. For him, it was the most difficult piece of the entire repertoire because it was one of the completely new selections.<sup>239</sup>

Table 58

*Suzuki's Repertoire for Long-Thibaud-Crespin 2019*<sup>240</sup>

Round	Composer	Title of Work	New/Old
Pre-Selections	F. Chopin	Etude in A Minor, Op. 25, No.11	Old
	J. Haydn	Sonata in C Major, Hob. XVI:50, II. <i>Adagio</i>	Old
	F. Chopin	Scherzo No. 3 in C-sharp Minor, Op. 39	Old
Qualifying Audition	J. Haydn	Variations in F Minor, Hob. XVII:6	New
	F. Chopin	Scherzo No. 3 in C-sharp Minor, Op. 39	Old
Semi-Finals	J. Brahms	Quintet for Piano and Strings in F Minor, Op. 34	Old
	G. Fauré	Nocturne No. 6 in D Major, Op. 63	Old
	D. de Séverac	“ <i>Les muletiers devant le Christ de Livia</i> ” from <i>Cerdaña</i>	New
	F. Liszt	Spanish Rhapsody, S. 254	Old
Finale Recital	M. Jarrell	Étude No. 2 (Réminiscences)	New
	M. Ravel	Le tombeau de Couperin	Old
	R. Schumann	Symphonic Etudes, Op. 13	Old
Finale Concerto	L.v. Beethoven	Concerto No. 1 in C Major, Op. 15	Old
	S. Rachmaninov	Concerto No. 1 in F-sharp Minor, Op. 1	New

238. Ryutaro Suzuki, interview by author, Paris, November 12, 2019.

239. Ibid.

240. Ibid.

## The Order of the Program

In a music concert event, designing the order of the program is one of the most important things to do, different orders of programs may lead the atmosphere differently. In some piano competitions, organization of the program is also one of the grading items. For example, in the Busoni Competition, free choice repertoire for contestants abounds. Thus, how to select the repertoire and how to organize the program is a big part of this competition.

Some contestants love to start with a slower piece to warm up their hands or to brew the emotions. Some contestants prefer to start with a flashy work to attract the listeners' attention. Some arrange the program with key relation, tempo relation, or story relation. A friend of pianist Alexander Panfilov told Panfilov that he received a comment from a jury member in an international competition who said that the performance was fine, but the piece that he chose to finish with was too quiet.<sup>241</sup> Actually, in an auditorium, a virtuosic piece usually receives more applause and cheers, and it is probably the reason why so many contestants chose the Liszt *Dante Sonata* as their competition repertoire and placed it at the end of their program in Busoni Competition.

In the XVI International Tchaikovsky Competition held in 2019, the six finalists had to perform two concerti in the final round. Chinese contestant Tianxu An prepared Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No. 1 in B-flat Minor, Op. 23, and Rachmaninoff's *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*. He was prepared to start with the Tchaikovsky concerto, likely more comfortable to start with than the Rachmaninoff *Rhapsody*. But the organizer of the competition made a mistake, and the orchestra started with

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241. Alexander Panfilov, interview by author, Paris, November 10, 2019.

Rachmaninoff. In the Tchaikovsky Concerto No. 1, there is a four-measure orchestra introduction, but in the Rachmaninoff *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*, the tempo is a galvanizing “Allegro vivace,” and the first octaves of the piano part come in just three beats after the orchestra. Tianxu An was shocked on stage and entered one beat late. This situation definitely influenced the result of the competition, although the competition fired the person who made the horrible mistake and offered Tianxu An another chance to perform his final round concerti. Tianxu An was upset but did not accept the offer. Finally, he received Fourth Prize and “Special Prize for Self-Confidence and Bravery”.<sup>242</sup>

Tchaikovsky Concerto No. 1 in B-flat Minor, Op. 23, is a piece more comfortable to start with instead of Rachmaninoff *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*, it has a slower tempo at the beginning. If Tianxu An had originally placed the Rachmaninoff *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini* at beginning of the program, and if the organizer of XVI International Tchaikovsky Competition had made mistakes on program order and started with Tchaikovsky Concerto No. 1 in B-flat Minor, Op. 23, Tianxu An probably could managed the mistake well because it gave him four measures to react.

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242. Peter Dobrin, “Anxiety Nightmare Comes Horribly True for Rising-Star Philly Pianist at Moscow Competition,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, July 21, 2019, <https://www.inquirer.com/news/curtis-institute-music-20190721.html>.

## CHAPTER V – CONCLUSIONS

Each pianist has their own thoughts on selecting their competition repertoire. These thoughts are based on their competition experiences and their knowledge of different repertoire. Different competitions have their own repertoire requirements which in turn need different strategies. The following conclusion summarizes a few points.

### Competition Experience

For the WFIMC piano competitions, different participants have different backgrounds and various competition experiences. Some of the participants perform regularly under contract, some of them are frequent prize winners, some of them are piano professors, and most of them are current students from various conservatories. Many of the WFIMC piano competitions contestants are experienced competitors. Usually a jury member of the competition, as opposed to a separate set of jury members, selects the contestants in the preliminary round to make sure the competition will have good quality contestants for the public rounds.

Different experiences lead to different ways of preparing for the competitions. Some experienced contestants have similar strategies and thoughts on competition repertoire. Most of them, when selecting repertoire for competitions, apart from choosing their best repertoire, also tried to avoid choosing high-risk repertoire.

One example of avoiding high-risk repertoire can be seen in Honggi Kim, who won the Schumann Prize of the 2018 Géza Anda Competition. He had a great deal of competition experience and was also a frequent prize winner. He felt that he was not good at playing Classical period works, and for him, Mozart presented a higher risk to

perform in the competition. In the second round of the Géza Anda Competition, the jury members requested him to choose either a Haydn or Mozart sonata to perform on stage; he chose Haydn to avoid the risk of performing Mozart.<sup>243</sup>

Another experienced piano competition contestant, Alexander Panfilov, also talked about this issue. Panfilov has competed in different international piano competitions for approximately fifteen years. Thus far, he has won a total of fifteen first prizes from various international competitions, and, of course, many other ‘non-first prize’ awards. In competitions, Panfilov thinks that it is better to avoid a piece which is too well-known such as Chopin Ballade No. 1 in G Minor, Op. 23. In an interview after his performance in the Qualifying Audition round of the Long-Thibaud-Crespin Competition, he shared his viewpoint, “When the piece is overly famous and every person has their own opinion of how exactly you should play, or there is a cliché, then I think it is not so good for a competition.”<sup>244</sup>

Because of different competition experiences, everyone’s competition preparation time is also different. Experienced contestants usually have more competition repertoire already learned, so they do not need to learn many new works, which takes a greater amount of preparation time. In the 2019 Busoni Competition, seven contestants interviewed by the author all had a similar answer: they prepared for the competition for one year, or a little bit more than one year. The Busoni Competition has run as a biennial competition, rather than an annual competition, since 2002. For the interviewees who participated in the Busoni 2019 competition, they all started

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243. Honggi Kim, interview by author, Zurich, June 11, 2018.

244. Alexander Panfilov, interview by author, Paris, November 10, 2019.

preparation for it once they knew the pre-selection results which were announced in August 2018. Many, but not all, were experienced international piano competition contestants.

The First Prize winner of the Busoni Competition 2018/19 was Emanuil Ivanov. Ivanov had some previous experience participating in different international competitions. The Second Prize winner, Shiori Kuwahara, had only participated in three international piano competitions, including the 2018/19 Busoni Piano Competition. Comparing these two winners, Ivanov prepared independently for the competition. He did not rely on anyone to give him advice on selecting or organizing his competition program. He said, “I’ve never actually relied upon someone else to choose my repertoire. Since I have started to play [the piano] seriously, which was around ten or eleven years old, I have chosen my repertoire for myself.”<sup>245</sup> Unlike Ivanov, Kuwahara took much advice from her professor in selecting the program.<sup>246</sup>

Competition experience affects the repertoire selection and preparation of a contestant. And of course, there are some contestants who are not so experienced performing in international piano competitions. They might potentially be a fine pianist, but they are not familiar with how to select repertoire for a competition. If these contestants could receive good suggestions from their professor or someone else, they might still experience a nice result.

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245. Emanuil Ivanov, interview by author, Bolzano, September 3, 2019.

246. Shiori Kuwahara, interview by author, Bolzano, August 29, 2019.

## Selecting the “Right” Competition

There are fifty-nine piano competitions in the WFIMC and hundreds of international piano competitions (not affiliated with WFIMC) all over the world. Different competitions have their own design for repertoire requirements. Of the WFIMC competitions, some of them are similar, and some of them are quite different. There are pianists who apply to many different competitions, but not many pianists who can attend different types of competitions. Still, one must choose the competition carefully. For example, every pianist has a repertoire which they play well and a repertoire that is less familiar. For example, Garrick Ohlsson, First Prize winner in the 1970 Warsaw Chopin International Piano Competition, gave an interview in 1974 in which he mentioned that he was not good at French Impressionism when he was eighteen because his teacher at that time was not interested in that area.<sup>247</sup>

Basically, in both Vienna and Telekom Beethoven Competition, the contestants who apply like Beethoven’s music and think they can perform Beethoven well. Of course, they have learned enough of Beethoven’s repertoire to apply for this competition. The same is true for the Warsaw International Chopin Piano Competition. Although the Chopin winners developed their career not only with Chopin repertoire, most of them, or almost all of them, are recognized by the public as a “Chopin interpreter.”

In the Long-Thibaud-Crespin Competition, there is a very special repertoire of lesser-known French music, which perhaps limits the number of participants to a smaller number than would be otherwise. Ryutaro Suzuki, a Japanese contestant of the Long-

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247. Dean Elder, “Winner in Warsaw: Conversation with Garrick Ohlsson,” *Clavier* (December 1974): 14.

Thibaud-Crespin Competition said, “If you live in Paris, and if you have studied in Paris for many years, I think it’s natural to have, or at least feel comfortable, familiar with French repertoire.”<sup>248</sup> Indeed, there were many contestants from the Paris Conservatoire who participated in the Long-Thibaud-Crespin Competition. It is one of the top piano competitions of the world. The reasons why the Paris Conservatoire students want to participate in this competition could be the repertoire; the short (non-existent for all purposes) travel distance; and also, the reputation of the competition.

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248. Ryutaro Suzuki, interview by author, Paris, November 12, 2019.

### Select the “Right” Repertoire

In this research, most of the competition jury member interviewees responded that the repertoire is not the aspect which influences the result; instead, the result is based on how contestants interpret their own choice. However, many people still think that the repertoire itself influences the result. F. Warren O'Reilly, music editor for the *Miami News* and a founder of the Ives Festival of Miami and the Chopin Foundation in Florida, wrote a 1977 article entitled “Report from the Liszt-Bartók Competition,” in which he states, “I suppose the contestants ought to be advised that the first prize is somewhat more likely to go to one who chooses a Liszt concerto than a Bartók.” He came to this conclusion due to the reason that the best performance of a Liszt concerto in the Liszt-Bartók Competition would receive an invitation to perform when the annual Liszt Birthday Gala Concert was to be held. And it is preferable if the soloist, on that occasion, is also the top winner in the competition.<sup>249</sup>

In Dean Elder's 1976 *Report from Montreal*, he mentioned that the Brahms Piano Concerto No. 1 in D Minor, Op. 15, “is a less successful contest piece” than the Rachmaninoff Third Concerto. He continues, “There isn't the complete abandoned frenzy so exciting for contest audiences and juries.”<sup>250</sup>

In fact, these above statements aspects are the reason why some experienced contestants are always trying to avoid risky pieces. It is clear in the Warsaw International Chopin Piano Competition since 1949, that apart from the 1980 First Prize winner Dang Thai Son, the other First Prize winners of this competition in different

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249. F. Warren O'Reilly, “Report from the Liszt-Bartók Competition,” *Clavier* (January 1977): 46.

250. Dean Elder, “Report from Montreal,” *Clavier* 15 (November 1976): 34.

years had always chosen Chopin Concerto No. 1 in E Minor, Op. 11. It is apparent that Chopin Concerto No. 1 is a better competition piece than the Concerto No. 2.

Another example can be seen in the 2016 International Robert Schumann Piano Competition. In the final concerto round, there were two possibilities for contestants' choice: one was the Schumann Concerto in A Minor, Op. 54; the other choice was the *Introduction and Allegro Appassionato (Konzertstück)* for Piano and Orchestra in G Major, Op. 92, along with the *Introduction and Concert Allegro* in D Minor, Op. 134. All the ninety-one contestants chose the Concerto in A Minor instead of the other paired option.<sup>251</sup> "A better competition piece" appears to help a contestant go further.

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251. Hrosvith Dahmen and Thomas Synofzik, 17. *Internationaler Robert Schumann Wettbewerb Klavier/Gesang* (Zwickau: Stadtverwaltung Zwickau): 79-125.

## The Chances of Winning Competitions

“Entering a competition is like going to a 7-11 and buying a lottery ticket,” said Emanuel Ax in an 2018 interview for *Living the Classical Life*, an ongoing series of filmed interviews with musicians from around the world.<sup>252</sup> In fact, this is true. Even if a pianist has won several competition prizes, it is not guaranteed that they will win another prize in their next competition. Just like buying lottery tickets, if you spend more money, you have a higher chance of winning big money, yet there is no guarantee. Therefore, if one sends in more competition applications, they increase their *chances* to win prizes. English pianist John Ogdon said, “I think I’ll just have to take the gamble,” before he went to the Second International Tchaikovsky Competition in 1962. Luckily, Ogdon won this gamble.<sup>253</sup>

However, if one wants to win this “lottery”, one must have at least enough money to first buy a lottery ticket. The same logic applies to music competitions; if one wishes to apply to one or more competitions, one has to have enough repertoire. Of course, there is some repertoire overlap in various piano competitions. Still, if a pianist wishes to develop their performance career, they should have a large amount of repertoire on hand.

In many WFIMC international piano competitions, there are always many pianists who send in applications. These include experienced prize winners and some less experienced contestants. Not all the experienced prize winners will be selected in

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252. Emanuel Ax, interview by Zsolt Bognár, “Entering a Competition is Like Going to a 7-11 and Buying a Lottery Ticket,” *Living the Classical Life* Episode 56 (April 10, 2018): <https://www.livingtheclassicallife.com/56-emanuel-ax>.

253. “Jolly Good Bash,” *Time Magazine*, Vol. 79 (May 1962): 79, <http://lynx.lib.usm.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=54208230&site=ehost-live>.

the preliminary round of a competition. Numerous good pianists get eliminated in the video selection round. One of the jury members of the 2017 Telekom Beethoven Competition, Akiko Ebi, touched on when she was the artistic director of the Hamamatsu International Piano Competition. Regarding the situation of selecting the contestants in the preliminary round she said:

“We have three to four hundred applications, and many of them are as good as Gupta [Ashok Gupta, the Chamber Music Prize winner of the 2017 Telekom Beethoven Competition]. But we cannot take all of them, because the numbers we can take are so little. So, you have to just keep trying, try more times.”<sup>254</sup>

However, the contestants who are able to advance to the final stages or win prizes are usually already experienced piano competition contestants who have won many prizes.

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254. Akiko Ebi, interview by author, Bonn, December 8, 2017.

## Career Development After Competitions

Many ways of developing the career of a concert pianist exist. But apparently, participating in competitions is one of the most efficient ways. In the piano concert world, most of the legacy figures have risen from competitions. Although in recent years, the times seem different than in previous years because there are so many international piano competitions. It is now not possible that all the winners can develop their careers simply by competing.

*Living the Classical Life*'s website features a quote by Gary Graffman excerpted from an interview of him: "I didn't allow Lang Lang or Yuja Wang to compete."<sup>255</sup> In the 2018 interview, Graffman relates that he organized auditions directly with conductors for his students Yuja Wang and Lang Lang, among others, in part because of their talent, but also so they would not need to attend a competition to develop their career.<sup>256</sup> It is also an alternative and good way to develop a career. But unfortunately, not every talented pianist has the chance to meet the teacher who knows well conductors of important orchestras and who can thus aid in opening doors for them. Therefore, many pianists are still trying hard to participate in various competitions.

Graffman also mentioned in the interview a reason why he was against competitions, despite having benefited himself from some. He thinks that if one needs to go to a competition, he must show their best repertoire for winning a competition. This fact prevents students from learning new repertoire because the best repertoire is the one

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255. Gary Graffman, interview by Zsolt Bognár, "I was Totally Against Competitions— I Didn't Allow Lang Lang or Yuja Wang to Compete," *Living the Classical Life* Episode 53 (February 22, 2018): <https://www.livingtheclassicallife.com/53-gary-graffmann>.

256. Ibid.

they have practiced for a long time.<sup>257</sup> In Bob Doerschuk's 1980 article "Conservatory Education: Behind the Scenes at Juilliard and Eastman," he summarizes the thoughts of pianist and Juilliard professor Martin Canin:

"There's a tendency to play it slightly safe if you want to do competitions. You find yourself perfecting the same pieces so that you'll play them so wonderfully that you'll win anything you entered. I think that's both good and bad. On the one hand, it brings up the level of the specific piece, but it might discourage a student from seeking a larger repertoire."<sup>258</sup>

Alan Walker, English-Canadian musicologist, scholar on Liszt and Chopin, as well as a jury member of many international piano competitions, has elaborated upon some of his thoughts in regards to competitions and the development of aspiring musicians:

How many know the Schubert songs, the Haydn string quartets, or even the operas of Mozart? Back comes the reply: "It is not our job to know these pieces." To which I can only repond: "Then you never really knew what your job was in the first place, because great music hangs together, each piece throws light on all the others. You will never play a single Beethoven sonata as well as you might play it until you have become acquainted with the others." Nor is this all. Few are the students today who are able to sight-read well, transpose from one key to another, and improvise on a given theme. They are too busy putting a final polish on the six or eight pieces in their competition repertoire.<sup>259</sup>

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257. Gary Graffman, interview by Zsolt Bognár, "I was Totally Against Competitions— I Didn't Allow Lang Lang or Yuja Wang to Compete," *Living the Classical Life* Episode 53 (February 22, 2018): <https://www.livingtheclassicallife.com/53-gary-graffman>.

258. Bob Doerschuk, "Conservatory Education: Behind the Scenes at Juilliard and Eastman," *Contemporary Keyboard* 6 (July 1980): 32.

259. Alan Walker, "Cassandra Speaks," *Polonaise* (Fall 2019): 21.

In fact, Gary Graffman did let one of his students attend a competition. He had previously arranged for his student Haochen Zhang to meet a conductor and some agents, but at that time, the agents had too many pianists and would not give Zhang a chance. So, Zhang went to the Van Cliburn Competition and won First Prize in 2009.<sup>260</sup>

Attending competitions is not an easy way to develop a professional career. Fewer and fewer contracts are offered to prize winners in present days. But it is still the most efficient way become known by the public.

Participating in a piano competition could be considered as a part of a pianist's performance education. Pianist Daumants Liepiņš speaks of this education, "There are many people who also applied to many competitions. If they are accepted, then they go. I also applied to many [competitions], I think this is a part of education."<sup>261</sup> Liepiņš has participated in many different piano competitions and expressed these thoughts after participating in the 2018 Concours Géza Anda.

As the old saying goes, "Rome was not built in a day." And developing a strong ability takes time and experience. Before attending a big competition, most pianists start with small competitions. Of course, some very talented pianists have won a big prize in their first important big competition. Still, more pianists fail many times before they stand in the limelight. They learn from failure and gain valuable experience, receive constructive feedback from different jury members, and adjust their strategies for the

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260. Gary Graffman, interview by Zsolt Bognár, "I was Totally Against Competitions— I Didn't Allow Lang Lang or Yuja Wang to Compete," *Living the Classical Life* Episode 53 (February 22, 2018): <https://www.livingtheclassicallife.com/53-gary-graffman>.

261. Daumants Liepiņš, interview by author, Zurich, June 6, 2018.

next competition challenge. The competition rite gives them a valuable opportunity to learn about themselves, to test themselves, and to develop their talents to a higher level.

## APPENDIX A – TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEWS

Table 59

*The Use of Punctuation in Interview Transcripts*

Punctuation	Explain
Brackets [ ]	Include information not specifically mentioned: 1. Non-verbal occurrence 2. A proper name 3. An inaudible passage 4. Clarification
Hanging em-dash [followed by another speaker's comment]—	Interruption

[Note: All mentions in the Appendix of the “Paris Conservatoire” and the “Conservatoire de Paris” are to the Conservatoire national supérieur de musique et de danse de Paris.]

**Alberto Ferro**, (Italian) contestant in the International Telekom Beethoven Competition Bonn 2017.

First Prize and Audience Prize.

Interview by Yuan-Hung Lin, Munich, September 8, 2019.

**Lin:** Are you currently studying with anyone?

**Ferro:** I just finished my second master's degree. It was just this year. So, I still study with Epifanio Comis. He is one of the greatest teachers of Italy. Now I'm continuing with private lessons.

**Lin:** Do you have an agent?

**Ferro:** Actually no. Now I self-manage. I know having a manager would work good, but I feel it's not easy to get a good manager. Maybe it's about luck; maybe it's about something else.

**Lin:** How long have you prepared for the International Beethoven Piano Competition?

**Ferro:** This was an unusual experience. I was not planning to apply. I looked at the brochure and noticed that this competition's deadline was approaching. I found I had the repertoire for this competition, so I decided to apply. I would say about three months' preparation.

**Lin:** I know that you were also the prize winner of Busoni Competition and Queen Elisabeth. How long have you prepared for these two competitions?

**Ferro:** For Busoni, this competition takes two years. One year for pre-selections and one year for the rest of the rounds. I prepared for two years. I was very lucky that I got a good result. It was my first very important competition for me to grow as a concert pianist. The Queen Elisabeth, which actually is one of the top three most important international piano competitions, I received many chances because of winning this competition.

**Lin:** How did you decide to enter these competitions? Because of their reputation or the rules of repertoire?

**Ferro:** I just checked the Alink-Argerich Foundation, I looked for the dates which I'm available to do the competition. And I decided to have a try.

**Lin:** Do you regularly participate in international piano competition every year?

**Ferro:** This year I will participate in Viotti Piano Competition [Viotti Music Competition 2019], it also has a long history. It's in Italy.

**Lin:** Will you go to the Queen Elisabeth Competition again next year [2020]?

**Ferro:** I can't. I'm already a prize winner. And it's better for me to try different competitions instead of going to the same one. It is good for me that I could travel to different cities and perform there.

**Lin:** What about Chopin [International Fryderyk Chopin Piano Competition 2020]?

**Ferro:** Yes. Chopin is every five years, maybe I'll have a look at it.

**Lin:** How did you decide the repertoire for this competition? I mean for the Beethoven.

**Ferro:** It is not a typical Beethoven Piano Competition in Vienna that you have to play all Beethoven from the beginning to the end. There are a variety of choices such as they have contemporary music of Schoenberg and other famous twentieth century composers, and also we have to play the contemporary piece after 1980. There were also Baroque music and pieces from Romantic period. I chose the pieces I already have, otherwise I discuss with my teacher.

**Lin:** Which one is your old repertoire? Which one did you prepare for this competition?

**Ferro:** Yes. For example, Beethoven last sonata I learned it in my last year of my bachelor degree. And also this one [points finger to the Bach Prelude and Fugue No. 3 in C-Sharp Major, BWV 848], and that was new [Beethoven 32 Variations in C Minor, WoO 80]. Tempest I played before bachelors, as well as the Mendelssohn Variations [in D Minor, Op 54]. Schumann [Op. 133] I learned for the Clara Haskil competition (July 2017), because it was obligatory in the first round, and it is allowed to perform at Beethoven competition. I find it very particular as series of small pieces, because it's like representing the day from the sunrise to the sunset (even if the title is *Songs of Dawn*) with a great variety in character, dynamic, tempo and atmosphere. Liszt: I have had in my repertoire for four years. This Rhapsody is very energetic and also humorous in the folk themes. I think it could be a suitable piece either for competitions or for concerts.

[See Table 40]

**Lin:** How did you decide to choose these new repertoires?

**Ferro:** First of all, I think the pieces are interesting, so I chose it. Choosing the pieces has to regard with my personality. I'm also trying to grow as a professional musician, so I have to take the risk. But I never perform the new pieces as the first time in the competitions. I always run through them somewhere else before I go to a competition.

**Lin:** How about the order of the repertoire?

**Ferro:** For the third round, I put Shostakovich at the end because this is a hard one, make a brilliant flashy ending and let the audience clap crazy. For the final concerto round, there are two concertos I could choose. In my case, I'm lucky; we finalists are all happy

and confident for our own choices. The second Beethoven concerto was totally new for me, No.4 I had play in Busoni competition, so I decided to go for No.4.

**Lin:** Which round do you think is the most challenge for you?

**Ferro:** First round. I was more nervous. And of course, the last round. Because you want to have a good ending. For the repertoire side, of course is the third round, there were more new repertoire there, and it's the longest round.

**Lin:** Do you still learn new pieces for new competitions?

**Ferro:** Yes, just like now, I'm learning a new Beethoven Sonata for the competition next month. I still need to grow up, so I'm still trying to learn more repertoire.

**Lin:** When you're choosing the repertoire, do you consider if your audience or the jury would like it, or do you think of only yourself?

**Ferro:** First I try to focus on the shape of the competition, then the thoughts and the personality of the composer, technical skill, musicality. But I think the main thing is focus on how I interpret the piece. So first, the interpretation; second, the taste of the audience.

For example, when I played in Italy [Busoni Competition], I could have more choice of what I want to do. But in Germany [Telekom Beethoven], I need to focus on the shape of the competition, respecting the audience taste.

**Lin:** What are the challenges of practicing the entire repertoire?

**Ferro:** For the Beethoven Competition, it is important to keep the style. Not too many rubato, not too much pedal, focusing on the technique and on the rhythm, not too be vertical in the melody, to think about the human voice, to think about each notes, that's the most challenging thing.

**Lin:** Do you think Beethoven's works is your best repertoire right now?

**Ferro:** I can say now, until now I feel very close, but who knows, I'm still young, it might change in the future.

**Lin:** Do you think this competition should make any changes to the requirements of the repertoire?

**Ferro:** I think they already did it after the last edition. And I think now it is better, to move the chamber music round to the Final, so the jury could judge the chamber and the concerto together.

**Lin:** About the challenge part, I would like to know when you were preparing the Busoni, what was challenging?

**Ferro:** Busoni competition has more varieties; the challenge is focusing on the variety.

**Lin:** What about the Queen Elisabeth competition?

**Ferro:** Elisabeth is the longest competition ever. We have to learn a totally new piece in the competition after getting into the Final. I tried to learn by heart, it was really difficult. The most difficult thing is to survive, because the competition is too long.

**Lin:** Thank you very much! That's all for today.

**Bruno Vlahek**, (Spanish) contestant in the International Telekom Beethoven Competition Bonn 2017.

Interview by Yuan-Hung Lin, Bonn, December 6, 2017.

**Lin:** So Bruno, where do you study?

**Vlahek:** My last study was at Madrid. I studied at the Queen Sofia School of Music with Professor Dmitri Bashkistrov.

**Lin:** Are you working anywhere?

**Vlahek:** Yes. At the moment I work in Madrid, in Spain, at the Katarina Gurska Conservatory as a piano professor.

**Lin:** How long have you prepared for this competition?

**Vlahek:** Well, I mean for this kind of competition, actually you prepare your whole life. I mean, the repertoire is so big, you cannot specifically prepare just for this competition because you have to play two Beethoven piano concertos, three Beethoven sonatas, chamber music, romantic pieces, contemporary works, prelude and fugue by Bach. So, it is the repertoire you actually have for your life. Of course, when you know you want to come to this competition, you start to prepare hard. I started about one year ago when I knew it was approaching. I had to apply. I had to send the recording—that's the moment I started.

**Lin:** How did you decide to enter this particular competition?

**Vlahek:** First of all, it has the name of Beethoven, I like Beethoven very much, he is one of my favorite composers. This competition's repertoire is a circle around Beethoven. All the composers here for the competition are somehow related to Beethoven. For example, Bach is a predecessor of Beethoven, in piano literature we say that Beethoven is the New Testament, and Bach is the Old Testament for pianists. So, we started with Bach, then comes Beethoven. Then for example, I played Brahms, which is the next step of Beethoven. He was really influenced by Beethoven. Then Liszt, he was the student of Czerny, and Czerny was a pupil of Beethoven. Even the contemporary parts, the Austrian composer Schoenberg, who created the new technique, the new vision of sound, he is a very Germanic composer. So, it is still in the line of Beethoven.

**Lin:** Okay. Have you participated in any other international competitions? If so, which ones?

**Vlahek:** Yes. I've taken part in many of them [international competitions]. For example, I was in Bolzano, the Busoni competition, I was the Finalist there. And "Ricard Viñes" [2008] in Lérida in Spain, I won the First Prize. And "Alexander Scriabin" 2010 in Paris, also First Prize. Then I was in Shanghai, in China, the China Shanghai International

Piano Competition. Last year I won Third Prize and the Audience Prize at the Lyon Piano Competition in France.

**Lin:** Are those repertoire repeated?

**Vlahek:** Well, some of it yes. But so specifically so much Beethoven. The other competitions you have more repertoire, you could play from other composers.

**Lin:** You are already experienced with competitions.

**Vlahek:** Yes.

**Lin:** So, this is just a piece of cake.

**Vlahek:** [Laughs] Well, it's not piece of cake. This is a really big competition [Telekom Beethoven].

**Lin:** Do you still get nervous when doing this?

**Vlahek:** Well, you always get a little bit nervous, but not big nervous. I think it is somehow also good because you want to do your best.

**Lin:** Okay. So, how did you decide the repertoire for this competition? Before you answer, I would like to ask you to write down your third and final round repertoire, because it doesn't show up now.

**Vlahek:** [Writing down his repertoire. See Table 39.] Okay, that's it.

**Lin:** I know you have to decide the repertoire by yourself because you don't have a teacher, right?

**Vlahek:** Sure. But most of these pieces I worked with my teachers. Some of them were new, for example, the Beethoven Sonata [in F Minor, Op. 2, No. 1] that I was supposed to play in the third round [Semi-Finals], this was a new piece for me. Well, it's the repertoire I really would like to play.

**Lin:** Could you please tell me which pieces were new and which were old? I mean, do you have any new pieces that were practiced particularly for this competition?

**Vlahek:** Here they are all old [first and second round], in the third round I have some new pieces. The Beethoven Sonata in the third round was new, and Schoenberg.

**Lin:** And the others you chose from your old repertoire.

**Vlahek:** Yes.

**Lin:** So, what is the main consideration in choosing the repertoire for these two new repertoire and for the other, old repertoire?

**Vlahek:** There're several elements. First of all, you have to select the pieces that you really play well, and the pieces I know well, and I feel well when playing them. It is important, you have to show the best of yourself. Of course, there are some limitation on the repertoire, you were limited and you couldn't really do what you want. But I believe that even there many people are choosing the same piece [Piano Fantasy in G Minor/B Major, Op. 77], I still could do something different, to show my own personality.

In second and third round, regarding the Beethoven, there is a list of sonatas that we have to choose. These maybe have some sonatas that are not often played. I like the No.1 sonata very much, I haven't learned it before, but I taught my students this sonata before. I like the idea of this music, so I decided to choose this one, that's the opportunity to play.

About Schoenberg, I never played Arnold Schoenberg, I also taught my students to play this, and I listened to many musicians such as Pollini played this, Glenn Gould, also. This music is really nice, I really like it, and I think I could show something interesting. So, I decided to learn it.

About the concerto round, No.1 was learned for this competition. I really wanted to learn this one. Sometimes you just need to have motivation to play, and this competition is a good motivation.

**Lin:** Did you play Op. 109 or Op. 110 before?

**Vlahek:** No, I didn't.

**Lin:** So, Op. 111 is your only choice.

**Vlahek:** But you know somehow from these sonatas, I remember the moment my teacher told me to play one of the late Beethoven sonatas, and Op. 111 was my choice. So, I decided on it long time ago.

**Lin:** So, why this one?

**Vlahek:** I'm also a composer, so this sonata is interesting to me. It has only two movements, Beethoven tried to destroy the form to create a new look of music. It opens the door for composers' possibilities such as Richard Strauss, Gustav Mahler's Eighth Symphony. It is a very special, very philosophical work.

**Lin:** Okay. What piece do you think you could play better?

**Vlahek:** Well, I think it is the big Romantic pieces. Beethoven Piano Sonata Op. 111,

Brahms and Liszt Rhapsody, this kind of music I could play well. When I saw this repertoire was required for this competition, I felt really good. And I like to play Bach, so, when I saw the repertoire, I just felt really good.

**Lin:** What do you think about your performance in the first and second round?

**Vlahek:** You won't be completely happy with your performance, and that's the lifelong training and learning and lifelong struggle. When they asked Pablo Casals (the famous Spanish cellist) at the age of eighty "Maestro, why are you practicing?" He said "Well, I'm improving my technique." So, you know. But I mean I was somehow satisfied, I think I presented myself well, and I was happy to receive positive feedback from audience and also from the members of jury.

**Lin:** Okay. Which piece do you think you play the best?

**Vlahek:** I think Op. 111. Bach was good, and the second round, maybe Liszt Spanish Rhapsody.

**Lin:** Are you happy with your repertoire choice?

**Vlahek:** Yes. I'm happy.

**Lin:** So, you think your repertoire choice helped you present yourself well on stage?

**Vlahek:** Definitely. Because this is the repertoire I like.

**Lin:** So, what are the challenges of practicing the entire repertoire?

**Vlahek:** The challenges are always to do something better in the repertoire you know. For example, the Brahms Variations on the Schumann Theme [Op. 9], this is maybe my longest playing piece in this repertoire. I played it the first time when I was fifteen years old. Now I'm playing it for fifteen or sixteen years already. Of course, you leave it for a while and take it back, and leave it again and take it back again. There's still a lot of things I want to do better that I wasn't happy when I played two days ago here. That's the challenge actually, to do it perfectly. But actually, you never do it perfectly because when you reach one level, you want more. You are always hungry. [Laughs]

**Lin:** How do you make it better every time you pick up an old piece?

**Vlahek:** Remember the places that you were not satisfied from the last performance. Like Brahms, I always catch some wrong notes, and I hate it, I really hate it. This is always the starting point that I want to do it perfectly, it is always very difficult, there's always something, and it always leaves the door open for the next time I play it. I just struggled.

**Lin:** Which piece is the most challenging one from your repertoire for this competition?

**Vlahek:** I'd say Stravinsky, the *Firebird*. It's the most difficult piece. Technically of this program. This is an old piece for me, I played it a lot. But it is always challenging because it is really difficult. You have to be in good shape for it. It is technically very difficult because it's originally an orchestra piece. Lots of chords, fast tempo, it's very challenging.

From interpretative aspect, that's definitely Op. 111 by Beethoven, it's somehow the most profound piece and most complex.

**Lin:** And it is in the first round.

**Vlahek:** Yes.

**Lin:** Did you encounter any difficulties during your preparation time?

**Vlahek:** No, it's fine. No special difficulties. [Laughs] Well, the difficulty is to find the balance, because it takes lots of time to practice these pieces. I mean, four rounds [of music] is a huge program.

**Lin:** How do you divide your time to practice because you're also working?

**Vlahek:** Yes. Two weeks ago I premiered a contemporary concerto in my hometown. There were many different programs you have to do at the same time. I have to compose, I have to teach, so that's really challenging. So, you have to get up very early to practice, and go to bed very late. It's a lot of works.

**Lin:** How do you prepare this kind of competition with a five-round repertoire [including the video preliminary round]?

**Vlahek:** First you always started with the new things. Then you started the pieces from the first round, the tricky passage from Stravinsky, from Liszt, and from *Appassionata*. Then you divided when it comes closer, today first stage, and tomorrow second stage. You won't get to the end because you'll be frustrated with Beethoven.

**Lin:** Do you think you are more focused on first round? Because in my observation, in the first round, everybody seemed to have well played, but in the second round, half of the contestants had memory slips. It feels like most of them are more focused on first round than the second round.

**Vlahek:** That's definitely true. At least when it comes closer to the date of the competition. A few days before I arrived here, I tried to go through my entire program (all four stages, tried to do it in one day). But when you arrive here, you actually concentrate just on the first round because it is what's coming. You need to prepare everything. After I've played the first round, I'll think about the second round.

**Lin:** Do you think this competition should make any changes in the repertoire requirements?

**Vlahek:** It's okay. That's just a personal thought. The only thing maybe I would change is the final round. I would like to play fifth concertos [Beethoven Piano Concerto No. 5], we have to prepare two concertos—first and third, second and fourth, fifth and the violin concerto. And I really don't like the violin concerto. So, if I have to play the fifth, I'll have to also play the violin concerto. So, I chose the first and third. But this is just the personal thoughts.

**Lin:** And other parts of the repertoire? Like the late sonatas, maybe it would be better to have them in a later round instead of the first round?

**Vlahek:** I like the Op. 111 of Beethoven, I don't mind playing it in the first round. It's very personal; some people may think it's not good.

**Lin:** Is there anything I haven't ask that you would like to speak about?

**Vlahek:** No, I think is fine. But if you want to ask something else?

**Lin:** How about the organization?

**Vlahek:** The organization is very good. The people who work on the organization are really kind. Sophie, Lena, Jonas, they are all very kind people. We had a good time with them.

**Lin:** Do you live with a host family?

**Vlahek:** No, because I prefer to stay in a hotel on my own. I prefer to have my own space, own rhythm, to eat when I want to eat. You know sometimes the people are really kind. I had some really good memories from some host families. But you're in a stranger's house, you have to obey the rules, you could get too cold or too warm, and you don't feel comfortable to say. You may like their food, you may not like. Something like that. So, I just feel better to be in the hotel. And I would like to stay in the city center, I feel comfortable there, I could go to the restaurant I like, and go to the Christmas Market. [Laughs]

**Lin:** Okay. We still have some more time, I'll ask some more questions. For your other competitions, are those repertoire your lifelong pieces?

**Vlahek:** Yes. Some of them, yes. There are some specific pieces which you don't play so often such as the Schoenberg piece, and the Beethoven Fantasy [Op. 77]. These are not so often played in the competition. For some other competitions, I definitely won't put in these two piano concertos [Beethoven Piano Concerto No. 1 and No. 3]. In the final round, usually people play Tchaikovsky or Rachmaninoff or Prokofiev or Brahms. But

other pieces like Beethoven Op. 111, *Appassionata*, Liszt Rhapsody, and Stravinsky are popular in competitions.

**Lin:** Do you think it is important for pianists to go to competitions?

**Vlahek:** The thing that it is difficult is to get known without presenting yourself on some platform. Yeah, competitions are a good platform.

**Lin:** Have you ever been eliminated from the first round or the video round?

**Vlahek:** Oh, yes. Of course. But going to competition is good. Even you don't get prizes, you could receive some good comments. But you have to be careful, some jury members they don't give you constructive comments, but they just want you to go to their master class.

**Lin:** Okay, I think that's all for today. Thank you so much.

**Daiki Kato**, (Japanese) contestant in the International Telekom Beethoven Competition Bonn 2017.

Interview by Yuan-Hung Lin, Bonn, December 6, 2017.

**Lin:** Where do you currently study?

**Kato:** In Tokyo, Japan. I'm currently studying at Showa University of Music.

**Lin:** Which degree are you doing now?

**Kato:** Actually I'm in a doctoral program, same as you. [Laughs]

**Lin:** Wow. Which year are you in?

**Kato:** I'm in my third year.

**Lin:** So you almost graduate?

**Kato:** No. Because this year I prepared for this competition. So, it is difficult to do both. [Laughs] For degree and competition, it is quite difficult and impossible for me.

**Lin:** Yes, of course. Did you also do your bachelor and master degree in the same school?

**Kato:** Yes.

**Lin:** And you always study with Fumiko Eguchi?

**Kato:** Yes.

**Lin:** Are you also working? Or just a student?

**Kato:** I'm just a student.

**Lin:** How long have you prepared for this competition?

**Kato:** For this competition, I think from April.

**Lin:** So, about eight months?

**Kato:** Yes.

**Lin:** Excellent. How did you decide to enter this competition?

**Kato:** Actually, in my doctor program, I research the Beethoven music score which was published in the nineteenth century. And I love Beethoven, that's the biggest reason to participate in this competition.

**Lin:** So, why not the Vienna Beethoven? That one is only focused on Beethoven repertoire.

**Kato:** I think that is also interesting for me. But this competition, as you know, it requires not only Beethoven, but also Bach, and the romantic period, and the modern, and the contemporary; so many pieces. I think, as a pianist, it is very important to get a big repertoire. So, it's a kind of challenge for me. That's why I want to be here.

**Lin:** Good. Have you participated in any other international competitions?

**Kato:** Yes. The first international competition I played was Épinal in France [Épinal International Piano Competition], when I was sixteen years old, around 2007. And then, I went to Ettlingen International Competition for Young Pianists [in Germany]; and Hamamatsu [Hamamatsu International Piano Competition]; Dublin Competition [Dublin International Piano Competition]; Liszt Competition [International Franz Liszt Piano Competition]; and Paderewski in Poland [Paderewski International Piano Competition 2013], I won the Third Prize. And, yes, quite a lot, I think too much.

**Lin:** So, how did you decide the repertoire for this competition? Did you decide with Professor Fumiko or by yourself?

**Kato:** No. I decided by myself. For example, the first round, there are not so many choices. So, I can decide very easily. And then the second and the semi-final program, it's difficult to decide because I think this is a competition, so I think it is important to show the ability of mechanics. But also, it is important to think about the repertoire's balance, that the relation between pieces and the relations of the composers. So, I think I tried to show the combination, to show new aspects that I want to show to the audience. In the second round, I chose the Schumann. I love Schumann also so I wanted to play. When I played, I was thinking which would better between Schumann Fantasy [Op. 17] and Schumann Symphony Etude [Op. 13], and I chose *Symphonic Etudes*. But I think the Schumann Fantasy is very lively compared with Beethoven's Piano Sonata. So, of course, it's a very good combination, especially with the *Waldstein* Sonata. But it's already common sense, so I decided to choose the other one.

**Lin:** May I ask you to write down the semi-final round repertoire please?

**Kato:** [Writes down the repertoire, see Table 41.]

**Lin:** Let me see, you have a total of nine new pieces.

**Kato:** Of course, when I was deciding this repertoire, it was already eight months ago. Some pieces were not that long, like Ligeti, I started in August.

**Lin:** Ligeti is difficult right?

**Kato:** Yes, very hard.

**Lin:** So, your main consideration of choosing the repertoire is the combination of the pieces?

**Kato:** Yes.

**Lin:** Do you also consider your ability, or do you just focus on the repertoire?

**Kato:** I think I love this piece. It means, I can play it. I believe myself, I can do that. But Ligeti Etude is really difficult. [Laughs]

**Lin:** Did you regret choosing it? [Laughs]

**Kato:** [Laughs.] When I first listened to the Ligeti, I thought it was interesting, and I wanted to play it. I practiced very hard every day, and I make it.

**Lin:** So, what do you think about your performance in the first round and the second round?

**Kato:** I think my first-round performance was better than the second round. Of course, I was very nervous for the first round. I mean in every competition I was always more nervous in the first round. The first round was the most difficult round for me because it is the first impression for the jury. It is very important. I always heard from the jury the comments of first round performance, which means they remember all. So, the first round is very tough. But in this time, I tried to think the audience is always waiting for good pianist, great music. They don't listen with very strict ears. So, I tried to relax, and I tried to open my mind. So, I'm satisfied with my first-round performance. Of course, I want to grow up, I want to be better and better, but so far, I'm satisfied.

**Lin:** So, what about the second round?

**Kato:** So, it is all new pieces on the stage. For competition, it's quite different than the concert. I think for concerts, the audience has to buy tickets themselves and wait for pianists. The atmosphere is different. Competition, it is more difficult to have relations with the audience.

**Lin:** Which piece do you think you played the best in previous rounds?

**Kato:** I don't know. Some audience told me that in the first round, Bach [BWV 874] and the Fantasy [Beethoven Op. 77] were very touching their heart.

**Lin:** What about the second round?

**Kato:** I think *Waldstein*.

**Lin:** So, are you happy with your repertoire choices?

**Kato:** Yes.

**Lin:** Do you think you present your program well?

**Kato:** No. If I did, I think I could pass. [Laughs]

**Lin:** It is really hard to say, it's just like gambling, right?

**Kato:** Yes.

**Lin:** What is the challenging of practicing the entire repertoire?

**Kato:** So, I can say it's not just for this repertoire, also for the other. To make beautiful sound, to try to show my opinion with the audience, and to touch their heart. It is challenging. For me, Beethoven's music already has great power. Anyone can just play it. But even I can get big energy from Beethoven's pieces. But sometimes Bach or Romantic pieces, they do not make it. I have to try to express their music. I have to always put my expression to the music, and always try to have big energy. So, I have to keep myself in good condition, not just mentally, and also spiritually.

**Lin:** Are there any pieces you are playing that you find especially challenging?

**Kato:** For fingers, Ligeti, no other choice [Laughs]. But Ligeti wrote down everything, so you just need to obey the suggestions. Mentally, Schumann is more difficult. We have to be careful and see what he wants to say, he is crazy.

**Lin:** Did you encounter any unusual difficulties during your preparation time?

**Kato:** Yes.

**Lin:** Do you think this competition should make any changes to the repertoire requirements?

**Kato:** I think it is already the best one. It's called the Beethoven Competition; everyone could play small pieces by Beethoven, and also chamber music and concertos.

**Lin:** Is there anything that I have not asked that you would like to speak about?

**Kato:** No. I think this is a great organized competition.

**Takayoshi Suzuki**, (Japanese) contestant in the International Telekom Beethoven Competition Bonn 2017.

Interview by Yuan-Hung Lin, Bonn, December 3, 2017.

Original interview in German, translated to English by Yuan-Hung Lin.

**Lin:** Where are you studying?

**Suzuki:** I study in Würzburg [University of Music Würzburg]. I am now doing the soloist class [equal to doctoral degree].

**Lin:** Oh! The soloist class!

**Suzuki:** Yes.

**Lin:** I see. Who do you study with?

**Suzuki:** His name is Alexander Fleischer.

**Lin:** What year are you right now?

**Suzuki:** Right now, I'm in the fifth semester of soloist class.

**Lin:** Do you work?

**Suzuki:** No.

**Lin:** How long have you prepared for this competition?

**Suzuki:** Three months.

**Lin:** Only three months?

**Suzuki:** Yes. I was in another competition.

**Lin:** Which competition did you participate in?

**Suzuki:** Munich Competition.

**Lin:** ARD?

**Suzuki:** Exactly. I participated in that one.

**Lin:** Do both competitions [Telekom Beethoven and ARD] have the same repertoire requirements?

**Suzuki:** No. They are very different.

**Lin:** Only three months preparation for this competition, that's unbelievable.

**Suzuki:** So, the repertoire was almost new for me. Not all of them, but almost.

**Lin:** And you played really well. Op. 110 [Beethoven Sonata No. 31 in A-flat Major, Op. 110] is very difficult.

**Suzuki:** Yes, especially the Fugue is difficult.

**Lin:** Is this piece new for you?

**Suzuki:** No, but the Variation [32 Variations in C Minor, WoO 80] was new for me.

**Lin:** And Bach [Prelude and Fugue in E Major, BWV 878]? Was Bach new for you?

**Suzuki:** That is already my piece.

**Lin:** Why did you decide to participate in this competition?

**Suzuki:** Two years ago, I heard about this competition. I was so excited, and I had decided to participate in this competition.

**Lin:** Do you like Beethoven?

**Suzuki:** Yes, of course.

**Lin:** Have you ever participated in any other international piano competitions?

**Suzuki:** Yes. I was in ARD, and in Lyon [International Piano Competition of Lyon (France)]. The other competitions were not so big.

**Lin:** How did you decide your repertoire for this competition?

**Suzuki:** The repertoire. Of course, I have selected some from my old pieces.

**Lin:** I don't know your second-round repertoire [the Competition had not yet published the second-round program].

**Suzuki:** For the second round I have *Eroica* Variations, and Liszt B Minor Sonata.

**Lin:** What else?

**Suzuki:** That's all.

**Lin:** What about the third round?

**Suzuki:** The cello sonata [Beethoven Sonata for Piano and Cello in C Major, Op. 102, No. 1], the one everyone has to play. And Pascal Dusapin, he is a French composer.

**Lin:** Maybe you could write down the repertoire for me?

**Suzuki:** Of course. [He starts to write:

J. S. Bach Prelude and Fugue in E Major, WTC 2, No. 9, BWV 878 (old)

L. V. Beethoven 32 Variations in C Minor, WoO 80 (new)

L. V. Beethoven Sonata No. 31 in A-flat Major, Op. 110 (old)

L. V. Beethoven *Eroica* Variations in E-flat Major, Op. 35 (new)

F. Liszt Sonata in B Minor, S. 178 (one year)

L. V. Beethoven Sonata for Cello and Piano No. 4 in C Major, Op. 102/1(new)

Pascal Dusapin (2016) (new)

S. Prokofiev Sonata No. 6 in A Major, Op. 82.

L. V. Beethoven Sonata No. 24 in F-sharp Major, Op. 78

D. Shostakovich Prelude and Fugue No. 16 in B-flat, Op. 87

L. V. Beethoven Piano Concerto No. 2 in B-flat Major, Op. 19 (new)

L. V. Beethoven Piano Concerto No. 4 in G Major, Op. 58 (one year)]

This piece was learned for the ARD competition [finger points to the Dusapin], it was composed in 2016.

**Lin:** Oh! This is quite new.

**Suzuki:** Yes, really new.

**Lin:** And the *Eroica* Variations was new?

**Suzuki:** Almost.

**Lin:** Liszt B Minor Sonata?

**Suzuki:** I learned it last year.

**Lin:** Not too old but also not quite new. And Dusapin? New?

**Suzuki:** Yes [Laughs].

**Lin:** Of course, it was composed last year.

**Suzuki:** Prokofiev [Sonata, No. 6] is an old piece for me. Beethoven [Sonata, Op.78] was new. Shostakovich [Prelude and Fugue No. 16 in B-flat Minor, Op. 87] was almost new. Beethoven Concerto No. 2 was new, No. 4 is my old repertoire.

**Lin:** [Marking the notes]

**Suzuki:** No. 4 [Beethoven Piano Concerto No. 4 in G Major, Op. 58] was learned in about one year.

**Lin:** How did you decide your repertoire for this competition?

**Suzuki:** I was supposed to choose *Waldstein* Sonata for the second round [Beethoven Piano Sonata No. 21 in C Major, Op. 53], but I was thinking that other composers might have chosen it. So, I decided not to choose this.

**Lin:** I see. When there was a possibility of many people choosing the *Waldstein* Sonata.

**Suzuki:** Exactly, and also the *Appassionata* Sonata.

**Lin:** Yes, and not so many people have chosen this one [the Beethoven Sonata Op. 78]. So, you chose the piece by its popularity, and then—

**Suzuki:** Most of the time it is like this [Laughs], but not always.

**Lin:** So, you have one, two, three, four, five, six, seven new pieces learned in three months?

**Suzuki:** Yes.

**Lin:** Unbelievable. So, did your teacher decide the repertoire with you? Or did you decide by yourself?

**Suzuki:** I decided by myself, but also not always [Laughs].

**Lin:** What was your main consideration when you were selecting the repertoire for competition? I know you said that you try to choose the piece that is not so popular, is there any other consideration? For example, your technique? Or like maybe you have big hands and you choose the piece which is suitable for big hands? Something like that?

**Suzuki:** I never think about that.

**Lin:** Really? You never think about other possibilities?

**Suzuki:** No. [Laughs]

**Lin:** How do you think about your first-round performance? Good? Bad? Or something else?

**Suzuki:** Bad. [Laughs]

**Lin:** Why do you think it was bad?

**Suzuki:** Bach, the prelude was a brain problem, I couldn't memorize. Beethoven Variations is new for me, and I couldn't create a mature performance. These were the problems, I had too many mistakes.

**Lin:** So, if you practice for six months, you probably could play much better.

**Suzuki:** Yes. [Laughs]

**Lin:** How do you think about your performance of Op. 110[ Beethoven Piano Sonata No. 31 in A-flat Major]?

**Suzuki:** Not bad.

**Lin:** Are you happy with your repertoire choice?

**Suzuki:** Yes, I'm satisfied.

**Lin:** What are the challenges of practicing the entire program?

**Suzuki:** [He takes a long time to think.]

**Lin:** Or maybe not [Laughs]?

**Suzuki:** [Laughs] Yes, of course. How do I say that? [He takes another ten seconds to think] Yes, I was always thinking about the characteristics of the piece, and dynamics, phrases, atmosphere. Yes, I think about those a lot. For example, when the music repeat, I'm always thinking of how could I make it different? Like Bach, how can I play differently and make the phrases different. I have here [he points to the score] almost self-composed.

**Lin:** What else?

**Suzuki:** Beethoven has almost everything written on the script. The breaks, phrases, dynamics, all of these were written on the score. But there are still lots of music details I have to think about.

**Lin:** Which piece do you think is the most challenging piece for you?

**Suzuki:** In this program?

**Lin:** Yes. Maybe concertos?

**Suzuki:** No, concertos were not difficult, those are easy. For me the Liszt Sonata and Pascal Dusapin were the most difficult pieces. Do you play piano?

**Lin:** Yes.

**Suzuki:** I can show you the score. [He shows his score of Dusapin.]

**Lin:** Did you buy this score?

**Suzuki:** No, I received this from the other competition [ARD]. The music is not really hard, but the tempo is very difficult.

**Lin:** No, everything is difficult for me. [Laughs]

**Suzuki:** What is difficult is the tempo. It was too fast, yes, too fast. [Laughs]

**Lin:** Okay. And Liszt B Minor Sonata, why do you think this is difficult for you?

**Suzuki:** Liszt Sonata. The music is difficult, and also the understanding.

**Lin:** Did you successfully overcome the difficulties?

**Suzuki:** I couldn't prepare very well, not all of them.

**Lin:** What have you not yet achieved?

**Suzuki:** There are many things, because there are many repertoire.

**Lin:** Do you think this competition should make any changes on the repertoire requirement?

**Suzuki:** Changes?

**Lin:** For example, there is contemporary music in the third round, maybe it would be better that they deleted this? What do you think? In Vienna Competition [2017 International Beethoven Piano Competition Vienna], Sonata Op. 101 to Op. 111 were in the second round, but here they have them in the first round. What do you think about this?

**Suzuki:** Not bad.

**Lin:** Why?

**Suzuki:** For me it is totally fine that these works are in the first, second or the third round. We just need to present the music, which is more important. So, in the first round, Beethoven was influenced by Bach, so we all have to play Bach.

**Lin:** Is there anything I haven't asked that you would like to speak about?

**Suzuki:** No.

**Lin:** Okay, thank you very much.

**Takayoshi Suzuki**, (Japanese) contestant in the International Telekom Beethoven Competition Bonn 2017.

Interview by Yuan-Hung Lin, Bonn, December 3, 2017.

Original interview in German.

**Lin:** Wo studierst du?

**Suzuki:** Ich studiere in Würzburg [Hochschule für Musik Würzburg]. Ich studiere jetzt Meisterklasse.

**Lin:** Ah Meisterklasse!

**Suzuki:** Ja.

**Lin:** Ach so, wer ist dein Lehrer?

**Suzuki:** Er heißt Alexander Fleischer.

**Lin:** Welches Jahr im Meisterklasse bist du?

**Suzuki:** Im moment bin ich im fünften Semester.

**Lin:** Arbeitest du oder nicht?

**Suzuki:** Nein.

**Lin:** Wie lange hast du dich für diese Wettbewerb vorbereitet?

**Suzuki:** Drei Monate.

**Lin:** Nur drei Monate?

**Suzuki:** Ja, ich war in andere Wettbewerbe.

**Lin:** Welche Wettbewerbe?

**Suzuki:** Münchener Wettbewerb.

**Lin:** ARD?

**Suzuki:** Genau. Ich habe da teilgenommen.

**Lin:** Sind beide Repertoire gleich?

**Suzuki:** Nein, ganz anders.

**Lin:** Nur drei Monaten für diesen Wettbewerb, das ist unglaublich!

**Suzuki:** Also, das Repertoire war fast ganz neu für mich. Nicht alles, aber fast alles.

**Lin:** Und du hast ganz gut gespielt, Op. 110 [Beethoven Sonata No. 31, As-Dur, Op. 110] ist ganz schwer.

**Suzuki:** Ja, Fuga ist besonders schwer.

**Lin:** Ist das Repertoire für dich neu?

**Suzuki:** Nein, aber Variationen[32 Variationen c-Moll, WoO 80] waren neu.

**Lin:** Und Bach [Präludium und Fuge, E-Dur, BWV 878]? War Bach neu?

**Suzuki:** Das war schon mein Stück.

**Lin:** Warum entscheidest du diesen Wettbewerb dabei teilzunehmen?

**Suzuki:** Vor zwei Jahre, ich habe mich der Wettbewerb zugehört. Und ich war begeistert, deshalb möchte ich dieses Wettbewerb versuchen, also habe ich entschieden.

**Lin:** Magst du Beethoven?

**Suzuki:** Ja! Natürlich.

**Lin:** Hast du in andere Internationale Wettbewerben gespielt?

**Suzuki:** Ja, im ARD, im Lyon, und andere Wettbewerben waren nicht so groß.

**Lin:** Wie entscheidest du das Repertoire für diesen Wettbewerb?

**Suzuki:** Das Repertoire. Natürlich ich habe ältere Stücke, dann wähle ich auch ältere Stücke.

**Lin:** Ich weiß nicht was spielst du in der zweite Runde.

**Suzuki:** Ich spiele in der zweite Runde *Eroica* Variationen, und Liszt Sonata b-moll.

**Lin:** Und noch?

**Suzuki:** Das war alles.

**Lin:** Und dritte Runde?

**Suzuki:** Cello Sonata [Beethoven Sonate für Klavier und Violoncello, C-Dur, Op. 102/1], das muss man spielen. Und Pascal Dusapin, er ist ein Französischer Komponist.

**Lin:** Vielleicht schreibst du dein Repertoire?

**Suzuki:** Natürlich. [Er schreibt das Repertoire:

J. S. Bach Prelude and Fugue in E Major, WTC Bk. II, No. 9, BWV 878 (old)

L. V. Beethoven 32 Variations in C Minor, WoO 80 (new)

L. V. Beethoven Sonata No. 31 in A-flat Major, Op. 110 (old)

L. V. Beethoven Eroica Variations in E-flat Major, Op. 35 (new)

F. Liszt Sonata in B Minor, S. 178 (one year)

L. V. Beethoven Sonata for Cello and Piano No. 4 in C Major, Op. 102/1 (new)

Pascal Dusapin (2016) (new)

S. Prokofiev Sonata No. 6 in A Major, Op. 82.

L. V. Beethoven Sonata No. 24 in F-sharp Major, Op. 78

D. Shostakovich Prelude and Fugue No. 16 in B-flat Minor, Op. 87

L. V. Beethoven Piano Concerto No. 2 in B-flat Major, Op. 19 (new)

L. V. Beethoven Piano Concerto No. 4 in G Major, Op. 58 (one year)]

Das Stück war für den ARD Wettbewerb [Finger zeigt Dusapin], es wurde komponiert im 2016.

**Lin:** Oh! Ganz neu.

**Suzuki:** Ja, ganz neu.

**Lin:** Also *Eroica* Variationen ist neu?

**Suzuki:** Fast neu.

**Lin:** Und Liszt Sonate?

**Suzuki:** Letztes Jahr gelernt.

**Lin:** Nicht zu alt aber auch nicht zu neu. Und Pascal Dusapin? Neu?

**Suzuki:** Ja! [Lachen]

**Lin:** Natürlich, es wurde komponiert im 2016.

**Suzuki:** Prokofiev [Sonate No. 6] ist alt. Beethoven [Sonate Op. 78] ist neu.

Shostakovich [Praeludium und Fuga no.16, h-moll] fast neu. Beethoven Konzert No. 2 ist neu, No. 4 ist alt.

**Lin:** [Machen das Zeichen]

**Suzuki:** No. 4 [Beethoven Konzert No. 4, G-Dur, Op. 58] habe ich in einen Jahr gelernt.

**Lin:** Wie entscheidest du diese neue Repertoire?

**Suzuki:** Ich wollte in der zweite Runde Waldstein Sonate [Beethoven Klaviersonate No. 21, C-Dur, Op. 53] spielen. Aber ich dachte, andere Teilnehmer werden dieses Stück nehmen, deshalb habe ich dieses nicht genommen.

**Lin:** Ach so, es gibt vielleicht viele Leute die Waldstein spielen werden.

**Suzuki:** Genau. Sondern auch Appassionate Sonate.

**Lin:** Ja, und nicht so viele Leute haben diese [Beethoven Sonate Op. 78] genommen. Also, zuerst entscheidest du dass dieses Stück nicht so viel gespielt wird, danach wolltest du—

**Suzuki:** Manchmal so [Lachen], nicht immer.

**Lin:** Also du hast ein, zwei, drei, vier, fünf, sechs, sieben neue Repertoire in drei Monaten?

**Suzuki:** Ja.

**Lin:** Unglaublich. Also hat dein Lehrer mit dir zusammen entschieden oder hast du selbst entschieden?

**Suzuki:** Ich habe selbst entschieden, aber auch nicht immer [Lachen]

**Lin:** Was kommt es zu gedanken wenn du das Repertoire wählst? Ich weiß dass du schon gesagt hast. Aber was noch ist außerdem ein bekannter Grund? Zum Beispiel, deine Finger Technik? Vielleicht hast du grosse Hände und du kannst Stücke für große Hände spielen?

**Suzuki:** Ich denke darüber nicht.

**Lin:** Wirklich? Denkst du gar nicht über andere Teile?

**Suzuki:** Nein. [Lachen]

**Lin:** Wie denkst du dein Spielen in der erste Runde war? Gut? Schlecht? Oder?

**Suzuki:** Schlecht. [Lachen]

**Lin:** Warum denkst du schlecht?

**Suzuki:** Bach, das Präludium war einfach ein Kopf Problem. Ich könnte nichts auswendig. Beethoven Variationen war für mich ein neues Stück ist, also konnte ich nicht reifen gespielt. Das ist das Problem, ich habe vieles Falsch gespielt.

**Lin:** Also wenn du sechs Monaten geübt kannst, vielleicht kannst du dann ganz gut spielen.

**Suzuki:** Ja. [Lachen]

**Lin:** Wie denkst du über dein Op. 110 [Beethoven Sonata Op. 110] Spielen?

**Suzuki:** Nicht schlecht.

**Lin:** Bist du zufrieden mit dein ausgewähltes Repertoire?

**Suzuki:** Repertoire ist ja zufrieden.

**Lin:** Was für Herausforderungen hatte diese Stücke um die zu üben?

**Suzuki:** [Er hat lange nachgedenkt]

**Lin:** Oder vielleicht gar keine? [Lachen]

**Suzuki:** [Lachen] Doch! Wie sagt man das? [Denkt er weiter circa zehn Sekunden] Ja ich denke immer Charakter, und Dynamik, Phrase, Atmosphäre. Ja, denke ich immer darüber. Zum Beispiel, wenn die Musik wiederholt, man muss Änderungen machen, also ich denke Bach, wo kann man Änderungen spielen und Phrases zu ändern. Ich habe hier [Finger zeigen auf die Noten] fast selbst komponiert.

**Lin:** Noch?

**Suzuki:** Beethoven ist alles schon in die Noten. Pause, Phrase, Dynamic. Alles schon geschrieben. Trotz die guten Noten, muss man selbst denken wenn man spielt, und auch Pedal.

**Lin:** Welches Stück denkst du war die größte Herausforderung?

**Suzuki:** Also in diese Repertoire?

**Lin:** Alle Repertoire. Vielleicht Konzert?

**Suzuki:** Nein, Konzert ist nicht schwer. Das ist leicht. Für mich sind Liszt Sonate und Pascal Dusapin, die sind Schwer. Spielst du Klavier?

**Lin:** Ja.

**Suzuki:** Ich kann dir die Noten zeigen. [Zeigt er die Noten Dusapin]

**Lin:** Du hast diese Noten gekauft?

**Suzuki:** Nein, ich habe diese aus ein anderer Wettbewerb bekommen. Die Musik ist nicht wirklich schwer, aber das Tempo ist sehr schwer.

**Lin:** Nein, mir ist beides schwer; Partituren and die Noten in die Stücke. [Lachen]

**Suzuki:** Was ist schwer? Ist zu schnell, ja, zu schnell [Lachen]

**Lin:** Ok. Und Liszt Sonate, warum ist diese Sonate schwer für dich?

**Suzuki:** Liszt Sonate, die Musik ist schwer, und das Verständnis.

**Lin:** Konntest du alle Schwierigkeiten perfektionieren?

**Suzuki:** Ich konnte nicht sehr gut vorbereiten, also nicht alles.

**Lin:** Was hast du noch nicht geschafft?

**Suzuki:** Es gibt viele Sachen, weil es viele Repertoire gibt.

**Lin:** Denkst du vielleicht muss dieser Wettbewerb das Repertoire wechseln?

**Suzuki:** Wechseln?

**Lin:** Zum Beispiel, in der dritten Runde, gibt es moderne Musik. Vielleicht wäre es besser, dieses Repertoire nicht zu haben? Was denkst du? Im Wien Wettbewerb [2017 Internationale Wien Beethoven Wettbewerb], Sonate Op. 101 bis Op. 111 waren in der zweiten Runde, aber hier sind in der ersten Runde. Was denkst du?

**Suzuki:** Nicht schlecht.

**Lin:** Warum?

**Suzuki:** Es ist mir egal, dass diese Repertoire in der ersten, zweiten, oder dritten Runde ist. Einfach Musik zeigen, das ist wichtiger. Also erste Runde, Beethoven hat natürlich Bach's Werke gelernt, ja, also, man muss Bach spielen.

**Lin:** Gibt es etwas, dass ich nicht gefragt habe, worüber du sprechen möchtest?

**Suzuki:** Ich bin zufrieden. Die Organization ist sehr gut.

**Lin:** Okay, vielen Dank für deine Hilfe.

**Marijan Duzel**, (Croatian) contestant in the International Telekom Beethoven Competition Bonn 2017.

Interview by Yuan-Hung Lin, Bonn, December 3, 2017.

**Lin:** Where do you study or where did you last study? Are you currently studying with anyone?

**Duzel:** I study in Brussels, Belgium. The Conservatory of Music with Alexander Maja.

**Lin:** How long have you prepared for this competition?

**Duzel:** For this competition, after the result of the Pre-Selections [video preliminary round]. I started intensive preparation. It's approximately about five to six months. The repertoire is mostly old.

**Lin:** How did you decide to enter this particular competition?

**Duzel:** This is by Ludwig van Beethoven, it is an important part of my repertoire, I also participated in Vienna Beethoven Competition, not this year, the last edition [2013]. I was the Semi-Finalist. So, I already have lots of Beethoven repertoire.

**Lin:** Have you participated in any other international competitions? If so, which ones?

**Duzel:** Yes. I was in the 2013 International Beethoven Piano Competition in Vienna, I was Semi-Finalist; and 2017 Viotti Competition in Italy, I got into the second round; and also 2012 European Piano Competition.

**Lin:** How did you decide the repertoire for this competition? Would you please write down your repertoire of this competition?

**Duzel:** Yes, of course. [Writing] New piece is something I learned in one year. I tried to fit in old pieces first. The new repertoire, for the second round, we needed to play sixty minutes, and Beethoven Op. 106 is forty-seven minutes, I still needed thirteen minutes, I chose Schumann toccata to start with, then I thought I need some lighter piece to fit in, so I decided to play Abendmusik for fit in the atmosphere and the tonality.

For the third round [Semi-Finals], unless it is an obligatory piece, the others are all old pieces. When I chose the piece, I thought about my taste first. Most of my pieces are challenging. If they go well, everything would be excellent.

For the final round, I played no.5 [Beethoven Piano Concerto No. 5]. I like it so I chose it. I also played no.3 before. But I prefer to play no.5 and the violin concerto because I like them more.

**Lin:** What was your main consideration in choosing the repertoire?

**Duzel:** First I chose pieces that I think I could present well on a high level. I like complex music with technique and understanding.

**Lin:** What do you think of your performance in the first round?

**Duzel:** It was not my best performance. I was nervous, the live stream, the atmosphere. I think probably the Op. 126 [Beethoven Six Bagatelles] was the best.

**Lin:** Are you happy with your repertoire choices?

**Duzel:** Yes.

**Lin:** What are the challenges of practicing this entire repertoire? Are there any pieces you are playing that you find especially challenging?

**Duzel:** Of course. The biggest challenge is to make a good schedule. For example, even though I have the old repertoire, I still need to make sure that I have it on hand instead of taking a long break. Such as Op. 106, one shouldn't have a big break for this piece, and this is the most challenging piece for me. I had some performing chance, so I could make sure that all pieces were in good shape.

**Lin:** Did you encounter any unusual difficulties during your preparation time?

**Duzel:** I think I did well. Although I didn't play well, but altogether I think it is good.

**Lin:** Do you think this competition should make any changes to the repertoire requirements?

**Duzel:** No. I think is very good actually. You notice that there are not many young competitors, because they don't have enough repertoire to come. Here we have much more well educated pianists. I like that the first round we have to play the Beethoven last three sonatas, it could show how mature the pianists are. And we are able to present other classical music.

**Lin:** Is there anything that I have not asked that you would like to speak about?

**Duzel:** It is a great organization. You don't usually get everything you want, water, juice, cookies when you're nervous in the backstage. I think it's really nice.

**Ronaldo Rolim**, (Brazilian) contestant in the International Telekom Beethoven Competition Bonn 2017.

Interview by Yuan-Hung Lin, Bonn, December 6, 2017.

**Lin:** Where do you study or where did you last study? Are you currently studying with anyone?

**Rolim:** I am currently finishing my DMA at Yale School of Music, in New Haven, where I study with Boris Berman.

**Lin:** Are you working anywhere?

**Rolim:** I teach privately, but I'm not employed by any school or other organization. And, of course, I perform.

**Lin:** How long have you prepared for this competition?

**Rolim:** Well, some pieces I've worked on for years, and some others less so, but, except when I was actually in Bonn, I can't say there was one time I was only preparing for this competition and nothing else.

**Lin:** How did you decide to enter this particular competition?

**Rolim:** I thought it would be an interesting experience (as it indeed was), and since I had most of the repertoire, I decided to try.

**Lin:** Have you participated in any other international competitions? If so, which ones?

**Rolim:** Yes, many others, including top ones such as the Queen Elisabeth and Géza Anda competitions. [Third Prize, 2015 Géza Anda]

**Lin:** How did you decide the repertoire for this competition? Did you decide by yourself, or did your teacher help you decide?

**Rolim:** I decided the entire repertoire myself.

**Lin:** What was your main consideration in choosing the repertoire?

**Rolim:** How to balance the rounds and how to balance the amount of pieces I already have with pieces I would have to learn.

**Lin:** What did you think about your performance in the first, second and semi-final round?

**Rolim:** Well, I rarely like the way I play, but it was particularly difficult to overcome the second round.

**Lin:** Which piece do you think you played the best?

**Rolim:** I don't quite know, but I tend to think my Prokofiev sonata [Sonata No. 8 in B Major, Op. 84] in the Semi-Finals was quite strong.

**Lin:** Are you happy with your repertoire choices?

**Rolim:** I would perhaps reconsider playing Brahms Op.119 before *Hammerklavier* - the initial option was Schumann's *Waldszenen*, but my performance time in that case would go beyond 60 minutes. Despite that, I think I'm mostly happy with the repertoire selections.

**Lin:** What are the challenges of practicing this entire repertoire? Are there any pieces you are playing that you find especially challenging?

**Rolim:** It is impossible to practice everything you have to play with the same level of focus every day, so you must pick specific things you need to fix as you go. Of course, Beethoven's Op.106 is by far the most demanding of all the pieces I played - no matter how ready you are, it never feels it's not a challenge.

**Lin:** Did you encounter any unusual difficulties during your preparation time?

**Rolim:** The main issue was having to do many other things unrelated to the competition preparation - for instance, a few days before the competition I had to play Debussy's *Fantaisie* for piano and orchestra, not at all related to the competition repertoire. But that's how it is in the professional world.

**Lin:** Do you think this competition should make any changes to the repertoire requirements?

**Rolim:** I don't believe so. It's by definition a mostly-Beethoven repertoire, so that must remain unchanged. The non-Beethoven repertoire seems adequate to me.

**Lin:** Is there anything that I have not asked that you would like to speak about?

**Rolim:** No.

**Yeon-Min Park**, (South Korean) contestant in the Concours Géza Anda 2018.  
Interview by Yuan-Hung Lin, Zurich, June 11, 2018.

**Lin:** I know you study at Hanover [looking at the program], what degree are you studying now?

**Park:** I just started my first year of soloist class.

**Lin:** Do you work?

**Park:** We do some concerts.

**Lin:** How long have you prepared for this competition?

**Park:** I think a few days. I literally prepared for a few days.

**Lin:** Ok, for example, the competition started on June 12<sup>th</sup>, and you started maybe from June 1<sup>st</sup>?

**Park:** Yes.

**Lin:** For the entire competition repertoire?

**Park:** Not all the repertoire. There are some pieces I already played. And some were totally new. For those new pieces, I didn't practice at all. For the first round, you watched me, the Brahms, I memorized just for a few days, and you heard that I stopped, because I forgot.

**Lin:** So, when did you decide to come to the competition?

**Park:** Normally I just applied, and if I feel I could go, I could take the challenge, and then I go. It's not about deciding that I have to go.

**Lin:** This competition required a video recording. Did you use your old video recording to apply or did you just record for this one.

**Park:** No, I didn't record for this. I use the old one.

**Lin:** Have you participated in any other international piano competition?

[Competition experience listed on the program:

2017 Suzhou Jinji Lake International Piano Competition, 1st Prize

2017 Darmstadt International Chopin Competition, 3<sup>rd</sup> Prize

2017 Seoul International Music Competition, 3<sup>rd</sup> Prize

2016 Andre Dumortier International Piano Competition, 2<sup>nd</sup> Prize

2016 Mayenne International Piano Competition, 1<sup>st</sup> Prize  
2015 Hanoi International Piano Competition, 1<sup>st</sup> Prize  
2014 Palma d'oro International Piano Competition, 1<sup>st</sup> Prize]

**Park:** Yes, I tried to go to many competitions.

**Lin:** So do you have many repeat repertoires from previous competitions?

**Park:** No, not a lot. This Mozart Concerto [K. 488 in A Major] is like I haven't had lessons, and it was totally new. It was the very first time to play in public. The Brahms which I stopped in the middle of the piece, as I told you, I memorized just before. Because I didn't expect to play Brahms after the Chopin. They were supposed to give me some different periods, but they asked me to play Brahms. Honestly, I really didn't learn the Brahms, and also that I didn't have lessons with anyone.

**Lin:** How did you decide the repertoire of this competition? Do you decide by yourself or with your teacher?

**Park:** I chose by myself.

**Lin:** What is your main consideration when choosing the repertoire?

**Park:** You know there are certain repertoires of competitions, and you'll try to stay safe. That's why everybody plays the same repertoire in the free repertoire competition. For my top consideration, some pieces which I can show much diversity of my performance, which could be very efficient and effective. I mean, competition is really just a game, we have to meet the jury's taste. It is not about the level of playing, we have to give. for example, the food they would like to eat. Just that.

**Lin:** So how do you know what kind of food they like?

**Park:** No, we don't know. To win the prize, that means we got lucky, but not all the time. Nowadays they don't just judge our play, there are many more [other reason] behind their decisions.

**Lin:** How do you think about your performance for the previous rounds?

**Park:** For the first round I stopped. I had a memory slip, there were so many mistakes that I thought I won't pass, I was really almost sure, like ninety-nine percent sure. And I was really shocked that I passed. And I think they would like to listen to the music, not really the technical parts. So I was very happy about that for I could play once more.

**Lin:** How about the second round?

**Park:** Second round I really tried to do my best and tried to enjoy. After my play, the audience really, really liked my performance. They came to me and said that they liked my performance, they talked to me and said that they have the same feeling at Sokolov's concert, and I was just happy about that.

And luckily, I passed again. Then I played Mozart [Piano Concerto K 488 in A Major], because this was a totally new piece as I told you. I really worked hard for two days, I listened a lot, practiced a lot, thought a lot, and played in my head, and again, and again. The rehearsal, I think it was going better and better. I think I was not completely satisfied, but still, you were there, and I think also the audience really liked my play, they really shouted a lot "Bravo, bravo", and that's it.

**Lin:** So which piece do you think you played the best in previous rounds?

**Park:** I don't know, I really don't know. It is all about the audience and feeling, and I was never totally satisfied. I mean, I was satisfied with the reaction of the audience, and I felt really happy after I played, not after I got the result, it was after my performance.

**Lin:** Are you happy with your repertoire choice?

**Park:** Yes.

**Lin:** What are the challenges of practicing the entire repertoire? Are there any pieces you feel challenging to prepare? Or maybe not? Because you said you prepared the Mozart concerto only in two days?

**Park:** That's exactly the challenge! What could be more challenging than that?

**Lin:** So the challenge is the short time and the big amount of repertoire?

**Park:** For me, Yes!

**Lin:** That means you really can practice new things in a short amount of time.

**Park:** Yes, but it could be very dangerous.

**Lin:** What's your repertoire for the final round?

**Park:** Beethoven No. 4 and Tchaikovsky No. 1.

**Lin:** Did you encounter any unusual difficulties during your preparation time?

**Park:** Sure. There's always challenges. Our life is just challenging, with the competition, without the competition, life is always challenging.

**Lin:** Do you think this competition should make any changes on repertoire requirements?

**Park:** I think is a very good idea to have specific special requirements for repertoire. But I thought I was missing Baroque there. Bach and Scarlatti, they should have put them in. Because these composers were all influenced by Bach.

**Lin:** Any other things you want to speak about this competition?

**Park:** I totally understand what they are doing, I know they have difficulties in organizing. Because there're like only two to three people who are organizing this competition, to organize a competition is really, really a lot of work. But I think it is too hard for them to have only a few people. I'm very thankful to have host family here, but for transportation, it is very tricky here. For me, as you know, how far I have to travel to the city center, the distance from here to the competition place, I can't go by myself, and this is very tiring.

**Lin:** That's all for today. Thank you very much.

**Honggi Kim**, (South Korean) contestant in the Concours Géza Anda, 2018.  
Schumann Prize.  
Interview by Yuan-Hung Lin, Zurich, June 11, 2018.

**Lin:** I know you study at Frankfurt [looking at the program], what degree are you studying now?

**Kim:** Yes, I'm now studying for the concert artist diploma.

**Lin:** How long have you prepared for this competition?

**Kim:** I think I have to say this [thinking]—because we just noticed the repertoire list about one year ago. So, [thinking]—

**Lin:** So, you thought you have the repertoire?

**Kim:** Yes, then I just decided: to participate, or not to participate.

**Lin:** So, when did you decide to participate?

**Kim:** This winter [2017 December- 2018 January], because the deadline was until the last day of January.

**Lin:** Did you use your old video recording, or did you record a new one for this competition?

**Kim:** I recorded a new one for this competition.

**Lin:** Have you participated in any other international piano competitions? I think I could find it on the program.

[Semi-Finalist of the ARD International Music Competition 2017;  
Semi-Finalist of the Van-Cliburn International Piano Competition 2017;  
Special Prize of the Schubert International Music Competition in Dortmund 2016  
And actually, there were a lot more than the program listed.]

Do you have repeat repertoire for international competitions? As you just mentioned, you didn't really prepare for a particular competition, that means most of your repertoires are old, right?

**Kim:** For the concerto round, I already used to play the concerto. Then, I easily prepared the concertos. For the solo program, I had to learn completely new things. For example, Schubert, and Schumann also, and Mozart, Haydn, because I don't think I play Classical music very well, so that's why I didn't learn many pieces from the Classical period.

**Lin:** How did you decide the repertoire of this competition? Did you decide by yourself or with your teacher?

**Kim:** Mostly by myself. For Schubert, I prepared two sonatas. My teacher suggested which piece is better, that's why I wrote down this B-flat Major Sonata instead of the others.

**Lin:** What is your main consideration when choosing the repertoire?

**Kim:** I think the most important thing is which piece I want to play, I love it, or I like it. And then, which piece is less risky in the competition.

**Lin:** What is your definition of risky?

**Kim:** Especially, I think the Schubert B-flat Major Sonata is dangerous in competition.

**Lin:** But you still chose it for the competition.

**Kim:** Yes, because my teacher told me to.

**Lin:** So, when you're choosing the repertoire, you choose the piece with the lesser risk?

**Kim:** Yes. It is important. Too much risk is always not good in a competition.

**Lin:** What kind of risk are you trying to avoid? Technique? Or musical risk?

**Kim:** Of course, technically also important. Even if I choose Liszt *Paganini* Etude or six *Paganini* Etudes, it would be really risky. I would rather choose other pieces like Chopin sonata no. 3, which I used to play a lot of time.

For musical problem, I already said, Schubert B-flat sonata is quite dangerous in competition because everybody has different tastes to play that sonata. And Mozart is risky in competition.

**Lin:** Have you thought about maybe some pieces would please the jury?

**Kim:** If someone were to imagine what the jury wants to do, it is impossible. One couldn't and should not imagine what the jury likes. It is not good to play any piece in the competition. There are many pianists who can play what the jury wants to listen to, and then they received many prizes. Then nobody wants to listen to them again.

**Lin:** What do you think about your performance in previous rounds?

**Kim:** Well, I—I think my play was a little bit risky, and that's why I failed.

**Lin:** But you still passed to the Semi-Finals.

**Kim:** So, this is kind of ridiculous.

**Lin:** Let's start from the first round, how did you feel about the Beethoven [Sonata No. 28 in A Major, Op. 101] and Ravel [*Gaspard de la nuit*]?

**Kim:** Somehow when I play the pieces, I could easily pass to the next round, and this time also.

**Lin:** What about the second round?

**Kim:** Second round. We have to discuss with the jury what program we will play. They wanted Schumann [*Humoreske*, Op. 20] and Haydn [Sonata in E-flat Major, Hob. XVI: 52] or Mozart [Sonata No. 18 in D Major, K. 576], then I chose Haydn, I was not sure if my Haydn was good enough. For the second-round playing, I was not sure if I passed or not.

**Lin:** How about the Semi-Finals?

**Kim:** I was completely not sure.

**Lin:** You were not confident with your performance?

**Kim:** No, I am always confident with my performance. Somehow the jury didn't like my Mozart concerto. I already had experiences like that, so this time also I failed.

**Lin:** So which piece do you think you played the best in previous rounds?

**Kim:** Schumann.

**Lin:** Are you happy with your repertoire choice?

**Kim:** Yes.

**Lin:** What are the challenges of practicing the entire repertoire? Is there any piece you feel challenging to prepare?

**Kim:** I'm kind of thinking too much. It means that while I was practicing, I think about other things.

**Lin:** So, to focus on the music is the most challenging thing for you?

**Kim:** Yes, and for me Mozart and Schubert are the most difficult to play.

**Lin:** What's your repertoire for the final round?

**Kim:** Beethoven 4th and Chopin No. 1.

**Lin:** Did you encounter any unusual difficulties during your preparation time?

**Kim:** I think so.

**Lin:** For this competition, do you think they should make any changes on repertoire requirements?

**Kim:** I think it is necessary to keep the same repertoire because this tests many pianists ability of being a musician, not just playing mechanically. Some people play all the same pieces in many competitions, and they play mechanically, and I think this competition doesn't want pianists to be like that.

**Lin:** Any other things you want to say about this competition?

**Kim:** For transport, when I was in Geneva competition, they gave candidates travel cards, so we can travel easily by ourselves. But here, the transportation is too difficult, and we have to pay for that. I almost spent more than a hundred on travelling.

**Lin:** That's all for today. Thank you very much.

**Daumants Liepiņš**, (Latvian) contestant in the Concours Géza Anda 2018.  
Interview by Yuan-Hung Lin, Zurich, June 6, 2017.

**Lin:** Where do you study?

**Liepiņš:** I'm doing my bachelor's degree at two places at Sweden. It is the Ingesund School of Music, which is part of Karlstad University. And also the Vitols Latvian Academy of Music.

**Lin:** Are you also working somewhere?

**Liepiņš:** I'm not working. Basically, I live from concert fees, competitions and some scholarship.

**Lin:** How long have you prepared for this competition?

**Liepiņš:** Of course, much of the repertoire is old repertoire. Because to compete in the competition of Géza Anda, this is about six hours to seven hours of music. A big part of the repertoire is old that I have gathered through the years of my education, but some part of the repertoire is new. When I applied to the competition, the repertoire is actually done. I started practicing the pieces, and when I got the answer that I was accepted to this competition, I was practicing more intensively.

**Lin:** How did you decide to apply to this particular competition?

**Liepiņš:** I think my professor suggested it to me. She knows that this is a good competition, and she knows that there were no scandals, because this is a serious problem. Sometimes the competition doesn't have a good reputation, and people don't want to go there. People want to go somewhere better, at least be treated fairly. Of course, this is a very tricky question.

I think it is really useful to just participate in the competition during the study time. It gave me a lot of opportunities and there is just a question of finding the right competition. There are many people also applied to many competitions. If they were accepted, then they go. I also applied to many [competitions], I think this is a part of education.

**Lin:** So, do you already have a next one?

**Liepiņš:** The next one probably will be Enescu competition, this is in Romania. Basically I'm trying to apply to those which are WFIMC. They are more trustful. They have to respect some rules.

**Lin:** Have you participated in other International competitions, if so, which one? I saw some competitions which you had won listed on your biography of the competition program.

[Tbilisi International Piano Competition Fourth Prize (WFIMC)  
RNCM James Mottram International Piano Competition Third Prize (WFIMC)  
Nordic Piano Competition First Prize  
Grand National Music Award First Prize]  
Apart from that, anything else?

**Liepiņš:** Yes, I went to the last edition of Enescu [George Enescu International Piano Competition], and I got into the third round, the total was four rounds, same as here—for the big competitions, I think that's all.

**Lin:** How did you decide the repertoire for this competition? Did you decide by yourself or you and your teacher decided together?

**Liepiņš:** First, I look at my old repertoire. Like which pieces I could take from my old repertoire. And then there are some occasions that I did not have anything. The strategy is like that, take everything as much as possible from the old, and when it is not possible, then just learn it.

**Lin:** So how long did it take you to learn the new repertoire?

**Liepiņš:** For the new repertoire, now I have to think actually. New repertoire was Debussy, this was four months maybe.

**Lin:** How many new repertoire do you have?

**Liepiņš:** I had Debussy, *L'isle joyeuse*; Schubert Sonata; Schumann [*Fantasiestücke*, Op. 12] could also be counted as new because I started it maybe six months before. I played Schubert second and third movement in the first round, which they asked me to do. I was a little bit surprised because I was prepared to start with the first movement.

**Lin:** What is your main consideration in choosing the repertoire?

**Liepiņš:** I tried not to play too many too new pieces. I tried to plan to play the pieces in the concerts before competition. It is not very comfortable to play totally new pieces in the competition. Taking into consideration, which composer better fits to my personality.

**Lin:** So when you're choosing the repertoire, will you think about if you like it, or you think about if the jury or the audience likes it?

**Liepiņš:** First I think I like this, because I'm the one who will play it. Everything all comes through me, and if I don't like it, people will not like it either.

**Lin:** So if you like a piece but the piece is super difficult, will you choose it?

**Liepiņš:** Yes. I lean more on the yes answer because if you really like something, you also have the right motivation to make it work.

**Lin:** How do you think your performances were in the previous rounds?

**Liepiņš:** What do I think, how did I play, and how do I feel?

**Lin:** Yes.

**Liepiņš:** The first round was very stressful, even though I could choose the piece I started with. It was Schubert, it was still not clear which movement. I thought they would say the first movement, but they said second and third.

**Lin:** So did you choose?

**Liepiņš:** Yes.

**Lin:** So when will you know what you're going to play?

**Liepiņš:** One and half hours ago.

**Lin:** Ok.

**Liepiņš:** This was a little bit of a surprised, and then Brahms, first movement. Exactly Brahms was the piece that I didn't practice that much.

**Lin:** How did you feel about Schubert when you were playing?

**Liepiņš:** Schubert was more stable because I knew I was starting with that. And I know I prepared it the best.

**Lin:** How about the others?

**Liepiņš:** Brahms was the piece I practiced the least. This was very stressful, but still somehow I managed that. Apparently, the jury liked it. For the second round, we had a conversation with the jury about the repertoire for the second round. We were waiting at the door, and went in and talked to the jury. We talked to the jury about the performance order. They had a program proposal "we would want you to play this and this." Something like that. In my case, they wanted me to play the Mozart sonata [Sonata No. 13 in B-flat Major, KV. 333], and Schumann *Fantasiestücke*, and the Shchedrin, the modern piece. I was not happy with this.

**Lin:** Can you tell them you are not happy?

**Liepiņš:** No.

**Lin:** But you played Haydn, not Mozart.

**Liepiņš:** This is a conversation, so I was able to speak something. Also, I think it would not be great for me to play Schumann, because this will show my musicality from one side, I think Schubert, Brahms and Schumann may lean a little bit on only one side. This is the argument, Liszt Sonata [B Minor Sonata] will fit much better with the first round, so I show something totally different from the first round. I think Liszt Sonata and Haydn Sonata [Sonata in E-flat Major, Hob. XVI: 52] fit better, so that's how. I left Shchedrin in the proposal.

**Lin:** Compare the first and the second round, which you are more satisfied with now?

**Liepiņš:** I was quite satisfied with Schubert, not that much with Brahms. The second round, I would say I'm in the middle. I think Shchedrin was the best from the second round at least, Liszt sonata could be better, and there was something I could fix in Haydn. You could always make the program better.

**Lin:** Are you happy with all your repertoire choices?

**Liepiņš:** Yes, I thought through the repertoire together with my professor. I think it is quite well.

**Lin:** What are the challenges of practicing the entire repertoire?

**Liepiņš:** Of course, you have to keep those pieces the same shape all the time. You start working on one piece and kind of neglect the others. Always make sure that all pieces are growing, not just one piece grows.

**Lin:** How did you make everything balance?

**Liepiņš:** For me, I think I'm quite good on keeping, refreshing all repertoire. In my case, there are many old repertoire, and I practiced the new repertoire the most of course, and the old repertoire. I just tried to play in concerts to make sure it is still in shape.

**Lin:** Did you encounter any unusual difficulties during your preparation time?

**Liepiņš:** Yes, this is the first time I have that huge repertoire. Normal competitions' repertoire is about three to four hours, and this one is about six to seven hours program.

**Lin:** Do you think this competition should change their repertoire requirements?

**Liepiņš:** I don't think so, because this is what makes this competition special. This is the only competition I know with so huge repertoire. I think this is the repertoire of pianist Géza Anda, what he played the most. Still, that is quite a lot of emphasize on German composers and classical repertoire. Not much romantic, only one modern piece.

**Lin:** So do you think you are a pianist with more German repertoire? Is that more like your style?

**Liepiņš:** I think Brahms is my composer, lately Schubert also. Basically, I think I'm good at romantic repertoire. I don't think this competition matches a hundred percent my performance style, but it's a big extension, that is good.

**Lin:** Anything else you want to say about this competition?

**Liepiņš:** I'm actually very happy to be here, because this competition is special.

**Lin:** Thank you very much, that's all for today.

**Seung-Hyuk Na**, (South Korean) contestant in the International Ferruccio Busoni Piano Competition 2018/19.

Interview by Yuan-Hung Lin, Bolzano, September 2, 2019.

**Lin:** Thank you for doing the interview with me.

**Na:** Oh! I'm so nervous. It is more difficult than playing the piano.

**Lin:** No, you don't need to be nervous!

**Na:** Piano has a more beautiful voice than me, that's why I'm nervous. [Laughs]

**Lin:** [Laughs] Relax, it's not that bad. Okay, here we are. Where do you study now?

**Na:** I'm currently studying at the Seoul National University, and now I am a senior.

**Lin:** And you are studying with Hyung-Joon Chang [The teacher's name shows on the competition program]?

**Na:** Yes, exactly.

**Lin:** Are you also working as a concert pianist?

**Na:** No, I'm just a humble student. [Laughs]

**Lin:** [Laughs] And a humble pianist. How long have you prepared for this competition?

**Na:** Well, in fact, this competition took two years. So, maybe one and half years.

**Lin:** How did you decide to enter this particular competition?

**Na:** As you already know, in Korea, we have the military problem that all the males should participate in the military. And the Ministry of National Defense [of South Korea] has a special competition list, which if you get the first two prizes of a competition, you could be exempt from military service.

**Lin:** Is that the only reason?

**Na:** That's the most important reason. Also, I had some—how can I say—I had a promise with my friend to have a good grade in this competition. And about this story, I will keep it now for the other repertoire questions that you might ask me later. Those two might be the reasons [the reasons why he participated in this competition].

**Lin:** Have you ever participated in any other international piano competitions?

**Na:** Yes, some other international competitions. Can I name them?

**Lin:** Of course.

**Na:** Georgia, which is near Turkey. Tbilisi Competition. [2017]

**Lin:** Oh! So, did you know the Georgian guy [the one who also participated in this year's Busoni]?

**Na:** Yeah, yeah. We were already friends. [Laughs]

**Lin:** Did you win any prize at the Tbilisi Competition?

**Na:** I got a Sixth Prize. Bad. [Laughs]

**Lin:** No, that was good. Some people do not get passed from video round [pointing to herself].

**Na:** [Laughs.] Actually, the video round is the hardest one.

**Lin:** So, what else?

**Na:** And in the same year I had the Seoul International Music Competition. I was eliminated at the first round.

**Lin:** What else?

**Na:** Dublin International Piano Competition. Also, first-round elimination. [Laughs]

**Lin:** What year was this?

**Na:** It was 2018. And while I was at [the] Dublin [competition], I submitted the video for this competition.

**Lin:** So, this is the fourth time [that you participated in an international piano competition]?

**Na:** Yeah, this is the fourth time. How about the Chopin Asia-Pacific International Piano Competition? Does it count?

**Lin:** Yes.

**Na:** I got a Special Prize for that. It was quite long ago, maybe 2015 or 16? Sorry about this.

**Lin:** That's okay. How did you decide the repertoire for this competition?

**Na:** The repertoire. Okay. Do I have to talk about all repertoire?

**Lin:** Let's do this. First of all, do you have any new repertoire specifically prepared for this competition?

**Na:** These Busoni [pieces] are new [Busoni BV 259, and Bach/Busoni BWV 639], and this contemporary piece [Francesco Filidei's Berceuse]. And maybe the quintet [Brahms Piano Quintet in F Minor, Op. 34].

**Lin:** How long did it take you to learn this quintet?

**Na:** Less than six months, it was tough.

**Lin:** How about Tchaikovsky [Concerto No. 1]?

**Na:** I've already studied this before.

**Lin:** Did you go to the pre-selection round last year? May I know your repertoire, please?

**Na:** Sure. [writing down] I played the Chopin Etude Op. 10/10. The Scriabin Etude Op. 8/12, the D-sharp Minor. And Bach/Busoni Chaconne.

**Lin:** Is this Bach/Busoni Chaconne a new piece for you?

**Na:** No, it is old repertoire for me.

**Lin:** Why didn't you play it here [in the solo final round]?

**Na:** I was concerned about that "okay, let's play the old one at the main stage and have some new one at the pre-stage." But my professor said, "You have to be selected first. Instead of thinking about the main stage, try to secure yourself in the pre-selection round. Don't think about the later rounds. Focus here."

**Lin:** And it works.

**Na:** Yeah.

**Lin:** Did you decide by yourself or did your teacher help you decide this repertoire?

**Na:** Well, I think it cannot be like black and white that he chooses for me or I choose. We had lots of conversations, and we also matched each piece like—for example, if you play I or VI [Rachmaninoff, *Six moments musicaux*, Op.16], it would be too dark. We had those kind of conversations.

**Lin:** So, actually, you decided together.

**Na:** Yeah. Maybe the final decision depended on me.

**Lin:** But he gave a lot of suggestions.

**Na:** Yes, Suggestions.

**Lin:** About these new pieces, how did you select them?

**Na:** Firstly, the Sonatina by Busoni [*Sonatina Seconda*, BV 259]. Frankly, I didn't like this piece because it was like atonal music.

**Lin:** It was brave that you chose a piece you don't like.

**Na:** Actually, I really want to play—what was it? It's like the *Chorale* piece [sings the melody]. Maybe Georgijs Ososkin [another competitor in the Busoni Competition] played this piece [BWV 253]. I really love that one. But if I played that piece with Schubert [Four Impromptus], those programs were going to be like too serious, maybe. Maybe too much tonality. I selected these pieces because of the dynamic ranges.

**Lin:** Most of the contestants had three composers in the semi-final round, and you only had two. Why didn't you play more variety of pieces? Do you really love this Schubert and [thus] wanted to play it at the semi-final round [Four Impromptus, Op. 90]?

**Na:** Maybe the later [round] would be suitable for me. I really like these Impromptus, and also I like the Chaconne I played in the pre-selection round. It's one of my strategies, too. In competition, particularly lots of competitors are supposed to show their technique or maybe their power. But I didn't like to do that [way]. So, they have like a 40-minute program [requirement]. It [the Schubert Impromptus, Op. 90] fit perfectly. So, I thought that "oh, my God! It's destiny to play this one." [Laughs]

**Lin:** Just like gambling, right? [Laughs]

**Na:** Yeah, I want to show my musicality to the jury.

**Lin:** And you succeeded. [Na went through to the Solo Finals after played the Schubert Impromptus]. Are you happy with this?

**Na:** Yes. I was really depressed that I didn't get into the Chamber Finals. But I was really happy that I got chosen by the Jury with these Schubert Impromptus.

**Lin:** I really like the Impromptus. Especially the fourth one.

**Na:** Yes. Actually, the fourth is very difficult to play on stage.

**Lin:** So, can you explain the combination of the repertoire of the solo final round?

**Na:** The Solo Finals. Now, we have a story for this one [the solo final round].

**Lin:** I'm excited about a story.

**Na:** Don't be excited. It's a sad story. Okay, the first one [that I played], the Choralvorspiel [Bach/Busoni, *Choralvorspiel* No. 5 "Ich ruf zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ," BWV 639]. I chose it because I just like it. The transcription of Busoni which the pieces originated were by Bach, as you know. They have like toccata, or maybe like—there are so many of them. Firstly, I really love the sound of the organ. And this *Choralvorspiel* is originally [transcribed] from the organ piece [by Bach]. So, I really want to pronounce or project the sound that the pianoforte could make, a sound of overlapping, wind sound maybe. Especially I love minor keys, and the title is great. It's like "I'm calling you, Jesus Christ." Although I'm not a Christian, somehow it touches my heart. It's like praying, begging. Those were my major reason of choosing this piece.

And about this contemporary piece [Francesco Filidei, *Berceuse*], it's quite funny because it has fewer notes [than other pieces]. I didn't practice it very much. I was able to memorize this piece, but it was so risky. So, I just requested a page turner. This piece covers the whole range of piano, all eighty-eight keys. And it is just my opinion, it might sound like the universe, a wild space. If I pronounce the very low voice and the very high voice in the hall, and if you stayed for a moment, the sound is blooming. It's quite funny that if you made a sound, it starts to bloom and in the same time it starts to fade. I really want to manage or to portray something like the universe. So, I chose this one.

The Rachmaninoff *Six moments musicaux*, okay, this is quite a tough one. Last year I had my own recital in Seoul. I performed the whole six pieces, and I planned to play all the six in this competition. But if I put down five and six, I would be out of time. So, I put down one to four. To maybe show like some techniques or like powers. Because all of my pieces were like a bit serious and a bit deep. So, I want to show something like that. Imagine the Rachmaninoff, the old Russian, that depression, and you're eager to find hope during the depression. I was eager to draw some pictures of his music. And it also says it's like musical moments. My professor also said that it's not just a sentimental melody, it's like a connection of each drawing you might see. It's like Mussorgsky. That's why I chose this piece. Those others are so serious. It might be like a mist, like a ghost. It just sparkled one time and vanished right away.

Okay, Beethoven [Sonata No. 32 in C Minor, Op. 111]. One of the biggest pieces in the world, maybe. Some can say, "How dare you play this last sonata?"

**Lin:** Yes. So, how dare you play this one? [Laughs]

**Na:** [Laughs]. People asked, "How did you dare play this kind of forbidden piece in the competition?" But what's funny is that I studied this piece like maybe six years ago when

I was in high school. That might be more “how dare you!” Well, at that time I was just in love with this piece. You know the second movement, right? The *Arietta*.

**Lin:** Yes, that was my repertoire.

**Na:** Maybe the first movement is like those diminished seventh chords [he sings the beginning of the first movement]. Beethoven loved the diminished chord. In Op. 57 *Appassionata* Sonata, third movement, there is also a diminished seventh [he sings the beginning of *Appassionata*’s third movement]. He really enjoyed using those diminished chords and liked using those rhythmic chord ingredients to show his feelings. He used a very tense rhythm [sings the opening of the first movement of Op. 111]. It never stops in the first page. And then suddenly, the left-hand trio and the theme go on. Some people have said that the first movement is about the tragedy of life, or like his depression, because of his deafness. And the second movement is like – okay, the life, the doomed world is over. It’s time to go to heaven. I don’t know if heaven would be that sweet, I have no idea, but I agree with that opinion because—here starts my story.

**Lin:** I’m waiting.

**Na:** You are waiting for my story? [Laughs]

**Lin:** Yes. [Laughs]

**Na:** Okay. Do you know Eun Seong Kim? He won the Fourth Prize last time [last edition 2016/17].

**Lin:** No. [I don’t know him.]

**Na:** He is a friend of mine, and also colleague of mine. He was a great pianist already, and his technique was amazing. You could find out his details on YouTube. He was a really good pianist. After his competition here we had a chat. He was also aiming for exempt status from military service. He already knew that I would participate this year, and he said to me, “You should get a First Prize in the Busoni Competition.” And I promised him I’d do my best. Last year, some tragic accident happened to him, and he passed away.

**Lin:** Oh, no! That’s so sad.

**Na:** He passed away last summer. I told you it is a sad story.

**Lin:** Okay, keep going.

**Na:** He also played this Op. 111 Sonata in the Solo Finals of the last edition [of the Busoni competition]. And at that time I suddenly decided that I really needed to play this at the Solo Finals [in this 2018/19 competition]. And thankfully, the judges passed me to

the solo final stage, they gave me the chance to play this one. The night when I played this repertoire, it was like such a great moment. Such a pleasure moment that—even [though] I didn't make it to the final stage, but I was so satisfied, and I was so happy that I played this sonata for him. It was like being so close to him when I performed on the stage.

**Lin:** Did he also study in the same school as you?

**Na:** No, he was studying at Korean National University of Arts. Yeah, that's the story. So, I decided to choose this dramatic piece in this competition. Even though I did not pass, I'm still satisfied.

**Lin:** Thank you so much for the story. So, how did you decide the order of this program?

**Na:** The order. Can I write down the correct order? This program is wrong.

**Lin:** Sure.

**Na:** [Writing: 1. Bach/Busoni, Choralvorspiel No. 5 "Ich ruf zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ"  
BWV 639  
2. Rachmaninoff, *Six moments musicaux*, Op. 16 (I-II-III-IV)  
3. Filidei, Berceuse  
4. Beethoven, Piano Sonata No. 32 in C Minor, Op. 111]

The *Chorale* is an intermezzo, like a prelude, and it is short. It is like telling the audience that I'm going to play something similar to this music for the whole program. Also, if you start with this kind of comfortable, easy, short piece, it is a great opportunity to rehearse the piano right on stage. You can't start those pieces like Beethoven Op. 111; that's no way [to start a program]. So, it became the first piece.

I was concerned about those two [Rachmaninoff and Filidei], I already decided to play the Beethoven at the very last. And the other option may be [for this program]—if I played this *Chorale* [Bach-Busoni] followed by this contemporary piece [Filidei], then Rachmaninoff. This Rachmaninoff No. 4, you know the rhythm [he sings the rhythm, it sounds similar to the beginning of Beethoven Op. 111], if you played this the third of the order, it would be difficult to play Beethoven. It's like the same rhythm. I could not put them together. Maybe after this one [Rachmaninoff], I have to rest for 5 minutes. [Laughs]

**Lin:** They won't allow you to take a 5-minute break.

**Na:** Yeah. So, I started with *Chorale*, and played the Rachmaninoff as second order. Rachmaninoff [Op. 16] No. 4 is a tough one. I could take a rest after this when waiting for the usher to set up the piano stand.

**Lin:** That's smart. Many contestants just sit on the stage for the entire one hour.

**Na:** That's quite tough. Well, going off the stage during the performance is a bit awkward. There was no applause, there was only the footstep sound [Laughs]. But I just went off and drank water. Yeah, that's the reason of my program order.

**Lin:** Okay. And why did you choose this quintet [for chamber round]?

**Na:** Brahms Quintet [in F Minor, Op. 34]. Okay, they had like five choices. Schumann, Brahms, Dvořák, Franck, and Shostakovich. As I said earlier, I really the love minor key. Ridiculous right? Well, it is off-topic, but I really love the minor key which is not just "Oh! So sad!" But it is like finding hope during the performance. I really love those kinds of feelings. And the *Chorale* was like exactly what I just said.

Okay. For Schumann [Quintet in E-flat Major, Op. 44]: Schumann is not suitable for me. That's like happy, happy! [He starts to sing the melody of the Schumann Quintet.] Well, I already know the masterpiece, but it was not my taste. And Dvořák, if I played that, the strings were going to die. It is so hard. [Laughs]

**Lin:** Just let them die. That's their duty.

**Na:** About the Franck and Shostakovich. Okay, Shostakovich is too hard to understand. The Franck, it would be like the romantic of romantics maybe. Like the thick texture of romantic. I was really concerned about the choice between Brahms and Franck. But for my longer career, and other performance stages, Brahms might be the best piece to be able to have a long run program. You could play Brahms quintet everywhere, but Franck, Shostakovich, we need some kind of those types of stages. But Brahms is always, all the time the best. So, I chose this one [the Brahms]. And it's also in a minor key.

**Lin:** How did you practice this Quintet? Did you have a group practice for you?

**Na:** Yes, I had a group of my friends in the same school. I asked them to help me. It was really great to have rehearsal. If you practiced chamber music or concerto, you play on your own, and you [are] just like, imagining the other parts, it's quite challenging. So, I decided to call some friends. It was a great experience, even though I did not make it to the chamber round.

**Lin:** What about Tchaikovsky [Concerto No. 1 in B-flat Minor, Op. 23]?

**Na:** Okay, Tchaikovsky. I hate this piece. [Laughs]

**Lin:** And you chose it? [Laughs]

**Na:** Well, it was so famous. The opening might be the all time best. Here comes my goals—in the future, I really want to participate in the Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow. You should play two concertos there and of course Tchaikovsky. So, I studied this one.

**Lin:** How long have you studied this one?

**Na:** Maybe four years.

**Lin:** And you hate it.

**Na:** The reason why I hate this is because—well, the music is great. All those techniques, and the brilliant themes. To be frank, my hands are not suitable for this one. For example, the second theme [singing], those sixteenth notes, even though I practiced like six hours of those passages, I always have mistakes all the time. I don't know, I have no idea.

**Lin:** Did your teacher say anything about that?

**Na:** He said that I approached Tchaikovsky like Beethoven or like Bach. He said I was doing like [he sings how he had been playing the music], and he told me not to do that, just do kind of one flow. He also said that “you should play wrong notes while playing Russian [pieces].” [Laughs] That was a bit funny.

**Lin:** That sounds so sad that you should play the wrong notes.

**Na:** Well, that might be convincing because you can't play Rachmaninoff like Beethoven. All those whole bunch of notes, scales. But he said, “You have to make a big phrase line. Don't care about missed notes and mistakes.” Even though he said so, I'm still the same. [Laughs] I really hate this one.

To say about this concerto, I was planning to finish this one. After this competition, I was thinking about dropping it and starting something like Mozart K. 466, the D Minor one. Or maybe Brahms No 1 [Concerto in D Minor, Op. 15]. I think I should approach like that kind of stuff instead of Tchaikovsky.

**Lin:** Well, the Tchaikovsky Competition is four years from now. You don't need to worry about it now. [Laughs] So, what piece do you think you played the best in the Semi- and Solo Finals?

**Na:** Oh, it's hard. I can't judge myself. How about you?

**Lin:** Well, for me I think it is the Schubert in the Semi-Finals.

**Na:** I'm so grateful to hear that [Laughs].

**Lin:** In the Solo Finals, I love Busoni and Beethoven. For me, I'm not judging if this is good or bad, I'm just choosing the one that touches my heart.

**Na:** Okay. Well, I'm similar to you. My Schubert, the third one, that might be my best. And the *Chorale*, maybe. And I really like my concentration in the second half of the Beethoven second movement. I was really concentrated without being nervous.

**Lin:** So, what were the challenges of practicing the entire repertoire? Was there any piece you played that was especially challenging?

**Na:** Well, it was most difficult to arrange my overall topic. I think that it is also important to have a storytelling of all the program of what you're playing. Not just each piece, but you have to make it some kind of story. And it could be serious. It could also be funny. But regarding interest, we should make some kind of chronology. Maybe some short chronology, like one-hour chronology, or like history. I was really eager to show those kinds of history of mine by those programs. And it is challenging because if you were supposed to practice those kinds of storytelling issues, play all these programs in a row without rest. Like the same on the stage. And if you played a one-hour program straight, you will just knock out. And if you did not satisfy your program (one of the practicing programs), you have to do again. But it is mentally and physically so hard. So, that was the most challenging thing for me—to run through the whole program.

**Lin:** Probably Solo Finals was the most challenging for you.

**Na:** Yes, the length and the difficulty of the pieces.

**Lin:** So, which piece is the most difficult for you?

**Na:** Beethoven [Op. 111]. Rachmaninoff [Op. 16] No. 4 and Beethoven [Op. 111]. Well, these kinds of pieces are so hard for me. You have to stay cool to [having] all those notes without being rushed. But if you're slightly nervous, you'll rush, and you'll forget some notes. All those small things are gathering. At the end, it's like some kind of—knock out. So, this was the most challenging one [the Rachmaninoff Op. 16, No. 4].

And for Beethoven, it is so hard to touch. You have to carve something. You are like a sculptor. You have to sculpt Beethoven. And you have the ability and skills to make the outline of the shape, but you're so scared to touch that precious material. It was my feeling.

**Lin:** So, do you think you tackled those difficulties that you just said?

**Na:** Somewhat. I have learned a lot, really. During the process, it might be just a tiny step for those great pianists, but for me, it was a great leap.

**Lin:** So, do you think this competition should make any changes to the repertoire requirements?

**Na:** Erase the contemporary piece. Why? Why? Why? Why? Why? Okay, do you know the Maj Lind Competition in Finland?

**Lin:** Not really.

**Na:** That competition has a requirement. You could play those contemporary pieces that the competition gave you, but also you could write some music and play it in the competition. I was really attracted to that. I really want to compose something. I'm not a good composer. I composed like two bars and dropped it, and another two bars then dropped again. I think the most attractive thing is that you can play your own ideas or own musical words in the competition. So, Busoni Competition, they should erase this one and make some funny things.

And about the arrangement of different rounds, I think it would be better to have the Solo Finals and Chamber Finals together, not split them into two different rounds. In this competition, you have first DVD round and the pre-selection round last year. And you have this one [Semi-Finals], this one [Solo Finals], then this one [Chamber Finals]. Total six rounds. Busoni Competition made you spend two years, and they made six rounds. I think it is too many. So, it would be great that—well, I really like the two-year project, if you divided the competition in this way, it would be better to make Chamber and Solo Finals together. And you choose three to the final [round] right away, not six to hear.

**Lin:** Good point.

**Na:** I think they didn't want to listen to all these twelve [finalists] in the chamber round.

**Lin:** Is there anything else you want to say about the competition?

**Na:** About [the] competition? [He keeps his voice lower and looks around to see if someone is walking around] The piano sucks. Well, this is the hardest question. Okay, please bring me one more piano. Like three pianos, not just two. For me, both pianos were not bad, but somewhat they still have—how can I say—the same personality maybe? If the piano number one has a bright sound, piano number two has a darker sound. But the pianos are so similar, that I think you don't have any variety. Or it might be better, like some other competitions, they offer different brands of pianos for contestants' choice.

**Lin:** Anything else?

**Na:** Okay, this is important. The comment time of the jury members.

**Lin:** I know there was no comment time, you have to stop the jury by yourself.

**Na:** Yes, it is so ridiculous. It is so hard to stop the jury and say: "Tell me how I was." They should offer the comment time. Well, the Seoul International Piano Competition

and the Dublin International Piano Competition all had the comment time for eliminated candidates. Okay, I had one more competition [I did] that I forgot to say.

**Lin:** Sure, tell me, please.

**Na:** It's in China. The Suzhou International Piano Competition [2017]. I went to the second round. They also had comment time.

**Lin:** Okay, anything else?

**Na:** Nothing.

**Lin:** Okay, that's the end of the interview. Thank you so much.

**Emanuil Ivanov**, (Bulgarian) contestant in the International Ferruccio Busoni Piano Competition 2018/19.

First Prize winner, Keyboard Trust Career Development Prize, and Alice Tartarotti Prize. Interview by Yuan-Hung Lin, Bolzano, September 3, 2019.

[Emanuil is currently a student study bachelor degree at Royal Birmingham Conservatoire with Pascal Nemirovski and Anthony Hewitt, the information show on the competition program]

**Lin:** Apart from study, do you also work as a concert pianist?

**Ivanov:** I'm trying to start going towards that way. Right now, I wouldn't call it work because I am not yet engaged with agents or whatever. Now, I'm trying to have many concerts to earn as much experience as possible.

**Lin:** How long have you prepared for this competition?

**Ivanov:** I'd say about a year, since last year, after the preliminary [pre-selection round]. Maybe after a month of that, I started to develop the idea of the program and started to prepare gradually.

**Lin:** What about the pre-selection round? Did you use the old repertoire?

**Ivanov:** For the pre-selection round, I played the piece which I was very much in tune with, which I played many times.

**Lin:** What was your repertoire for the Pre-Selections?

**Ivanov:** For the Pre-Selections I played Chopin Etude Op. 10, No. 8; Rachmaninoff Etude Tableau Op. 39, No. 9; which were interesting enough new pieces for me at that time.

**Lin:** These two were new?

**Ivanov:** Yes. I was crazy enough to start with the Chopin Etude which is very, very difficult. And that was the first time for me to play on stage. [Laughs] It was just crazy. And I also played the Scriabin Sonata No. 5, which I played many times.

**Lin:** So, Scriabin is old repertoire?

**Ivanov:** Yeah. It was short. The limitation time of the Pre-Selections was twenty minutes, but it was enough for me with this repertoire.

**Lin:** So, how long did you prepare for these new etudes? One day? Two days? One month?

**Ivanov:** No [Laughs]. It was about two months or something. Actually I played the Rachmaninoff Etude somewhere before, but I don't remember exactly where.

**Lin:** So, how did you decide to enter this particular competition?

**Ivanov:** I decided to go for something big. I mean, this competition is surely one of the top five or top ten competitions out there. And I decided this time to do something like that. I've been doing small competitions a lot, I'm not a fan of competitions, but at the same time, they are very important nowadays. I'd say I don't go so far as to say they were an unnecessary evil. Because I really have a feeling that they're not so good for an artist's mentality, especially one that is young. But they are necessary for building a career. There are other ways of course, but it's much more difficult.

**Lin:** And this is the way everybody knows.

**Ivanov:** I mean, it is not easy of course. [Laughs]

**Lin:** But it's easier than to know somebody like Karajan and have the chance.

**Ivanov:** Yeah. [Laughs] It's easier than pure luck. But yes, I decided to do something, like a big competition like this.

**Lin:** Are you planning to go to Chopin Competition next year?

**Ivanov:** I was thinking about doing something like that, but I don't know if it will be Queen Elisabeth or Chopin. I don't know about Chopin [he means that he doesn't know if he will go to the competition], because it's really tough to play all Chopin repertoire in four rounds. It is really, really tough.

**Lin:** You have to count the video round and preliminary round. It's in total of six rounds with all Chopin repertoire.

**Ivanov:** Yeah, it's really, really tough. So, I don't know.

**Lin:** Apart from Busoni Competition, have you ever participated in any other international piano competitions?

**Ivanov:** Just this year, I went to the Alexandro Casagrande. It was also in Italy, and it was Terni, in the town of Terni which is a small but quiet city. It was a really hard program but very nice experience, four rounds total.

**Lin:** Did you win any prize?

**Ivanov:** I took the Second Prize actually. That was a great experience, and I got to prepare my Busoni Competition repertoire through that competition.

**Lin:** What else?

**Ivanov:** Three years ago I went to Arthur Rubinstein Piano Youth Competition in Beijing [2016], which is the first competition for the youngster on the name of Rubinstein. I only played in the first round, then I was eliminated. That was my first international piano competition experience.

**Lin:** That's nice.

**Ivanov:** A year later. I went to Shenzhen, and I participated in the Concerto Competition there. It was the same thing basically. I just played in the first round and was eliminated.

**Lin:** And?

**Ivanov:** Those are the big competitions I've done.

**Lin:** And this year you have two big competitions.

**Ivanov:** I don't think I could do more than three competitions in a year. I know people who do like ten competitions per year. I don't think it's a good idea for pianists to do so much competition. I mean, you should go to the competition. It's nice to view the competitions in the main stream sense, but more like concert experience. It's more like playing for the audience than just thinking "Oh! My God! I have to play for the jury!" No, that's a completely wrong approach. But it's sometimes easy to fall into that trap. I mean, to think about it's a competition. Actually, it doesn't have to be different than doing a concert. That's why I don't do so much of the competitions. It's much more important to develop yourself to work not for something specific for competitions, but in general, to work on yourself as an artist. Not a pianist, an artist. There are huge differences between these, which are not covered in the competition. It needs to be gradual. I know many people who are likely to win the competition at age sixteen, and they have a career, but I don't think that's very good, especially young people.

**Lin:** Thank you for the answer. How did you decide the repertoire for the competition?

**Ivanov:** [Takes about five seconds to think] That's an interesting question. I haven't really thought about why I chose these. [Laughs]

**Lin:** Okay, the Busoni *Elegie* in first round, was that old repertoire or new?

**Ivanov:** I prepared it especially for the competition.

**Lin:** And the Vladigerov?

**Ivanov:** Yeah, that's the most extravagant choice I ever made in the competition because he's a Bulgarian.

**Lin:** New piece or old?

**Ivanov:** That's an old one. It's a sonatina [*Sonatina Concertante* in F-sharp Minor, Op. 28] from a Bulgarian composer [Pancho Vladigerov], probably our biggest composer. It was a very risky decision to choose this one for the competition, because sometimes jury members when they see a contestant playing something that they haven't heard a lot, they will think like, "Why is he playing that? I don't know it."

**Lin:** It's a big gamble.

**Ivanov:** Yeah. It's very risky, but I decided to do it, to take the chance. Because it's really a beautiful piece, and I wanted to show it.

**Lin:** What's the reason for you to put it in the Semi-Finals? Is it because that you don't know if you could get into the next round and you were afraid that you might not have chance to play it?

**Ivanov:** I put it here because it is old repertoire for me. It would be more stable.

**Lin:** Okay. How about *Dante* Sonata?

**Ivanov:** Dante, I played for a few years. So, it's again an older piece. Yeah, it has really grow on me, but I think I'll leave it for a few years. I really played it too much. This would be probably my last time to play it.

**Lin:** Okay, Solo Finals. The contemporary piece [Thomas Adès, *Mazurkas for Piano*, Op. 27] is definitely new. How about Beethoven [Sonata Op. 31, No. 3]?

**Ivanov:** Beethoven was also new, I learned it a half year ago. Bach/Busoni [*Choralkvorspiel*, BWV 659] was also started a half year ago. And Brahms Variations [Variations on a Theme of Handel, Op. 24] probably a year ago. The solo final round I decided to compose with the sense of this Germanic idea (apart from the modern piece). The modern piece is set apart from them. It was played at the beginning, and I went Beethoven, Bach/Busoni, then Brahms.

**Lin:** How about the Franck [Quintet in F Minor]?

**Ivanov:** The Franck was new.

**Lin:** Did you have friends to practice with you?

**Ivanov:** I played it once in concert, in Birmingham. So, this would be the second time I play it.

**Lin:** That's great.

**Ivanov:** But it's a really, really tough piece.

**Lin:** How long did you study this?

**Ivanov:** I would say half year.

**Lin:** And Saint-Saëns Concerto [Concerto No. 2, Op. 22]?

**Ivanov:** Saint-Saëns Concerto I learned this February. So, it is new.

**Lin:** Everything is new!

**Ivanov:** I don't know why. Actually, the Saint-Saëns Concerto I decided to include because I really have enough of all competitions. If you check around the booklet [the competition program], all people choose wither Tchaikovsky No.1, Rachmaninoff No. 3, or Prokofiev No. 3. That's like the most popular. And I wanted to add to the list of the repertoire for the final round. It's a much, much bigger [choice] in the Busoni Competition than in the other competition, you have Saint-Saëns No. 2 and No. 5, and you have Bartók No. 2 and No.3 Concerto. No one even choose Beethoven.

**Lin:** Yes. Tchaikovsky is the number one top choice.

**Ivanov:** To be honest, I don't like that concerto, and I don't know why [Laughs].

**Lin:** When you were choosing these repertoire, did you talk to both of your teachers? Or did you decide by yourself?

**Ivanov:** I've never actually relied upon someone else to choose my repertoire. Since I have started to play [the piano] seriously, which was around ten or eleven years old, I have chosen my repertoire for myself.

**Lin:** So, let's talk about the first round [Semi-Finals]. Why did you choose Liszt Dante Sonata?

**Ivanov:** Well, because it was a piece I have played for a long time. It was strong enough.

**Lin:** Why did you put it in first round?

**Ivanov:** Because the first round has to be something really secure. If you put the new piece in the first round, it's a little bit risky. I mean, the first round is always you don't know exactly what the atmosphere in the hall is, you don't know the acoustics perfectly, and it has to be something you know very well.

**Lin:** About the orders, why do you have this order for the program?

**Ivanov:** I always think the biggest piece should be the last. I mean, normally, yeah, that's normal because the audience likes it.

**Lin:** And you were also the last one to perform in the first round.

**Ivanov:** That's why I chose Brahms Variations at the end of the second round [Solo Finals]. Tried to make the audience excited with the flashy ending.

**Lin:** So why you had Busoni [*Elegie*] at the beginning?

**Ivanov:** I thought that if I started with Vladigerov, it's even riskier. Not only is it an unknown work, but I'm starting with it. So, I had Busoni first, which also is an unknown work, but at least it's the Busoni competition. And it works really well to have Busoni at the beginning, it starts with the rumbo [Starts to sing], and you have the chance at the first two pages to see how the keyboard is like.

**Lin:** You have time to rehearse on the piano right?

**Ivanov:** Fifteen minutes, not so much.

**Lin:** How about the order of the second round [Solo Finals]?

**Ivanov:** I'd say I decided to make shorter pieces and longer pieces like the [Thomas Adès] Mazurkas first, then Beethoven Sonata, which is way longer. Then Bach/Busoni *Chorale Prelude*.

**Lin:** For rest?

**Ivanov:** No, it's hard to have rest because it's very emotionally, but at least, it's slow tempo. Then the Brahms/Handel, in the sense of tonality I think that works well because the Beethoven Sonata is in E-flat, then the Bach/Busoni is in G Minor, Brahms/Handel is in B-flat. So, tonality wise it works well (the relationship).

**Lin:** So, for the contemporary piece, why did you choose this one [Adès, Mazurkas]?

**Ivanov:** I don't know. We have twelve pieces for choice, and out of all, I think this might be the best one.

**Lin:** Do you like it?

**Ivanov:** Yeah, yeah. It is very difficult, especially in three months. I chose it on the base of listening to it, and I realized how difficult it is right after I got the sheet music. [Laughs]

**Lin:** Did you have lesson with your teacher for this piece?

**Ivanov:** No, actually I didn't. I started learning in June, and I had already went back to Bulgaria [It was already summer vacation]. But it's not so important, the modern piece. A friend of mine told me if you lose the competition or if you won the competition, it's not going to be due to the way you play the modern piece. It's much more important to have a general perception of the music, the way you play the pieces like Brahms or Beethoven.

**Lin:** So, why did you choose this Beethoven Sonata? This one is so long.

**Ivanov:** I was the only competitor who chose this sonata. I really think is a beautiful sonata and it's one of the most live hearted, warm piece by Beethoven. Most people like to play Appassionata which is really dramatic and strong or *Waldstein* which is like very glorious. But I think this sonata brings nice balance very well in contrast with Brahms/Handel Variations. Actually, it is not so contrasting because Handel Variations although it's very weighty, it is also very humorous. The same things goes for the Beethoven Sonata. So, I decided to play the humorous Beethoven Sonata and the humorous Handel variations, and then between I put Bach/Busoni. It a very—a kind of sad emotion.

**Lin:** How did you decide to choose the Franck [Quintet]?

**Ivanov:** Actually, we had the choice of playing five quintets. We had Schumann, Brahms, Dvořák, Franck, and Shostakovich. I could have gone with the Shostakovich or the Brahms, but the Brahms is even I think more difficult than the Franck. The Franck is a very interesting piece because it's very exhausting emotionally, but at the same time it's approachable mentality because it's an—I mean, it's easy to get the sort of tragic energy. Shostakovich is more difficult than that. It is—how to say—I shouldn't say it's deeper, well, it's more complex. I think the Franck suits me better than the others right now.

**Lin:** So, which piece you think you played the best so far?

**Ivanov:** I think the Brahms/Handel Variations went really well. The fugue at the end [sing the melody] was really cool.

**Lin:** And you drove the audience crazy. [Laughs] So, are you happy with your repertoire choice so far?

**Ivanov:** Yeah.

**Lin:** What are the challenges of practicing this entire repertoire?

**Ivanov:** I don't know. It's nothing different from anything else. I mean, I always tried to approach the music in same devotion. For me, it doesn't matter if it is a Busoni competition or if it's a small competition. You have to play for people, you have to play for the audience, you have to be yourself, you have to be prepared, and you have to give

the best you have. So, the challenges of the preparation for such a competition doesn't have any differences with the others.

**Lin:** So, is there any "most difficult" piece for you from the entire repertoire?

**Ivanov:** Out of those, I think the *Dante* Sonata is the most difficult. At least it's what it turns out to be. I thought Liszt B Minor Sonata was difficult, but I now think *Dante* is more difficult because the structure is more complex and also the technique parts are difficult. Liszt usually writes very comfortably, he's a fantastic pianist. But here, he probably wants to build a dramatic texture; there are some awkward things and passages.

**Lin:** Do you think you conquer all the problems?

**Ivanov:** In *Dante*? I don't know. I could play much better actually, that was not the best performance. Well, it happened. It's not possible for everything to be in the same high level.

**Lin:** So, do you think this competition should make any changes on repertoire requirements?

**Ivanov:** No, I think they are very good.

**Lin:** Is there anything that I have not asked that you want to speak about?

**Ivanov:** It really feels good to be here. I'm really grateful for that.

**Lin:** Getting into the Finals is very good.

**Ivanov:** Really fantastic.

**Lin:** You didn't look so excited when they were announcing the result.

**Ivanov:** Didn't I? I guess I didn't show it. I was surprised after the first round. I was generally surprised that they have me selected because I didn't think I played so well, if I was in the jury, I wouldn't choose myself.

**Lin:** So, were you surprised to be selected into the final six after Solo Finals?

**Ivanov:** I don't know, I don't know how to answer that question. It's really difficult to think about this.

**Lin:** You are happy, right?

**Ivanov:** Yes, I'm happy. I mean, after my performance, I was always the last one, and at the same time, I have to wait for the result. When they were announcing, I was always tired and exhausted.

**Lin:** Okay, thank you very much.

**Giovanni Bertolazzi**, (Italian) contestant in the International Ferruccio Busoni Piano Competition 2018/19.

Fourth Prize.

Interview by Yuan-Hung Lin, Bolzano, September 2, 2019.

**Lin:** Are you currently a student?

**Bertolazzi:** Yes. I'm in the Master's program at Music Institute "Vincenzo Bellini" of Catania. I'm in the first year.

**Lin:** So, are you working as a concert pianist?

**Bertolazzi:** Yes, I have some concerts.

**Lin:** Do you belong to any manager [agents]?

**Bertolazzi:** No. Not yet.

**Lin:** How long have you prepared for this competition?

**Bertolazzi:** Actually Busoni is every two years, the first year is Pre-Selections, and the second year is Semi-Finals and the rest of the rounds. First of all, I just prepared the pre-selection [round].

**Lin:** And how long did you prepare for the pre-selection [round]?

**Bertolazzi:** All the summer of last year [2018]. Actually, the pre-selection [round] was a 20-minute performance, with two etudes. It's not a big repertoire, so, we have to be really prepared. So, I started to prepare this year's competition right after the result of the Pre-Selections. I didn't start immediately because I was also thinking about other pieces. In general, the preparation was almost one year, maybe a little bit less.

**Lin:** May I ask for your pre-selection repertoire?

**Bertolazzi:** Chopin Etude Op. 10, No. 1. Rachmaninoff Etude Tableau Op. 33, No. 9. Then Brahms Intermezzo Op. 118, No. 2. And Liszt Rhapsody No. 12.

**Lin:** How did you decide to enter this particular competition?

**Bertolazzi:** Actually in Italy, Busoni Competition has a long history. It's a really important tradition with great prize winners like Martha Argerich or Lilya Zilberstein, even Alfred Brendel, he won the Fourth Prize in the first edition [1949]. So, Busoni is a really important competition for Italians, and I think this is the most important competition of Italy. So, for us, it is really important, and it is a really important competition for pianist. For me, of course it is a really important goal.

**Lin:** Have you ever participated in any other international piano competitions?

**Bertolazzi:** Yes. But they are—I think a little bit less important. Thalberg International Piano Competition, in Napoli. It was a three-round competition, I won the First Prize [2018]. I won two competitions in Germany. These are for young people. One is Troisdorf Competition, there were three main categories, I was in the middle one [2015]. Another one in Germany is the Weishaupt Competition, I also won the First Prize [2017]. I think these are the most important competitions I have attended. The other competitions are not so important.

**Lin:** Are these WFIMC competitions?

**Bertolazzi:** No, from Alink-Argerich.

**Lin:** So, this is your first time participating in a WFIMC competition?

**Bertolazzi:** I'm not sure actually. Oh, and I have attended Gina Bachauer International Piano Competition in USA. I don't know if it is World Federated Competition.

**Lin:** Yes.

**Bertolazzi:** Okay. That one is also in three categories. Junior, Young Artists and the other one. When I was eighteen [2016], I took part in this. They had live Pre-Selections in a lot of different cities. I was the only one Italian selected who participated there, we were the only three Europeans. I did all solo rounds, not the final.

**Lin:** So, you got into the semi-final round?

**Bertolazzi:** Yes.

**Lin:** So, how did you decide the repertoire for this competition?

**Bertolazzi:** We had some rules for the repertoire. So, for example, the Busoni piece. You have to choose one at least, and the same for contemporary pieces, at least one Bach/Busoni transcription, and we have to play one classical sonata, then of course quintet and concerto (we have to choose from the list). Then the free repertoire, I chose something I really wanted to play, and something I was thinking which suited me (my characters). For example, Liszt, I really like Liszt. In the first round, I had Liszt *Dante* Sonata. The same reason for the Rachmaninoff [Sonata No. 2, Op. 36] in the second round [Solo Finals]. Usually I tried to balance one performance with virtuosic pieces, and different characters pieces.

**Lin:** Did you decide by yourself or did you talk to your teacher?

**Bertolazzi:** Yes, I talked to my teacher, and I made the final decision.

**Lin:** Did he give you any suggestion on the repertoire choice?

**Bertolazzi:** Yes. Actually, we chose together.

**Lin:** Okay. Can you please tell me which one is your old repertoire and which one is the one you learned particularly for this competition?

**Bertolazzi:** So, the Busoni piece was new [Busoni Sonatina “In diem nativitatis Christi MCMXVII,” BV 274]; Liszt [*Dante Sonata*] is old. I learned it few years ago, then I stop and relearned again. I think I learned *Dante* almost five years ago, but actually this year I wasn’t practicing it until April or May. I was thinking about choosing other pieces, then I decided to play *Dante*.

**Lin:** How about Debussy?

**Bertolazzi:** Debussy, one old and one new. *Brouillards* was new, *Ondine* is old [Both from *Préludes*, Book II].

**Lin:** Stravinsky?

**Bertolazzi:** Really new.

**Lin:** So, in the semi-final round, you have three new pieces.

**Bertolazzi:** Yes.

**Lin:** So, for the Solo Finals, the contemporary piece was new. What else?

**Bertolazzi:** We received the scores in February, but then actually first I chose another piece. And at the end I decided to play the Nante *Invocation*, because I like it more. It was a really pianistic piece. I started this piece in June.

**Lin:** What about Beethoven [Sonata No. 21 in C Major, Op. 53]?

**Bertolazzi:** Old piece for me. The same reason as how I chose Liszt Dante.

**Lin:** Bach/Busoni *Choralkvorspiel* [No. 2 “*Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme*” BWV 645] was new, right?

**Bertolazzi:** Yes.

**Lin:** Rachmaninoff? [Sonata No. 2 in B-flat Minor, Op. 36]

**Bertolazzi:** I started it last year. It’s new, but it’s not particularly practiced for this competition. I was learning it, and I think it is good to have it in this competition. In general, when I was choosing pieces, I always choose with the idea of the competition. I

mean, I chose pieces which were good for my age, what could be useful for my technique or for my performance. And it could be used in general. For example, if you chose some really deep Schubert Sonata, you cannot play them in every competition, in some competitions maybe.

**Lin:** What about the Quintet [Schumann Quintet in E-flat Major, Op. 44]? Was that new for you?

**Bertalozzi:** Yes.

**Lin:** How did you practice this? By yourself? Or do you have friends who could help you?

**Bertolazzi:** Yes, I have some friends, but I didn't have so many rehearsals before the competition.

**Lin:** So, do you play chamber music a lot?

**Bertolazzi:** Not so much. Maybe a bit but usually not with a quartet. I mean, not a piano quintet.

**Lin:** And the concerto is new [Prokofiev Concerto No. 2 in G Minor, Op. 16]?

**Bertolazzi:** Yes. I wanted to play Rachmaninoff No. 2, but it's not in the repertoire requirement list. I had some others such as Liszt Piano Concerto No. 2, but I prefer to have a new one, and I want the one from Russian [composer].

**Lin:** So, why not Tchaikovsky No.1? It's probably the most famous Russian piano concerto.

**Bertolazzi:** I don't know. I prefer the Prokofiev.

**Lin:** So, your main consideration of choosing the repertoire is based on what you favor?

**Bertolazzi:** Not only my favor. I tried to find which pieces are more close to me, and to my personality.

**Lin:** What is your personality?

**Bertolazzi:** It's difficult to explain. I always tried to search for some pieces with deep language, deep music in general, I really like it. Not just the virtuosic music.

**Lin:** You said you were trying to search for deep music, so, do you think you are a good story teller?

**Bertolazzi:** It's not simple to tell a story. I always try with the imagination, and with my personality to say something.

**Lin:** You said you tried to select some music close to your personality. But like in the semi-final round, your repertoire Liszt, Debussy and Stravinsky are all in different characters.

**Bertolazzi:** Yes. But actually in every piece, even in [the] Busoni Sonatina, they all have some really deep meanings. Like *Dante*, of course, the piece is inspired from Dante comedy. Then Stravinsky, there's a story of the firebird. Every Debussy *Prélude* has a different image, and you have to advocate different atmospheres. Even in Busoni Sonatina, it has a long title *In diem nativitatis Christi*. It means in the day Jesus was born. And also in Rachmaninoff, even in Beethoven, there are some symbolic images and symbolic meanings.

**Lin:** Okay. So, how do you think about your performance in the previous rounds?

**Bertolazzi:** Actually, in my semi-final round, maybe it was a little bit more difficult for me. Because it was the first round, the first impact with the public and with the jury. A lot of people waiting for me. It's not like the other competitions, you go there and that's it. Busoni has Pre-Selections. Right after the pre-selection results, people know about your result and they are waiting for you. Especially in Italy for Italian, in this year, we have just two [contestants], the number is very little. In past editions, we had more Italian participants, eight to ten maybe. But two is really a few.

**Lin:** People are waiting for their Italian proudly, isn't it? Is there anything that you think you played the best?

**Bertolazzi:** I don't know actually. Because I was really happy for something, but in every piece there are always something that I could play better. Maybe I was more satisfied with the second round [Solo Finals], but not too much, not hundred percent happy of course.

**Lin:** Are you satisfied with your repertoire choices so far?

**Bertolazzi:** Yes. I think so. As I already told you, during this year, I changed a lot (the pieces). I mean, I practiced a lot of pieces, more than the pieces for the competition, and then when the deadline for sending the repertoire came, I chose what I played in the competition. So, I practice a lot of pieces. I think now they work well.

**Lin:** How did you decide the program order for the semi-final and solo final round?

**Bertolazzi:** It's not just about chronological order. Because in both rounds, I didn't rehearse like the chronological order. In general, I preferred to play at the end the most powerful piece and most effective. So, Stravinsky *Firebird* and also Rachmaninoff

Sonata, both of them are at the end. Then I think I have to start with something comfortable for me. I think it's really difficult to start with the classical sonata. And it's better to start with Bach/Busoni, or contemporary.

**Lin:** People seldom start with the contemporary in the solo final round. Do you feel comfortable with this order?

**Bertolazzi:** Yes. I think the order was really good.

**Lin:** What were the challenges of practicing this entire repertoire?

**Bertolazzi:** Actually, it's a very big repertoire, and it's difficult to manage everything. I think you have to focus on each round little by little. Immediately before the first round, you have to just focus on the first round. Then before the second round, focus just on the second round.

**Lin:** But for the whole year, how do you manage [learning the repertoire]?

**Bertolazzi:** Everything little by little. The contemporary piece I started later, because the score arrived later. But still, little by little.

**Lin:** Which is the most difficult piece for you in this competition?

**Bertolazzi:** For me, of course every piece. They all have their own difficulties. But maybe the classical sonata, it's the most difficult part. Oh, Stravinsky actually.

**Lin:** Do you think this competition should make any changes on the repertoire requirements? Or do you think this is good?

**Bertolazzi:** Actually I think it is good. Of course we have to respect some rules, but you have also the possibility to choose a lot of free repertoire. So, it is quite balanced, I think.

Then, we had a lot of concertos for the finals, but maybe if there were some more or some different concertos, I would probably choose something different (there wasn't Rachmaninoff No 2 and Brahms).

**Lin:** Is there anything that I did not ask and you would like to speak about? Anything? The arrangement maybe?

**Bertolazzi:** I think the arrangement is good. Especially the practice organization is really well done. We always have some really good pianos to rehearse with. I think there are more than ten pianos offered to us. And it was possible to practice anytime till ten at night. My host family is also very good, kind people. Some other competition host families have also offer pianos that could let us practice at home. Here they don't do this,

but it's also good. Here I practice at school, I could be very focused. You could practice without problems, without worrying about bothering the neighbors.

**Lin:** That's great. Thank you so much for today.

**Shiori Kuwahara**, (Japanese) contestant in the International Ferruccio Busoni Piano Competition 2018/19.  
Second Prize and Special Prize for the Best Interpretation of a Piece by Ferruccio Busoni.  
Interview by Yuan-Hung Lin, Bolzano, August 29, 2019.

**Lin:** So, you are currently studying at Berlin UDK [since 2018]. Who is your teacher?

**Kuwahara:** Professor Klaus Hellwig.

**Lin:** Apart from study, do you work anywhere?

**Kuwahara:** Yes. I do some recitals and concerts in Japan, also in Germany. But I don't belong to any agents.

**Lin:** So, how long have you prepared for this competition?

**Kuwahara:** From last year. When I passed the first round [Pre-Selections round].

**Lin:** Before your first round, how long did you prepare?

**Kuwahara:** For my program, I had some pieces which I played or practiced for a long time. But some are only half year. The longest one is five years, or six years. The last year first round was only for fifteen minutes, and there were two etudes, Chopin and the others, and some free choice. And I practiced these maybe for three or four months.

**Lin:** May I ask what was your first round [Pre-Selections round] repertoire?

**Kuwahara:** Chopin Op.10/1 Etude. Rachmaninoff Etude Tableau Op. 39/1. And Brahms Paganini Etude, book II. That's all.

**Lin:** Thank you. So, have you ever participated in any other international piano competitions?

**Kuwahara:** Yes. My first experience of international piano competition was Maria Canals at Barcelona. I got the second prize.

**Lin:** And next?

**Kuwahara:** The second one was 2017 Viotti International Piano Competition, in Italy. I also got Second Prize.

**Lin:** When you were doing these two competitions. You were still studying in Japan, right?

**Kuwahara:** Yes.

**Lin:** That's great that you won the prize, the prize money could cover your travel fees from Japan.

**Kuwahara:** Yeah. [Laughs]

**Lin:** Okay. So, how did you decide the repertoire for this competition? Did you decide by yourself or did your teacher helped you?

**Kuwahara:** I made the final decision. But, of course, I talked about this with my professor, and he gave me some advice.

**Lin:** So, what was your main consideration in choosing the repertoire?

**Kuwahara:** Mainly, I wanted to choose some old pieces. Because it is a competition.

**Lin:** Old pieces means traditional pieces?

**Kuwahara:** No, the old repertoire for me.

**Lin:** Oh, okay.

**Kuwahara:** But sometimes I don't have the repertoire to match the other pieces. Then I chose some new pieces.

**Lin:** Which pieces are old repertoire for you [Looking at the competition program]?

**Kuwahara:** Liszt [*Dante Sonata*] is old, and Stravinsky also.

**Lin:** And Busoni [*Elegies* No. 7 and No. 4 BV 249] was learned for this competition, right?

**Kuwahara:** Yes.

**Lin:** Have you ever tried other Busoni before?

**Kuwahara:** Only Bach/Busoni [*Chaconne*, BWV 1004], which I'm going to perform in solo final round.

**Lin:** How about Beethoven Sonata [Op. 111], is this old repertoire or new for you?

**Kuwahara:** This is old.

**Lin:** How long have you learned this?

**Kuwahara:** Four years, but it is still difficult for me. The contemporary piece is new [*Campo Hommage à Georges Cziffra*], and *La Valse* [by Ravel] is very new for me. Because there is no French music in my program, at first I considered the other program which was Prokofiev Sonata No. 8. And I chose some small and short Bach/Busoni pieces, but I wanted to play Rachmaninoff Concerto No. 3 in the final round, and it would be too many Russian pieces. My professor said it is too much, and I'm not a Russian. If I'm a Russian, it would be very nice to play many Russian works. But I'm Japanese, it is too much. So, I chose Bach/Busoni, it is an old piece for me. And also Beethoven, which I want to play it here. Then the remaining time is about 22 to 23 minutes. I don't have a 23-minute piece, so, I was thinking about the program, and I should play some French music.

**Lin:** Have you tried French music before?

**Kuwahara:** Yes, of course. I have some French music but not so many, and the timing couldn't match.

**Lin:** So, these two new pieces [Ravel *La Valse* and Campo *Hommage à Georges Cziffra*] were selected by yourself or suggested by your professor?

**Kuwahara:** I chose it. Actually, for the contemporary piece, I chose this one because it's not so difficult to memorize. Of course, we don't need to memorize the contemporary work. But I feel better, and also the acoustic is very different between the stand on the piano and without the stand on the piano. And of course we must prepare the contemporary piece in a short time, so, I can't choose a very technical piece. It is hard to play.

**Lin:** What about the Ravel?

**Kuwahara:** I like Ravel much more than Debussy. So, I didn't consider choosing some Debussy pieces, and for Ravel, due to the time limitation, there is not so many pieces I can choose.

**Lin:** So, basically it is because of the timing.

**Kuwahara:** Yes. And the *La Valse*, the atmosphere is very good. After the contemporary work, it is comfortable for me to play *La Valse*.

**Lin:** This kind of competition, it doesn't have much limitation on repertoire.

**Kuwahara:** Yes, so, it is very important how you choose your program.

**Lin:** So, when you were organizing your program, what was your main consideration?

**Kuwahara:** At first, I think about the balance. Not only the German music or not only the Russian music. But finally, I found some connection, some stories in my program. So, I think I was really succeeded choosing my program this time.

**Lin:** So, how about this quintet and this concerto?

**Kuwahara:** These are old programs for me. [Schumann Quintet Op. 44 and Rachmaninoff Concerto No. 3]

**Lin:** I think your program organization is really nice, and you were lucky because you were the first one who played *Dante* Sonata.

**Kuwahara:** [Laughs] Exactly. I'm glad I played before the Russian girl who also played *Dante* Sonata [The Russian contestant also played *Dante* sonata, and she placed it at the end of her program. Kuwahara played the *Dante* Sonata at the beginning of her program, so if Kuwahara played after the Russian contestant, it will be two *Dante* Sonatas without break]. Otherwise, it is going to be tiring for audience.

**Lin:** So far there were already four *Dante* Sonatas.

**Kuwahara:** Exactly.

**Lin:** Did you decide the program order by yourself?

**Kuwahara:** It was by myself. First, I had think about having Busoni Elegies No.4 at the beginning. Then *Dante*, then *Elegie* No.7, then *Petrouchka*. But it's not comfortable for me, it was too much interruption. So, I was thinking if it was good to play *Dante* at the beginning. But when I tried to decide the order, I found it very smooth that I play *Dante* first, and Busoni *Elegies* No. 4 and No. 7, then Stravinsky. So, that's how I decided the order.

**Lin:** How do you think about your performance in the semi-final round? Are you satisfied?

**Kuwahara:** The program was fine. But my performance was of course not bad. But could be better. Mainly it was ok.

**Lin:** Which piece do you think you played the best yesterday?

**Kuwahara:** I think the Busoni was the best. Technically, the Busoni is the easiest.

**Lin:** I like your Stravinsky.

**Kuwahara:** Thank you. I have already performed in my recitals and in other competitions. So, this time was not my best performance.

**Lin:** So, I forget this one [Busoni Elegies] BV 249. Why did you choose this one as your new piece?

**Kuwahara:** I had never played the Busoni original pieces. And I listened to the last edition Busoni Competition semi-final round on YouTube, and I also I asked my professor, because Busoni lived in Berlin for a long time, half of his life, and he died in Berlin, also. So, I think last year it was his memory year. In Berlin there were some Busoni festivals, and pianists played the Busoni's works in the festival. My professor knows a lot of Busoni's works, he recommended to me about three to four pieces. I listened to all pieces which he recommended to me. And finally, I chose this one. I could choose different characters pieces, and it's better to connect with my program. And the piece is of course very lively and very beautiful, I like it and I chose it.

**Lin:** Did you consider any technical parts when you were choosing your pieces?

**Kuwahara:** Actually, my technique is not so good. Not like the typical Korean young pianists. So, at first I was thinking the *Sonatina Seconda*, BV 259, and Ten Variations. And I practiced a little bit, but it was very confused, I can't play it. We had so many works we needed to prepare, we couldn't spend too much time on only the Busoni piece. So, if I chose very difficult pieces, I have to concentrate to learn them because there're very new for me. For the competition, the new piece is not so good. And it's a Busoni Competition, Busoni's pieces are very important here. If I focused on Busoni's works, I can't prepare the other repertoire well.

**Lin:** For not just this competition, when you entered the other competitions, when you were choosing the repertoire, have you ever thought about if the jury likes your selection or if the audience like it?

**Kuwahara:** Yeah. I don't think so. I wouldn't think about if jury like it or not. Because each person has their own taste. And of course, I don't choose Chopin for the competition.

**Lin:** So, you avoid something that you are not good at.

**Kuwahara:** Yeah. But it is important to perform the pieces I love. I don't really think about if the jury likes it or not.

**Lin:** So, you don't like Chopin?

**Kuwahara:** Chopin is too difficult for me. It's kind of very—how can I say? Male music, not for female. The spiritual is very male. It is difficult to understand and perform. Of course I have some Chopin pieces I really like to perform, but he is not my top composer.

**Lin:** So, what are the challenges of practicing the entire repertoire? Are there any pieces that you think are very challenging?

**Kuwahara:** My biggest challenge is the Ravel *La Valse*. I studied in Germany, and I don't have much French repertoire. I don't know very much about French music. The feeling is completely different from Beethoven and other German composers. Of course, Busoni is also different, of course he is Italian, but he had lived in Germany. So, I must change my feeling and the atmosphere from Beethoven. And it is very hard for me. *La Valse* is dance, usually Japanese are not good at dance music. We have a different culture from European people, so, the Japanese are very flat and Japanese dance is also very flat. We can't understand very much of the waltz and the dancing rhythm of the European. So, usually the Japanese people are not good at waltz. But I chose it, of course, I like it. But it is really hard for me understand and have a good performance.

**Lin:** So, this would be the first time you perform it if you get into the solo final round.

**Kuwahara:** Yes.

**Lin:** So, why did you choose this competition?

**Kuwahara:** I already participated the other two WFIMC piano competitions, and I want to upgrade the competition's level. I think the Viotti Competition is a little bit higher than Maria Canals, and I want more higher level, so I sent my video recording to this competition. Of course, I had sent my video to other famous competitions, but to pass the video round is very difficult for me. Because my performance is technically not so precise. You know the Korean young pianists, they really play precisely, no mistakes and we can hear all notes. But my performance is not like that, of course I like to perform on the stage, and I don't like recording too much.

**Lin:** So, when you were selecting which competition to apply to, would you maybe consider the repertoire? For example, maybe this competition's repertoire you like more, and you would apply. Or maybe you just tried to apply to many competitions?

**Kuwahara:** Yes, of course. Because the characters of the competitions are very important. Some competitions have a composer's name, it is really the character of the competition, such as Chopin or Beethoven. But the other competitions we could choose the repertoire very freely.

**Lin:** So, what do you think your performance characteristics?

**Kuwahara:** I think I'm not so good on technique, but I have energy. Usually most Japanese girls are very small and very thin (or tiny). They don't have much energy or power. So, my character is kind of Russian or German—very energetic and powerful. And I like to choose the pieces which have a big story or embedded meanings, like Liszt or Rachmaninoff. I like them. Also, I think these pieces could easily tell what kind of personality I have.

**Lin:** Do you think you encounter the difficulties that you just mentioned?

**Kuwahara:** Yes, and actually I don't have too much chamber music experience. I don't have the experience to perform chamber music in competition. So, it's my first time to play (if I pass). At first I can't—I don't know which way to prepare it. We don't have much time to rehearse with the quintet here, so I have to be very flexible, to be able to change my performance in a short time. It is really different from the solo pieces. So, now I still don't know if I encounter the difficulties [the chamber round had not happened yet at this time, but after her performance in the chamber round, I think she worked really well with the string quartet of the competition].

**Lin:** So, do you think this competition should make any changes in the repertoire?

**Kuwahara:** Actually, I changed my contemporary piece in April. It was on the deadline date of changing the program. Because it was too difficult for me.

**Lin:** I mean the competition rules. Do you think they should change the repertoire requirements?

**Kuwahara:** I think most competitions have chamber music, but not only the chamber music [in one round]. Chamber music and solo program are together in the same round. But this competition has only the quintet in one round. It's not so bad, but it's a little bit—not strange, it's just rare. Yes, the organization [of the program] is very nice.

And for the timing, for example, in the semi-final round we had a 40 to 45-minute range for our program. In the Solo Finals we had a 55 to 60-minute program time limitation. It had only 5 minutes of flexible time, it's a bit difficult for programming, to make a program. In the practice room, I practice my first-round program with 41 minutes and 30 seconds, but usually I performed the program with only 40 minutes. It was very dangerous.

Generally, this is a very nice competition.

**Lin:** Is there anything I have not asked that you would like to speak about?

**Kuwahara:** No.

**Lin:** Okay, thank you very much.

**Nicolò Cafaro**, (Italian) contestant in the International Ferruccio Busoni Piano Competition 2018/19.  
Sixth Prize.

Interview by Yuan-Hung Lin, Bolzano, August 31, 2019.

**Lin:** Thank you so much for doing this. Are you a student now?

**Cafaro:** Yes, I study at Istitotu Musicale “Vincenzo Bellinni” di Catania.

**Lin:** And you study with two teachers?

**Cafaro:** Yes, with Grazielia Concas and Leonia Magarius.

**Lin:** How long have you prepared for this competition?

**Cafaro:** About one-and-a-half years.

**Lin:** How did you decide to enter this particular competition?

**Cafaro:** I had participated in other international piano competition, and I want to upgrade the competition’s difficulty level. So, I decided to apply to this one.

**Lin:** How did you decide your competition repertoire?

**Cafaro:** I decided my competition repertoire with my teacher, and I made the final decision. Some of the repertoire I had already learned before. We tried to combine each of the pieces together for each round and ran through the whole program. Afterwards we finally decided the order of the program.

**Lin:** Would you please let me know which pieces were particularly learned for this competition?

**Cafaro:** Yes. Busoni Sonatina [BV 259] and Debussy [Prélude, Book I]. In the solo final round were Bach/Busoni *Choralvorspiel* and Pagliei [*Uno: Courbes*, the contemporary work]. The Franck Quintet [in F Minor] was also new for me.

**Lin:** Which piece do you think you played the best in the previous rounds?

**Cafaro:** Chopin Sonata [No. 2], I think.

**Lin:** Are you happy with your repertoire choice?

**Cafaro:** Yes.

**Lin:** So, what is the most challenge thing for you during the preparation time?

**Cafaro:** Of course, the contemporary piece is very difficult to learn. And the Beethoven Sonata also is not easy. For me, Beethoven Sonata [No. 26, Op. 81] is difficult to understand.

**Lin:** Do you think you overcame the difficulties you just mentioned?

**Cafaro:** Kind of. I tried my best.

**Lin:** Anything you want to say about this competition?

**Cafaro:** I'm very satisfied with this competition and the result so far. [Cafaro passed to the final six].

**Lin:** Okay: Thank you very much.

**Xiaoya Wan (万小丫)**, (Chinese) contestant in the International Ferruccio Busoni Piano Competition 2018/19.

Interview by Yuan-Hung Lin, Bolzano, August 31, 2019.

Original interview in Mandarin Chinese.

**林:**您現在正在上學讀書嗎?

**万:**算是吧!

**林:**所以還在附中嗎? [中國中央音樂院附屬中學]

**万:**不, 我已經畢業了, 高中畢業。

**林:**您還沒有念大學是嗎?

**万:**還沒有, 目前就是空了一年。[原本申請上美國克里夫蘭音樂院, 但因為想要爭取更高的獎學金, 就決定重新申請。]

**林:**那您現在有老師嗎?

**万:**有, 我有很多老師。

**林:**所以您沒有特定向誰學習?

**万:**我有專門的特定老師, 是附中的。因為老師比較忙, 所以也沒有太多固定的時間可以給我上課。

**林:**那這個老師呢? [手指指著比賽節目冊上指導老師的姓名]

**万:**這個老師是我在美國的老師, 他是克里夫蘭音樂院的老師。

**林:**您有在接演奏工作嗎?

**万:**沒有，我還是學生。

**林:**您第一輪比賽曲目準備了多久？[第一輪在 2018 年八月底，選手們確定入圍第二輪後才需要繳交第二輪曲目。第二輪在 2019 年八月底至九月上旬。]

**万:**我沒有參加過很多比賽，我也不敢說我能進入下一輪。當時是我的一個朋友，他是一位維也納的演奏家，他回國時到我家住。在報名當天晚上，我正好練完鋼琴。我問他在幹嘛呢？他跟我說：「妳也可以報名這比賽，反正妳有錄音嘛！」因此，我就也遞了錄音，沒想到就進了 Pre-selection[第一輪]。我嚇到了，因為我們學校很多人寄了錄音但都沒有入選。我心想，那我就去吧！我就拿著我手上現有的曲子就去[比賽]了。

**林:**請問您第一輪[Pre-selection]彈了什麼？

**万:** 李斯特但丁奏鳴曲, 然後蕭邦練習曲 Op. 25, No. 9,還有一個普羅柯菲夫的練習曲 Op. 2, No. 4。其實很搞笑，這兩個練習曲都是臨時湊的，因為我這首曲子太長了[李斯特但丁奏鳴曲]，比賽規定這輪[必須在]二十分鐘之內，但丁就已經十七分鐘了。然後我還得找兩首練習曲，一首是蕭邦練習曲，一首是其它的練習曲。得在三分鐘之內的，我就找了這兩首最短的。這個[蕭邦練習曲]好像才五十多秒，這個[普羅高菲夫練習曲]也才一分零幾秒[笑]。而且這些都是在比賽前才練的。

**林:**您進了下一輪[進入 2019 年的半決賽]，真的很厲害耶！

**万:**其實我當初就不應該這麼選，我當初就應該選一個正常一點的曲目，然後李斯特的但丁奏鳴曲留到第二輪[2019 的 semi-final round]。

**林:**那您的錄音呢？

**万:**我錄音用了一個莫札特奏鳴曲 K. 333 [開始唱旋律]，然後李斯特嘆息練習曲 [Liszt: Concert Etude "Un Sospiro"]，然後還有一個是蕭邦第三號敘事曲。

**林:**您從什麼時候開始練今年的曲目呢？

**万:**四月，考完大學入學考，五月中旬旅遊完開始練，但我有很多曲子都是舊曲子。第一輪[這裡指的是 2019 的 semi-final 半決賽]的普羅柯菲夫也是舊的，就是我去年用來考學校用的一首曲子。

**林:**所以基本上這些都是舊曲子？[手指指向節目冊上的曲目]

**万:**李斯特的但丁奏鳴曲是當時在練的，不是舊的。這兩首是新的[手指指向蕭邦 Op. 25, No. 9 和普羅柯菲夫 Op. 2, No. 4]。

**林:**所以基本上 Pre-selection 都是新曲子。請問這兩首練習曲您練了多久？

**万:**大概一個月吧。

**林:**您有比過其它的國際鋼琴比賽嗎？

**万:**小時候比過一個 Imola [Imola International Piano Competition]，是義大利的一個城市。那是一個小比賽，我當時拿了第一名，還拿了特等獎，來了義大利後還和阿敘肯納吉合作了協奏曲，那時候才十三歲。

**林:**當時您彈了什麼協奏曲？

**万:**K. 449 [Mozart Piano Concerto No. 14 in E-flat Major, K. 449]。

**林:**您真的很喜歡莫札特。

**万:**我真的一輩子就是困在這作曲家裡了。我所有的莫札特奏鳴曲全部都彈過，我太愛莫札特了。我覺得我可以很靜下心來的練莫札特，不需要考慮太多，也不用考慮效果，就是把東西彈出來就好了。

**林:**所以這個 Imola 的比賽是您在參加這個比賽之前唯一參加過的[國際]比賽？

**万:**算是吧！之前參加過一個法國的明日之星[BNP Paribas “Rising Star”]，但不是我出國，是他們來學校選拔。然後我被選上了。

**林:**您是如何決定您比賽的曲目的呢？比如說這些曲子[Pre-selection]是您看時間湊出來的，然後這些是本來就有的[手指指向舊有曲目部分]。

**万:**這兩個是我十五歲時錄的[莫札特奏鳴曲 K. 333, Liszt 嘆息練習曲]，這個是考學校時錄的[蕭邦第三號敘事曲]。

**林:**您如何決定選這些曲子？您老師決定的嗎？還是自己決定的？

**万:**嗯，是我自己。

**林:**全部都是您自己決定？

**万:**對。我老師是很開放的，會按照我的意願。

**林:**您會問他的意見嗎？

**万:**有，他會回答我。但是就是針對問題回答，他不會左右我的決定。其實他知道莫札特的曲目拿來比賽其實是不太好，但他會說:反正這不是一個結束，這不是一個妳必須要拿到的東西，妳就享受舞台就好。

**林:**真是個好老師。那您怎麼決定這些曲目的編排以及第幾輪彈什麼？您怎麼決定呢？

**万:**我其實把它[曲目編排]想成是一個音樂會。一個很長的音樂會。這很有趣，第一輪的話，我覺得開頭應該要有個比較代表性的莫札特奏鳴曲，我就挑了 K. 457，這是莫札特兩首小調奏鳴曲中的其中一個小調[奏鳴曲]。再來是普羅柯菲夫，我想要用來連接莫札特奏鳴曲[K. 457]和布索尼[Ten Variationen über ein Präludium von Chopin, BV 213a]，因為這個[Busoni BV 213a]是指定的。Busoni BV 213a 是 C 大調，然後[Mozart] Sonata [K. 457]是 C 小調，我覺得中間加個無調性的曲目會很有意思。

然後第二輪[solo-final round]呢，我還是彈莫札特，因為我莫札特曲目彈太多了，隨便挑一個都行。我挑了一個大調的、很恬靜的奏鳴曲，一個能夠配上布拉姆斯[奏鳴曲 Op. 1]的曲子。這個是 C 大調[Brahms 奏鳴曲]，這首 Bach/Busoni 是 A 小調。[solo-final round 曲目編排，順序為 Campo's Hommage a Georges Cziffra, Bach/Busoni Toccata, Adagio and Fugue in C Major, BWV 564-Adagio, 莫札特奏鳴曲 K. 282, 布拉姆斯第一號鋼琴奏鳴曲。]

**林:**那有點像是用調性來安排。

**万:**是的，我的想法就是這樣。

**林:**有考慮曲子的快慢或強度嗎？

**万:**也有。

**林:**好的。

**万:**就像這個 Busoni 是管風琴的感覺，就是那種教堂式的，然後最後在配上一個比較恬靜的、宮廷的音樂，然後最後再來一個，很宏偉的音樂，就還是蠻有張力(我覺得)。[這裡指的是 solo-final round 曲目編排，順序為 Campo's Hommage a

Georges Cziffra, Bach/Busoni Toccata, Adagio and Fugue in C Major, BWV 564-Adagio, 莫札特奏鳴曲 K. 282, 布拉姆斯第一號鋼琴奏鳴曲。]

**林:** 那這首呢? [蕭士塔高維奇鋼琴五重奏]

**万:** 這個呀! 很難為情的說, 我從來沒有合作過鋼琴五重奏, 然後我也沒有彈奏過這些曲子[指所有列在指定曲選擇的鋼琴五重奏曲目], 我完全不瞭解這些曲目。我有一天花了一整個下午的時間把這些鋼琴五重奏曲目都聽了一遍, 這首蕭士塔高維奇五重奏是讓我聽了覺得最有意思的。

**林:** 好的。這也是莫札特呢! [指向決賽輪的曲目選擇, **万**選擇了莫札特鋼琴協奏曲 K. 466。]

**万:** 我本來是要彈柴一 [柴可夫斯基第一號鋼琴協奏曲], 我練了四年的柴一。我本來要用, 而且這首我都不用練就可以直接彈。但是, 七月份的時候, 我的手這個地方特別酸[比劃了手腕的部分], 有點類似、但還沒有到劍鞘炎的程度。我很怕, 我不敢再彈柴一那麼傷手的曲子了。然後我就想, 反正我也不可能進決賽[笑]—

**林:** [笑]怎麼這樣說!

**万:** 然後我就挑了一首我練過的莫札特協奏曲。

**林:** 那您可以告訴我哪些是新練的[曲子]嗎?

**万:** [看向比賽手冊]莫札特都是舊的。[Mozart Sonata K. 457、K. 282 和協奏曲 K. 466。] 我從十歲到十三歲都在練莫札特[笑]。

**林:** 那麼哪些是為了比賽練的?

**万:** Busoni[semi-final 的 BV 213a 和 solo-final 的 BWV 564]、Brahms[第一號奏鳴曲], 這首是我聽了 Sokolov 彈的, 我聽了後, 我告訴自己有一天我一定要彈它[布拉姆斯第一號鋼琴奏鳴曲], 正好這個時候可以彈, 於是我就彈了。

**林:**順序就是大調小調穿插?

**万:**對。這個特別有意思, 這個是降 E 大調[莫札特 K. 282], 然後這個是 C 小調[Bach/Busoni BWV 564], 這兩個有聯繫。然後這個是 C 大調[Brahms Sonata Op. 1], 這個是 C 小調[莫札特奏鳴曲 K. 457], 我所有的曲子都是和 C 有關係的。這兩個[普羅高菲夫和 Compo]是沒有調性的。

**林:**所以您在曲目編排上, 您比較以自己想法、自己的喜好去編排。

**万:**對。

**林:**您有考慮評審喜好嗎?

**万:**我哪知道?

**林:**或是觀眾可能會喜歡什麼?

**万:**我覺得演奏音樂還是回歸於音樂本身, 並不是為了討別人喜歡。我覺得我有點任性。就是在選曲方面。其實我本來選曲是用李斯特的傳奇曲兩首[Deux Legendes, S. 175]配上普羅柯菲夫[Sarcasms, Op. 17], 這樣的話曲目會更有份量吧! 但我覺得太吵了, 李斯特傳奇曲和這個 Busoni [BV 213a]加在一起太吵了! 我一定要選一首稍微安靜一點的, 所以就選了莫札特奏鳴曲。

**林:**所有參賽者中只有您選了莫札特。我覺得您莫札特彈得挺好的。

**万:**但我覺得這次我沒晉級其實還有一部分是失誤，我莫札特奏鳴曲[K. 457]失誤的有點嚇人。有一個地方沒有彈清楚 [她開始唱了一段旋律]，那個會成為評審們「為什麼淘汰她，為什麼不讓她晉級」的關鍵，就是因為這個失誤。

**林:**或許吧！但我挺喜歡整體音色的。

**万:**我自己也還挺滿意的。

**林:**您覺得在第一輪您表現最好的曲子是哪一首？

**万:**普羅柯菲夫吧！這首彈奏時比較放鬆一點，第一首[莫札特奏鳴曲 K. 457]有點太緊張了，然後 Busoni [BV 213a]又是新的。

**林:**即使您沒有晉級，到目前為止，您對您的曲目選擇還滿意嗎？

**万:**我其實有點困惑，我不知道接下來該怎麼樣去選擇。我是堅持我自己呢？還是說該去迎合不同比賽的胃口？我會思考一段時間再去做一個決定。畢竟是比賽，並不是在安排自己的音樂會的曲目，不一樣。

**林:**在您練習的時候，您遇到最挑戰您的事情是什麼？

**万:**冷靜。我練琴您要聽到會被嚇到的，我唱得比彈得還要多。我家之前住在一樓，我練琴時，前面有個小陽台，陽台底下就會有一排人在那聽著我唱歌。特別是小時候，連樓上的也會跑下來聽我唱歌。小時候我不想練琴時，就會直接用唱的[她開始唱一段旋律]，我覺得這樣是讓我最舒服的狀態，但有時候就是冷靜不下來。

**林:**所謂的冷靜不下來，是指無法練手指上的東西，還是腦袋無法思考？

**万:**其實我都有思考，有在練。但是就慢慢閱歷豐富後，彈得曲子也更重了。不只是說唱出來就足夠，唱出來可能會帶動樂句的發展，但樂曲更深層次的東西就需要

用很智慧的腦子去想。但我本身又不是真的那麼有閱歷，所以彈曲子有時候就比較膚淺一點。

**林:**這樣並不是針對這個比賽的準備曲目，而是您自己長久以來的挑戰。

**万:**我確實沒有把它[Busoni Competition]當作一個比賽，所以不會對於比賽有什麼大問題。我會像平常一樣練習，把這一套曲目當作音樂會的成品練起來。

**林:**那您覺得這個比賽[Busoni Competition]的曲目設計是一個很好的設計嗎？

**万:**呃，還不錯啦！這比賽已經給我們很大的自由空間了，如果時間再長一點就好了[每一輪的規定演奏時間]。

**林:**所以四十五分鐘您覺得太短？

**万:**一場音樂會要一個半小時吧？比如說，第一輪如果可以再讓我多彈一些就好了[笑]，這樣我就有更多的發揮空間。

**林:**所以四十五分鐘比較難發揮。

**万:**就是選曲的時候要考慮這首不行，那也不行。

**林:**選曲時會比較難一點是吧？

**万:**對。我本來想要選一首比較長的舒曼，但是就選不了。本來是想選作品 16 [Schumann Kreisler Op. 16]，但太長了。

**林:**您覺得對於這次比賽您有任何想說的話嗎？像是比賽的整體規劃、接待家庭之類的？

**万:**噢！接待家庭太棒了！我愛 Eva [接待家庭女主人的名字]他們一家！

**林:**練琴的環境呢？

**万:**練琴的環境也很好，給我很充足的時間練，我能練時就盡量練，早上八點到晚上十點都在練，吃飯也在琴房解決，我媽幫我買飯來琴房。

**林:**真是不容易。好，我的問題問完了。

**Xiaoya Wan**, (Chinese) contestant in the International Ferruccio Busoni Piano Competition 2018/19.  
Interview by Yuan-Hung Lin, Bolzano, August 31, 2019.  
Original interview in Mandarin Chinese, translated to English by Yuan-Hung Lin.

**Lin:** Are you currently a student?

**Wan:** Yes.

**Lin:** So, are you studying at Beijing Central Conservatory of Music?

**Wan:** No, I graduated from the Middle School Department.

**Lin:** You are not yet a college student?

**Wan:** Not yet. Now I'm taking a one year gap. [Wan is applying for university in USA, she had gave up her offer from Cleveland Institute of Music of 2019 fall]

**Lin:** Do you have a teacher now?

**Wan:** Yes. I have many teachers.

**Lin:** So, you are not studying with someone specifically?

**Wan:** My teacher at Beijing Central Conservatory is very busy, we could not set up a regular time to have lesson.

**Lin:** What about this one? [Point to the name shows on the competition program]

**Wan:** This is the teacher at the Cleveland Institute.

**Lin:** Are you working as a concert pianist?

**Wan:** No.

**Lin:** How long have you prepared for the pre-selection round?

**Wan:** I didn't have too much experience on competitions. And I wouldn't say that I could pass to the next round. It was my friend who invited me to apply to this competition. I used my old recording as an application video. Then, I passed. I didn't imagine that I could pass because there were also many people from my school who applied to this competition, and they didn't pass. I was surprised that they selected me to the pre-selection round. [In Busoni competition, there was a video round, then pre-selections (live auditions).]

**Lin:** What did you play in the pre-selection round?

**Wan:** Liszt *Dante* Sonata, then Chopin Etude Op. 25, No. 9, and Prokofiev Etude Op. 2, No. 4. Actually, it was funny, these two etudes were selected in short time for *Dante* Sonata. The time limitation of pre-selected rounds was twenty minutes maximum. The *Dante* sonata is seventeen minutes, and I have to play two more etudes, which means that I had only three minutes left after *Dante*. So, the Chopin etude is about fifty seconds, and the Prokofiev etude is about one minute and fifteen seconds.

**Lin:** And you passed to the next round, it was great.

**Wan:** Actually, I shouldn't make this decision. I should have played *Dante* Sonata at the semi-final round instead of playing it in the pre-selection [round].

**Lin:** What about your video recording repertoire?

**Wan:** I had Mozart Sonata K 333[Sing the melody], Liszt *Un Sospiro* Etude, and Chopin Ballade No. 3.

**Lin:** When did you start to practice the repertoire for this year's competition [Busoni 2019]?

**Wan:** After the audition of universities in April, and I took a little trip until mid-May, after that I started to prepare for the Busoni Competition this year. But I have many old pieces, the Prokofiev [*Sarcasms*, Op. 17] in the semi-final round is old repertoire, that was the piece I played in university auditions.

**Lin:** So, basically these are all old pieces? [Points to the competition program.]

**Wan:** Not old repertoire, those are the pieces that I am learning at the time. These two [Chopin Etude Op. 25, No. 9, and Prokofiev Etude Op. 2, No. 4] are new.

**Lin:** So, basically the pre-selection round pieces are all new for you. How long did you practice for these new pieces?

**Wan:** Approximately one month.

**Lin:** Had you ever participated in any other international piano competitions?

**Wan:** I had participated in Imola International Piano Competition when I was thirteen years old, and I won the First Prize. At that time, I was in Italy and worked with the orchestra conducted with Ashkenazy.

**Lin:** Wow! What concerto did you play at that time?

**Wan:** Mozart Piano Concerto, K. 449.

**Lin:** You really like Mozart a lot.

**Wan:** Exactly. I love Mozart, and I had played all his piano sonatas. I feel like I could be really calm when practicing Mozart, and I don't need to think too much about it. All I need to do is just play the music.

**Lin:** So, the Imola was the only international competition you had participated in before Busoni?

**Wan:** I think so. I had also participated in a French competition called BNP Paribas "Rising Star", but I didn't travel, they came to our school for auditions, and I was selected.

**Lin:** How did you decide your competition repertoire? In the pre-selection round, you decided the repertoire due to the time limitation. How about the other rounds?

**Wan:** These two [Mozart, K. 333, and Liszt *Un Sospiro* Etude] were recorded when I was fifteen, this one [Chopin Ballade No. 3] was for university audition.

**Lin:** And how did you decide? Did your teacher help you? Did you decide by yourself?

**Wan:** I decided by myself.

**Lin:** All by yourself?

**Wan:** My teacher is very open minded. He would respect my choice.

**Lin:** Would you ask for his suggestion?

**Wan:** Yes, and he would answer my questions. But only answer the question, he wouldn't change my decision. He actually knew that Mozart is not suitable for competitions, but he still let me choose Mozart. He said this is not the end, you don't really need to get something from here, all you need to do is to enjoy the stage.

**Lin:** What a nice teacher. And how did you decide to place the pieces in different rounds?

**Wan:** I imagined the choreography as a concert program. A long concert. It was fun, in the semi-final round, I think it would be nice to start with a representative Mozart sonata, that's why I had K. 457 here, this is the one from "the only two minor" sonatas. The Busoni was obligatory piece, in C Major. I had it at the end and performed Prokofiev *Sarcasms* (dissonant) between Mozart and Busoni to make an interesting connection.

In the solo final round, I still had Mozart. I really played a lot of Mozart, I just picked one from my repertoire. This one is in a major key, and it is a quiet, tranquil piece. I think it could match Brahms [Op. 1] well (Brahms is in C Major). And Bach/Busoni is in A Minor.

**Lin:** It sounds like you arranged the repertoire with key relation.

**Wan:** Exactly. That's what I think.

**Lin:** So, were you not considering the other part characteristics of the pieces?

**Wan:** Sure, I did.

**Lin:** Okay.

**Wan:** Like here [solo final round] the Busoni is a kind of quiet, church-like music. And it follows by a kind of court-style music, then match it to a magnificent music, such as Brahms, it would be nice.

**Lin:** Okay. What about this? [the chamber music, Shostakovich Piano Quintet]

**Wan:** To be honest, I had never worked on piano quintet. I didn't know these quintet pieces. I spent a whole day on listening to these quintets, and I think Shostakovich is the most interesting one for me.

**Lin:** Okay. What about this? [the Mozart Piano Concerto, K 466]

**Wan:** I actually was going to play Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No. 1, which I had been learning for four years. But recently my hand was a little bit injured, and I didn't think it was a good idea to keep practicing this kind of repertoire which might cause damage to my hand. And I was thinking that it is impossible for me to get into the final round. [Laughs]

**Lin:** [Laughs.] That was funny.

**Wan:** So, I decided to choose the Mozart Concerto.

**Lin:** Can you tell me which pieces are new for you?

**Wan:** [Looking at the competition program] These Mozart pieces are all old repertoire [Mozart Sonatas K. 457 and K282; Concerto K. 466.] I was learning Mozart's works from when I was ten years to thirteen years old. [Laughs]

**Lin:** Which in particular were learned for this competition?

**Wan:** Busoni [BV 213 and BWV564], Brahms Sonata Op. 1. I heard Sokolov played this [Brahms Sonata Op. 1], and I made up my mind that I'm going to play this piece one day in the future, and now it's a good time to play.

**Lin:** And the order is according to key [major, minor] right?

**Wan:** Exactly. This is interesting. Mozart K 282 is in E-flat Major, and Bach/Busoni BWV 564 is in C Minor, these two related together. And Brahms Sonata Op. 1 is in C Major, Mozart K 457 is in C Minor. My repertoire here is related to C. And these two [Prokofiev *Sarcasms*, Op. 17, and Campo *Hommage à Georges Cziffra*] are dissonant.

**Lin:** So, when you were arranging the program, it was based on your favour right?

**Wan:** Yes.

**Lin:** Do you ever think about the jury's taste?

**Wan:** No. How would I know that?

**Lin:** How about the taste of the audience? Have you thought about that?

**Wan:** I think I would just be honest to the music itself instead of trying to please someone. I think I'm wayward. Actually I was thinking to choose Liszt *Deux Legendes*, S. 175, together with Prokofiev in the Semi-Finals, but I felt it was too noisy. So, I end up with Mozart.

**Lin:** You were the only one who chose Mozart in the Semi-Finals, and I think it was nice.

**Wan:** I think the reason why I didn't pass to the Solo Finals was because I had too many mistakes when performing on stage.

**Lin:** Maybe. But I like the whole performance.

**Wan:** I was also satisfied with the music.

**Lin:** Which piece do you think you played the best in the semi-final round?

**Wan:** [Thinking] I think Prokofiev. I was more relaxed when performing Prokofiev, and I was too nervous when playing Mozart. Busoni was new for me.

**Lin:** Even though you did not pass the Semi-Finals, are you still satisfied with your program choice?

**Wan:** I actually was quite confused. I don't know what's next. Should I just keep choosing the pieces I like or should I just try to cater to different tastes? I'll think about it. After all, this is a competition, not my own recital.

**Lin:** What was the most challenging thing when you were preparing this entire repertoire?

**Wan:** To be calm. It is difficult for me to stay calm during practice time. You would probably be shocked if you heard me practice. I usually sing more than play. I lived on the first floor of an apartment. When I was practicing the piano, there was always a row of people underneath the balcony listening to me singing. Especially when I was young, even upstairs residents would run down and listen to me sing. When I was young, I used to sing [begin to sing a melody]. I think this is the most comfortable way for me, but sometimes I just can't calm down.

**Lin:** When you said you couldn't be calm, does that mean your brain couldn't think or your fingers couldn't work?

**Wan:** Actually, I was always thinking during practice. But after gaining richer experience, the music became even heavier. Singing the melody is not enough, singing may help drive the development of the phrase, but the deeper aspects of the music need to think with a very intelligent mind. But I'm not really that experienced, so my music sometimes is shallower.

**Lin:** So, this is not particularly for preparing the competition, it is the challenge you already have.

**Wan:** Exactly [Laughs]. I don't see any difference between usual practice and preparing a competition. I actually didn't treat this as a competition, it is just like preparing a recital repertoire, all I need to do is practice and present it.

**Lin:** Do you think the repertoire requirement of this competition is good?

**Wan:** I think it is good. It has already given us a lot of free choice. If they could give us some more time, it would be even better.

**Lin:** Do you think forty-five minutes is short?

**Wan:** For a regular concert, the time is about one and a half hours. So, if they could let me play more in the Semi-Finals, I could have more room to play.

**Lin:** Forty-five minutes is difficult to play?

**Wan:** Yes. When you were selecting the repertoire, you have to consider the timing.

**Lin:** It would be more difficult to choose the pieces.

**Wan:** Yes, I was thinking about Schumann *Kreisleriana*, Op. 16, but it was too long, so I gave up.

**Lin:** Do you have anything to say about this competition? For example, organization, housing? Something like that?

**Wan:** The host family was wonderful, I love Eva and the whole family.

**Lin:** How about the practicing environment?

**Wan:** It was great. I had enough time to practice. I practice from 8 am to 10 pm every day, and I also have meals in the practice room. [In the Monteverdi Conservatoire] My mom bought me the food.

**Lin:** Wow, it was not easy. Okay, I think I'm done. Thank you so much.

**Giorgi Gigashvili**, (Georgian) contestant in the International Ferruccio Busoni Piano Competition 2018/19.

Interview by Yuan-Hung Lin, Bolzano, September 1, 2019.

Third Prize and Audience Prize winner

**Lin:** Are you still a student?

**Gigashvili:** I graduated this year from the Conservatoire of Tbilisi.

**Lin:** So, what are you doing now?

**Gigashvili:** I'm doing everything like practice, practice, and practice. So, for competition, it's quite difficult to say because I'm practicing my repertoire for my concerts, when there is enough repertoire to play in the competition, it's fine. I'm doing everything for the Solo Finals because it's very hard in the competition. It's the hardest thing in solo-final because you were alone, and it's depends on you. The program is so difficult to choose.

**Lin:** Don't worry, you now have a guarantee prize, you will at least have 2500 Euro. [Laughs, when we were doing this interview, it was after the Solo Finals results, so we all know that Gigashvili was in the final six.] You graduated right?

**Gigashvili:** Yes.

**Lin:** But you are only nineteen years old.

**Gigashvili:** I'm eighteen actually.

**Lin:** Is it normal for an eighteen-year-old student to graduate from Conservatoire?

**Gigashvili:** Yes, that's our system in Tbilisi.

**Lin:** Are you going to keep studying?

**Gigashvili:** Yeah.

**Lin:** So, are you going to do like a master's degree?

**Gigashvili:** I don't know where. I will check later, maybe Europe or USA.

**Lin:** So, technically you're graduated. But you're still learning and still have a teacher.

**Gigashvili:** Yes.

**Lin:** And you're still thinking about you're future.

**Gigashvili:** Yes.

**Lin:** Okay. So, do you also work as a pianist?

**Gigashvili:** Yeah. It's hard to say about me, but I'm a concert pianist now. From this year actually. Because I have won a competition in Spain, where the legendary Martha Argerich was in the jury. And she awarded me the First Prize. From there I'm—I think it is hard to say, but I'm a concert pianist.

**Lin:** For sure you are. Okay, how long have you prepared for this competition?

**Gigashvili:** Exactly one year.

**Lin:** Last year was the pre-selected round, did you choose the old repertoire for that?

**Gigashvili:** I didn't have to do the pre-selection round. It's a long story, I can tell you if you have time to listen.

**Lin:** Sure.

**Gigashvili:** In 2017, I won Tbilisi International Piano Competition, which belongs to WFIMC. In Busoni Piano Competition rules, they have written that if you were a winner of the federation competition, you can take part in the competition [Busoni Competition] without doing the pre-selection round. Me and this guy from Russia didn't need to do it.

**Lin:** Were you the First Prize of Tbilisi?

**Gigashvili:** Yes. Actually, no. The First Prize had not been awarded. It was quite bad. So, I was the winner.

**Lin:** And you could be exempt from the pre-selection round here. You didn't need to send the video right?

**Gigashvili:** Yes. I only sent my biography and the program. And my program was started one year ago.

**Lin:** Okay. Technically, you prepared the program for one year.

**Gigashvili:** Yes. One year.

**Lin:** So, how did you decide to enter this competition?

**Gigashvili:** I think it was because of Martha Argerich. Because Martha Argerich won this competition at the age of sixteen, I was quite shocked and I wanted to take part in this competition. It is one of the oldest competitions, and I like the atmosphere here, I like

the listener here, they all love the classical music, it is so rare in the world right now. It is my first big competition. I couldn't have imagined it.

**Lin:** You couldn't imagine that you're the Finalist?

**Gigashvili:** Yeah.

**Lin:** That's really exciting.

**Gigashvili:** Yeah, it's really, really exciting.

**Lin:** When you heard your name yesterday, you must have been really happy.

**Gigashvili:** Really! Really! Really! [Laughs] My heart was beating so fast!

**Lin:** You are a big fan of Martha Argerich.

**Gigashvili:** Yes.

**Lin:** Please tell me what international piano competitions you have participated in.

**Gigashvili:** Okay. So, my first international competition was in Estonia. It was 2016, Chopin International Competition for Young Pianists. I got Third Prize. Then it was in USA, I think this one was earlier, it was in 2015. The Gershwin International Competition for Pianists, in New York. I got Third Prize, again [laughs].

**Lin:** If this time you're Third Prize again, you must be very happy.

**Gigashvili:** Yeah. [Laughs]

**Lin:** Okay, what else?

**Gigashvili:** Then it was Tbilisi International Piano Competition [2017, Second Prize]. There was a competition in 2019, it's called City of Vigo International Competition, it was the third edition, and it was also called Martha Argerich edition.

**Lin:** So she was there [Martha Argerich].

**Gigashvili:** Yeah. Not only she, also Nelson Freire, Tamás Vásáry, Sergio Tiempo and Pablo Galdo (Spanish pianist, very good). I got the First Prize and the Nelson Freire Special Prize [Special Prize " Nelson Freire "]. Concert in Brazil next year, in Sao Paulo.

**Lin:** That's great! So, how did you decide the repertoire for this competition?

**Gigashvili:** By myself. With a little help from my professor. So, Busoni pieces were all obligatory.

**Lin:** Which one is new repertoire? Which one is old?

**Gigashvili:** Everything is quite new. But the oldest one is Shostakovich Sonata No. 2.

**Lin:** How long have you learned it?

**Gigashvili:** One year. And the newest one is the Urquiza Contrapluma.

**Lin:** How long did you practice this? Three days maybe?

**Gigashvili:** Three months. [Laughs] No, not three days. The last two months I was trying to memorize this piece. So, one month of practice, two months memorizing.

**Lin:** Okay. So, these are all new, you practice for this particular competition?

**Gigashvili:** Yeah. Not this one [Prokofiev Concerto No. 3], I played this in Tbilisi Competition in 2017, this one should be the oldest repertoire.

**Lin:** Wow, and you learned this entire repertoire in one year.

**Gigashvili:** This Prokofiev Sonata No. 7, I played in Spain this year, in April. Scriabin Sonata [No. 9] was also played in Spain, and Bach/Busoni [*Choralspiel*] was also played in Spain.

**Lin:** How long do you practice a day?

**Gigashvili:** Not so much, maybe three hours a day. But every day.

**Lin:** How did you decide the combination of the repertoire?

**Gigashvili:** My professor helped me do the combination. I only chose the repertoire by myself. The order was decided by my professor.

**Lin:** Why did you choose this repertoire for this competition?

**Gigashvili:** I thought I would be good at this program. Because I like the music which is not based on technique. I like the pieces which are based on the brain, and lots of voicing, or orchestra voicing. And every piece is like that.

**Lin:** So, when you were choosing the piece, you just based on your favorite?

**Gigashvili:** Yeah. Of course.

**Lin:** Have you ever thought about maybe this piece the jury will like it or the audience would like it?

**Gigashvili:** No. It's just about me.

**Lin:** Okay. So, do you know why your professor made this kind of combination for the Semi-Finals and Solo Finals?

**Gigashvili:** Yes. Busoni Toccata is an obligatory piece. Shostakovich Sonata is for me, because I feel very comfortable with it, the first round [semi-final round] is to be comfortable. And the Liszt Etude is the technical piece, I think. Because in the first round you have to make an effect on the jury members and the listeners.

**Lin:** What about the solo final round?

**Gigashvili:** The Solo Finals was the hardest one of this competition. Because you have to play an hour and all of the general music, I think. Beethoven Sonata No. 30 is my favorite sonata of Beethoven. Scriabin Sonata No. 9, like the Shostakovich Sonata, it is for me. Because I feel so comfortable in it. This Urquiza was an obligatory piece, and this Prokofiev Sonata is also mine too. I'm comfortable with Prokofiev, Shostakovich and Scriabin.

**Lin:** Okay. Why did you choose this modern work [There were twelve modern works for contestants' choice]?

**Gigashvili:** By chance. But then I fell in love with it.

**Lin:** So, like the order of the program was also decided by your professor?

**Gigashvili:** Yes, and this order is comfortable for me.

**Lin:** How did you think about your performance at the previous round?

**Gigashvili:** I think I did my best.

**Lin:** Which piece do you think you played the best in the Semi-Finals?

**Gigashvili:** Shostakovich. Those three pieces [the semi-final round repertoire] I think I played the maximum I could. But I think I could play better in the concert, because I feel freer in the concert.

**Lin:** What about the Solo Finals?

**Gigashvili:** It was the same actually. I felt most comfortable in Beethoven and Prokofiev.

**Lin:** What are the challenges of practicing the entire repertoire?

**Gigashvili:** Oh [Laughs], you could get tired of it. Maybe one year is too long, it is so long to play all the pieces every day. It is a bit exhausting and you get tired of each piece.

**Lin:** So, how do you make yourself not feel tired for these repertoires?

**Gigashvili:** I don't know really. [Laughs] When I was practicing, and I got tired, I had to relax one hour and go back to piano.

**Lin:** Do you run the whole program every day?

**Gigashvili:** Not the whole program. One round in one day, something like this.

**Lin:** Any repertoire you felt was difficult to practice? Or everything is all good for you?

**Gigashvili:** I think when I started to practice it, it was quite hard. But then I got used to it, it wasn't hard anymore.

**Lin:** Do you think this competition should make any changes on the repertoire requirements?

**Gigashvili:** Everything is perfect. We have quite a lot of free space to choose what we like to play.

**Lin:** Do you have anything want to say about this competition?

**Gigashvili:** I love this interview so much, really. It was so interesting.

**Lin:** Thank you for encouraging me [Laughs]. And thank you for your time.

**Jean-Baptiste Doulcet**, (French) contestant in the Long-Thibaud-Crespin International Piano Competition 2019.

Fourth Prize and Prix du public (Audience Prize).

Interview by Yuan-Hung Lin, November 17, 2019.

**Lin:** Thank you so much for your willingness to do this [the interview]. Are you currently a student?

**Doucet:** No, I finished two years ago, and I'm now still living in Paris but kind of study in Sweden with a teacher since last year, her name is Julia Mustonen-Dahlkvist. So, I live in Paris and go there like once a month. Something like that.

**Lin:** What degree did you finish here?

**Doucet:** I finished two years ago the Master, piano. But I first started at the Conservatory twelve years ago in improvisation first, then harmony, chamber music, then piano. I did like a kind of opposite way. Then I came to the piano last.

**Lin:** So are you a concert pianist?

**Doucet:** Yeah, of course. And as well as an improviser. Sometimes, when it's possible in recital, I split [the program] between repertoire and improvisation. This is something I do the most because I know in the classical music world it is not that common. So, I want to do this more because for the audience it's interesting.

**Lin:** Do you have an agent?

**Doucet:** No, I don't.

**Lin:** OK good, cause some agents will say "No interview". [Laughs]

**Doucet:** Yeah, exactly. So, for now, no problem. [Laughs]

**Lin:** So, how long have you prepared for this competition?

**Doucet:** Well, not very long, because I did just before this one the Clara Haskil competition, which I prepared quite well. And then here is the Long-Thibaud just literally two months after, kind of. So now the Clara Haskil [competition] was so exhausting that I took like two weeks off. And I had to get back to the piano for all the things I had to prepare for the Long-Thibaud, which is completely different repertoire. Of course, for the free choice program, I took some pieces that I know well already. Of course. But it was just not the same repertoire as Clara Haskil, except one piece. So, actually, I had just like, even not, one month and half. So, it was a bit stressing. And the Bartók Concerto [Concerto No. 3, Sz. 119] that I did not know, I learned it three weeks ago.

**Lin:** Had you heard it before?

**Doulcet:** Yes, of course, I knew it in my ears, but somehow it's not enough.

**Lin:** You are so brave that you didn't know the Bartók Concerto before and you never had learned it, and you chose it as your repertoire [for this competition]?

**Doulcet:** Because I had to choose between the—it was on the six concertos choice [list], so somehow and because I love this concerto, I thought it was the occasion to play it.

**Lin:** Yeah, I also love this concerto.

**Doulcet:** Yeah, me too.

**Lin:** OK. So, how did you decide to enter this particular competition?

**Doulcet:** I decided because in the last two years I just realized that the—because I came quite late to serious piano playing, and because I often improvise, I've been always going in every direction but not taking it seriously that—the repertoire and everything. At the end of my conservatory, the Master with Claire Desert, I took it seriously. Then I met this teacher in Sweden, which is carrying me a lot, pushing me to the competitions, because she found that, and she is completely right, that is just a way for me to work, to have very good challenges, and improving a lot of things. Because of that I had to be ready in one month. Clara Haskil and Long-Thibaud were two competitions I wanted to do. The Long-Thibaud because it's in Paris and I live in Paris. So, somehow it was kind of obvious that I do it.

**Lin:** You did not participate in the previous edition of this [competition], right?

**Doulcet:** In Long-Thibaud? No, it was the first time for me. I really began competitions two years ago. Like my first big competition was Maria Canals. Not this year, the year before. It didn't work, nothing, didn't pass to second round. In Clara Haskil I went into the Semi-Finals, and I got the prize for the best performance of the obligatory piece [Prix Modern Times] in the Clara Haskil three months ago. Which is the only prize they gave this year because they didn't award the prize. The only prize the jury gave was for the obligatory work. It's a kind of an optional prize, but it's still a prize. That was good, and it was very good experience to be in the Clara Haskil [competition].

**Lin:** How did you decide the repertoire for this competition?

**Doulcet:** Well, I decided mostly—[thinking]

**Lin:** With your teacher or by yourself?

**Doulcet:** Yeah—because of my teacher. So, I tried to be very rational, which means that I had to play the maximum of the things that I knew well from a long time ago for the free choice. So, Berg [Sonata, Op. 1], Brahms Op. 116, that kind of thing, or Bach [Capriccio in B-flat Major, BWV 992] as well. Then for the Brahms Quintet [Piano Quintet in F Minor, Op. 34], because it was for me that the Brahms I played a lot, so somehow—I don't know, I just chose Brahms because I feel it's more interesting for chamber music somehow. And then I had to learn a lot of new pieces like the French one (the Dutilleux and the Nocturne of Fauré), and of course, Haydn [Variations in F Minor, Hob XVII/6]—that I never had played. And the Concerto, Bartók [Concerto No. 3, *Sz.* 119], because I love it so much that it was a good occasion that it was on the list. I had only played the Mozart [Concerto No. 24 in C Minor, K. 491]—for the Clara Haskil actually. But I never had played it [with orchestra], Mozart No. 24, and—so, I had to pick another one, and that's the one they [the jury] chose for me in the end to play in the Finals.

**Lin:** Is this your first time to play with orchestra?

**Doulcet:** Second time only. The first time was the Beethoven 3rd [Concerto], which is not the same feeling of playing with the orchestra because of the—it's kind of square—the writing of course. And Bartók is completely different because you have to play with the orchestra, always like—exchanging, like the solo part, orchestra. It was completely different writing, so it was really stressful for me. But I feel that I managed it somehow because I was trying to play with the orchestra as much as I could.

**Lin:** So, how many new pieces for this competition? Like the Bartók [Concerto], Haydn [Variations] and what else?

**Doulcet:** So, Bartók [Concerto], Haydn [Variations], Fauré Nocturne [Nocturne No. 1 in E-flat Minor, Op. 33, No. 1], Dutilleux [*Trois préludes – Le jeu des contraires*], Jarrell [Étude No. 2, *Réminiscences*], and Debussy [*Estampes*] I played it once but I never really had time to work on it, so that was kind of a new thing. Very fresh.

**Lin:** So, what did you play for the pre-selection round [preliminary round, which the Long-Thibaud-Crespin Competition holds in different cities]?

**Doulcet:** Yes, I played the second movement of Haydn Sonata, E-flat Major [singing the melody of the Haydn Sonata, Hob. XVI:52, first movement], the slow movement in E Major. Chopin Etude in F Major [Op. 25, No. 3], and the Berg Sonata [Op. 1], that I also played there in the Semi-Finals. Because this is one of the pieces I know very well that it works well. Because I can defend it very carefully and not a lot of people play that in the competition. And I felt it was a good occasion to do it in the Semi-Finals as well. [The repertoire of pre-selection round could be performed again in other rounds.]

**Lin:** Yes. So how did you decide which pieces to put in the first round and semi-final round?

**Doulcet:** Well, I first questioned the timing of course, ah—so, I first thought Berg in the first round with Haydn and then the *Three Burlesques* [Bartók] in the. But finally it was better for the timing to play Bartók in the first round as well, Semi-Finals because it was very contrasting with the Haydn—like kind of very light music and very virtuosic and creative, contrasting, with three little pieces. Better than Berg which is not showing a lot of virtuosic theme, and also it is very heavy music. So, after the Haydn, it would not be a good idea. And if I played the Berg in the first round, I feel I should show it again, but maybe later in the competition.

Then, of course, for the Finals, I thought, of course, Bach [Capriccio in B-flat Major, BWV 992], Debussy [*Estampes*], always work. So, having the Bach after the contemporary work [Jarrell Étude No. 2, *Réminiscences*] works as well. Also the link between Bach and Brahms [Six Fantasies Op. 116], also works. So, somehow it was contrasting, and it was kind of making sense to me.

Musically, I first planned to play something of my own composition, for the Final Recital, because—

**Lin:** Do they allow that?

**Doulcet:** They said that. We had some rules before we get in. That like “Frequently Ask Questions,” so first I was thinking about, of course, I should show it. But not before the Finals. Because this is something that I can bring as the extra, you know. But finally, for some question of timing, the administration told me that they prefer me to cancel it. So, I don’t know if it was really for a timing question, or whatever.

**Lin:** The competition requested you to cancel it?

**Doulcet:** Yeah—before we confirmed the program. That maybe it was a bit more than one hour of music. And they want one hour between the music, the bowing, and everything. So, finally I was, “Okay, whatever, it’s not a problem.” And right now I feel maybe it could have been nice at the same time. It could have been something a bit out of the contest to do that maybe.

**Lin:** So, when you’re choosing a new piece, what is your top priority? For example, like your own taste, or personality?

**Doulcet:** You mean in general? Or for competition?

**Lin:** For competition.

**Doulcet:** For competition is different because it has to be something that I want to play, that’s for sure. For example, I never played Chopin. Because this is the typical technique which is not good for me.

**Lin:** You have never played Chopin????!!

**Doulcet:** I mean, I have played Chopin. But this is something I avoid the maximum of time, because I think it is the most difficult music to make. Even though I love Chopin, of course, but it doesn't fit me. So, I know that it's not a good idea. So, this I don't do, except [when] I have to. Because the Chopin Etude is an obligatory piece for the pre-selection [round], and it is usual. But as much as I can, I avoid Chopin. That is absolutely my own feeling.

I try to play something I want to play, but for competition it also has to be something which makes sense, for the logic of the program, the construction; and because of that I think that—depends on the competition actually. But some things are not good to play in competitions clearly. Like, of course, there are some pieces that I would like to play but more for a concert. For example, the Scriabin *Vers la flamme*. I don't know what is the title in English, I'm sorry. Through the flame—something like that? Well, It's like a quiet poetic piece, which is incredible, but I think it's not a good idea to play in competition. But, for example, when we see what they ask for in the Long-Thibaud, it shows somehow that they are not looking for the main, ahh—the repertoire, because they ask you for some less-known French music. The concerto list was kind of different from what we are used to hearing in the Finals. Also, Haydn, the obligatory variations. From that I also thought that it was probably a good idea to play Berg, for example, which could make sense here. Bach Capriccio—yeah, I feel that in this competition at least.

**Lin:** Great. So, for different competitions you have different strategies, right?

**Doulcet:** Yeah, I think. Because I think somehow we can see from the rules, and the program asks what there—what kind of competition it is. And this, of course, I know that maybe this one was a good competition for me, for this reason. Clara Haskil, as well, I wanted to do because it's a completely different program. It's not playing Chopin, Liszt, Prokofiev, Rachmaninov, which is not the repertoire that they play that much. Literally, it depends.

**Lin:** I think you could go to the competition the one in Finland, what's it called? Something at Helsinki. They ask every pianist to compose—Mai Lin something?

**Doulcet:** Oh! Maj Lind.

**Lin:** Yes.

**Doulcet:** I think I will not do competitions anymore actually.

**Lin:** Oh really? This will be your last competition?

**Doulcet:** Yeah, probably. I was planning to do ARD in Munich [ARD Music Competition 2020], because I think that the ARD is a very good competition. others,

maybe. But first, I'm 26, and it's not going to be much longer that I can compete. Because, like other competitions are held every four or three years in piano. And because I won Fourth Prize and the Audience Prize. Well, we all felt in the hall that it was kind of tricky yesterday, which was really disturbing for me [The audience booed when it heard the announcement of the prize winner, Kenji Miura. They cheered for Doulcet but booed at the jury]. I feel that somehow a lot of people cared about me. So, the reality, I guess, I don't know yet. But I guess when you're French, because in France we have a lot of festivals. Like the classical world is really active. So, I think when you're French, and you win that [the "Prix du public"], even though [I won] a Fourth Prize, in France the Audience Prize is probably something that very much opens doors. And, of course, it wouldn't be the same if I was in the—I don't know. Like the Lithuanian pianist, who would have to be First Prize [winner] maybe to be recognizable. But in France, we have a lot of—I think—you know—it goes more easily because it is a very active classical music culture somehow. So, I think doing another competition is not in my interest because it's a lot of pressure. And then if go to a competition, maybe fail it you know, it is very bad. So, I don't see the point.

**Lin:** And you have already actually developed your career.

**Doulcet:** Yeah. We'll see if I feel that I have to come back to competition. But I don't think so.

**Lin:** So, what did you think of your performance in—like generally, in each round?

**Doulcet:** That's a tough question [laughing]. Well, I—step by step. First round, I was afraid because I was the last one to play. Somehow, you know that you are the last of forty-three Haydns they are listening, or of forty-two. Somehow, you have to close the round very big. I had the feeling I was happy about my first round. Not that much, just happy. I felt it was a good performance. Especially Bartók [*Three Burlesques*, Opus 8], and I think it was probably that which pushed me to the Semi-Finals actually. Also the choice of playing this piece [*Three Burlesques*, Opus 8]. I was very happy, but I didn't know that I was going to pass the semi at all. For the Semi-Finals, actually, I don't know because we sometimes—we are completely wrong about ourselves on the stage in both senses. Sometimes, we think we played wonderfully, but it's not that contrasting—it's not that good for the audience. And sometimes we feel very bad, and people like it.

The Semi-Finals for me was one of the best performances I did in my life. That's what I felt. I don't know what happened actually. I was focused of course, but I don't know what happened. I felt like it was—I couldn't do more than that.

I passed to the Finals, and then the Final Recital. I felt that was one of the worst moments in my life on stage.

**Lin:** You mean the Solo Finals [final recital round]? Why was it the worst?

**Doulcet:** I don't know. Stress, the emotions. The Jarrell [*Étude No. 2, Réminiscences*] was kind tricky. I was very focused on Bach, I was afraid of Bach. You never know. You know, memory stuff—it's stupid, but you have to think about that always.

Because of stress. Because you're playing in this hall. A lot of very important people. And then when Bach was done, I started to go to Debussy and Brahms. The kind of easy way [following the order]. But then I disconnected my brain to my fingers, and I was thinking about myself: can I reach the end of the recital? And when you have this feeling in your brain, that's the most horrible thing because this is—the—mistake, the bad sound, the—everything—because things are not connected anymore. That was a hard moment, that Debussy and the first half of Brahms [Op. 116]. And I feel the last three pieces of Brahms I focused again and finished the thing. That was the thing, but then I didn't have this feedback from people at all. So, I don't know, people just feel that I was ultra-focused, and I was a kind of ultra-focused but not in a good way [Laughs].

**Lin:** And how about the concerto?

**Doulcet:** Concerto. I was so stressed that somehow of so, being with the orchestra playing with people, I couldn't be something else than being 100 percent open ears. Because it was the first time I played this concerto with orchestra in front of "The Martha Argerich," with this full house. Somehow, I was completely into the concerto, and I'm really happy because I think I couldn't do better than that. I mean in this situation, of course, it could be better. But in this situation regarding me—that I learned this just three weeks I think it couldn't be better. But that is not the problem of the jury. That is my problem, and my responsibility.

**Lin:** Unbelievable. So, what piece do you think you played the best?

**Doulcet:** In the semi? I think kind of everything. I think I was really playing with the quartet. I tried not to be a soloist but to be a quintet. Also, the Salle Cortot is a great hall. I can do whatever I want to do. The piano is very good. The sound is even better than I could imagine. This feeling is great because it's not that common.

**Lin:** What are the challenges of practicing the entire repertoire?

**Doulcet:** The challenge, I think is the organization of the work. Because you are examining all the ways to be prepared, and juggling getting back to first round and getting back to the works you know well. What do you really need to work right now? What is the priority? What do you decide to do later? I almost cancelled the competition one week ago before the competition. I talked to my teacher, I was not really ready with Bartók [Concerto] and Jarrell, like five days before. And I felt like it was not interesting to go into this situation that—somehow, I just boosted myself: "Okay, just go to first round. It's a good occasion to play. Whatever. You're not going to semi. It's your hometown. You don't need to travel." So, I—yes, I think it was good to go because I—finally, something happened. I really honestly couldn't imagine that. And I think I don't realize it actually.

**Lin:** Okay. Which piece do you think is the most difficult?

**Doulcet:** From this repertoire? It's difficult to answer because there are a lot of different types of difficulty and—I can say the Haydn Variations is difficult because everyone was playing it. If we say about purity, just the piano, I think the Bartók Concerto is not that difficult actually. The difficulty is you have to be really aware of the orchestra. For the sound and everything. It's not an unplayable difficulty, I think. I still think that the Bartók *Three Burlesques* could be really tricky. Very difficult.

**Lin:** So, do you think you overcame these unusual difficulties?

**Doulcet:** Mainly—yeah—I think I didn't have problems.

**Lin:** Do you think this competition should make any changes in the repertoire requirements?

**Doulcet:** Actually—I think this set up is new. Before Long-Thibaud was not like that, They changed last year. I think it is good for the music world because we finally can play things not heard often. Even the concertos. I think we have to stop playing the 3rd Prokofiev [Concerto]. We have to stop to play Tchaikovsky Concerto No.1. I mean these are master pieces, but this is not the question. This is boring now. Everyone is playing that. I don't see what is the point about that. So, having the Mozart No. 24 and Beethoven No.1 is a good idea—somehow they left out Chopin No.1, the famous one [they only allowed Chopin Concerto No. 2]. I think it is very interesting to have new repertoire that the competition (same for those rare French music), we had a lot of choice of these, such as Boulez—so, you could find your own way in what you want to play in this list.

**Lin:** Do you have anything want to say about this competition?

**Doulcet:** Honestly, I had a really good time. The organization [of the competition] is really well made, I probably was not the person to say about this because I live in Paris and I don't need the host family. We had enough time to try out the piano, try the hall for practicing. We had sufficient time for rehearsing with the orchestra as well. We had one hour rehearsing and 50 minutes for dress rehearsal. That means you could run through the concerto once and still fix something. That's really what I needed [laughing].

**Lin:** That's great! Thank you very much. That's all my questions.

**Shotaro Nishimura**, (Japanese) contestant in the Long-Thibaud-Crespin International Piano Competition 2019.

Interview by Yuan-Hung Lin, November 10, 2019.

**Lin:** Okay, I believe you are currently study a diploma at Imola. Are you also working anywhere?

**Nishimura:** No. But I want to be both a concert pianist and teacher.

**Lin:** How long did you prepare for this competition?

**Nishimura:** After passing the pre-selection round pass, I started to prepare the repertoire for Long-Thibaud. So maybe four months.

**Lin:** How did you decide to enter this particular competition?

**Nishimura:** This competition is my dream. It is very famous, Japanese people know this competition.

**Lin:** Is that because of Akiko Ebi [Japanese-French pianist who won the Long-Thibaud Competition a long time ago]?

**Nishimura:** Akiko Ebi also. This competition is not held as regularly as other competitions. Sometimes [there is a gap of] three years, sometimes five years. I found out they are holding the competition this year, so I decided to participate. This is my dream. This time I'm very happy, we have an amazing jury. Of course, I'm happy to participate in the competition itself, and also enjoy the audience in Paris.

**Lin:** Have you ever participated in any other piano competitions?

**Nishimura:** Yes. Big competitions like Busoni. Unfortunately, I couldn't pass the 2018 pre-selection round. I have taken part in many competitions, This year alone there have been maybe eight competitions, some big competitions and also some small competitions. Anyway, I'm not good at competitions because I don't like people judging my playing. But I like to play at places that I have never visited before. This time was also my first time playing in Paris. I like the audience here, it has been a good experience for me, I'm very happy.

This year I went to Germany, Spain, and Italy for competitions. Of course, I would love to have a prize, but I am just as happy playing at different places. This is the reason I participate in competitions. Of course, I do want to be a professional pianist, and competitions are good training.

**Lin:** How did you decide on the repertoire for this particular competition?

**Nishimura:** Of course, I chose the pieces I like. Sometimes I asked my teacher for advise, and also my friends.

**Lin:** Would you please write down the repertoire for the third round and also the final round for me? Because it is not printed out.

**Nishimura:** Sure. [Starts writing] I played the commissioned work, Ravel *Miroirs*, No. 2 and No. 4, and also Beethoven Sonata Op. 106.

**Lin:** What about concertos?

**Nishimura:** Concertos were Beethoven No.1 and Bartók No. 3

**Lin:** So, these are all new repertoire you learned for this competition?

**Nishimura:** I had already played the No. 4 [points to Ravel, *Miroirs*, No. 4].

**Lin:** So which one is new? These two? [points to Dvořák and Messiaen]

**Nishimura:** Yes.

**Lin:** So this is new? [Points to Ravel, *Miroirs*, No. 2]

**Nishimura:** Yes.

**Lin:** And this is old, right? [Beethoven Op. 106]

**Nishimura:** Yes, but I always have to study it many times. It's been in my repertoire maybe four years.

**Lin:** So, did you order them *Miroirs*, No. 2, No. 4, then Beethoven Op. 106?

**Nishimura:** Yes, because I can't play after Beethoven Op. 106. I'm just done, so is the audience.

**Lin:** What was your main consideration in choosing the repertoire?

**Nishimura:** When I choose my program, I always choose a theme. For example, sometimes I choose by tonality, sometimes I choose a very similar character of music but from different composers. I try to have a theme because this is interesting for me, and I hope the audience enjoys it. So, this time I also had a theme. Kenji [the First Prize winner of Long-Thibaud-Crespin 2019] chose these two [Haydn Variations and Chopin Ballade No. 4] this time, and these are in the same tonality, in F Minor. For me, this is very interesting because F Minor is the same, but the pieces still have completely different characters. I'm trying to think about the theme of the competition.

**Lin:** May I also ask you to write down your pre-selection round repertoire please?

**Nishimura:** Sure. [Writes Haydn Sonata in E-flat Major, Hob: XVI, second movement; Chopin Etude in C Major Op. 10, No.1; and Liszt Scherzo and March S. 177.]

**Lin:** So, when you are choosing the repertoire, are you thinking about your own personality or are you thinking about the chronology?

**Nishimura:** For me, it is very important to think about my personality. For example, I was too afraid to play Chopin in the competition. I have played Chopin pieces many times in competitions, but always not well. So, it means for me, I'm not a good fit for Chopin. Of course, I play it in concerts, but in situations where I am being judged, I'm not suited to playing Chopin. Right now, I'm thinking about which is better suited to my character. For me, I like Bartók, Prokofiev, and Liszt.

**Lin:** So when choosing the competition repertoire, do you think about your personality first or the repertoire theme first?

**Nishimura:** Probably my personality first.

**Lin:** What did you think about your first-round performance?

**Nishimura:** I tried to do my best. I think. Of course, every time I am eliminated in the first round, I am sad. But juries are not enemies. I received comments from every jury member, and they said completely different things that were all helpful.

**Lin:** Which piece do you think you played better in the first round?

**Nishimura:** Haydn maybe. Liszt was a little bit hard (the sound). The jury also said this.

**Lin:** How did you decide the order of the program?

**Nishimura:** For the Final Recital, competitors were asked to play the commissioned work first, and after that we could choose [the program order].

**Lin:** And you said you had to put Beethoven Op. 106 last.

**Nishimura:** Yes, and also for the Semi-Finals, we had to play chamber music first. So the Messiaen [20 *Vingt Regards sur l'Enfant-Jésus* – n. 15 *Le Baiser de l'Enfant-Jésus*], this piece is about heaven, a very clear piece, and I think this piece [points to Liszt Scherzo and March S. 177] is very dark, like hell, so I tried to make a comparison between heaven and hell.

**Lin:** So why did you put heaven first than hell next? Why not go with hell first and send everyone to heaven with a happy ending?

**Nishimura:** Oh, I didn't think about that. Good idea, next time I'll try that. I had already decided on Messiaen first, and I don't know the reason.

**Lin:** So, you felt comfortable with playing Messiaen before Liszt?

**Nishimura:** I did.

**Lin:** Are you comfortable and happy with all your repertoire choices?

**Nishimura:** Oh, yes.

**Lin:** So, what were the challenges in practicing your entire repertoire?

**Nishimura:** In my opinion, sometimes competitors need to take risks. Challenge is very important to me, because if I play old pieces, only old pieces in a competition, sometimes it can be boring. For me, it is boring. Of course, old pieces are more relaxing, I don't need to worry about memorization. But I don't like that situation, sometimes I need to take a risk. For example, for me Messiaen was my first time playing the composer. In the Semi-Finals, I could choose from many other French composers, like Saint-Saëns, Chabrier, that I had already played before, whereas I had never played Messiaen. That was a very big challenge and adventure for me, but I'm happy to learn Messiaen.

**Lin:** So, which piece do you think was the most difficult for you when you were preparing for the Long-Thibaud Competition?

**Nishimura:** Beethoven! [Op. 106.] Every time when I performed it, from the first movement, I was very scared. The new piece [the commissioned work] was also difficult, it had a different difficulty. Beethoven [Op. 106] is difficult to concentrate on. The new piece [the commissioned work] is just difficult to play.

**Lin:** Did you need to memorize it [the commissioned work]?

**Nishimura:** No, we could have the score.

**Lin:** Do you think you encountered any unusual difficulties during your preparation time?

**Nishimura:** Some pieces I prepared well, some pieces not so well. Of course, I tried to practice very well. For example, for the Liszt, one day before the first round, suddenly I couldn't play well in the practice room, I don't know why. I tried to practice very slowly and tried to play, and told myself tomorrow will be much better.

**Lin:** Do you think the competition should make any changes to the repertoire requirements?

**Nishimura:** I don't think so.

**Lin:** You think everything was good?

**Nishimura:** Yes.

**Lin:** Is there anything I didn't ask that you want to say about this competition?

**Nishimura:** The competition administration is good. But it is very interesting, in Japan, competitions try to please competitors from the welcome day to the end, everything is good and well organized. Here we have to check the time by ourselves before we go on stage. Nobody came to the warm up room to get me, and I had to watch the time and arrive backstage by myself.

**Lin:** Thank you very much.

**Wei-Ting Hsieh**, (Taiwanese) contestant in the Long-Thibaud-Crespín International Piano Competition 2019.

Interview by Yuan-Hung Lin, November 13, 2019.

Original interview in Mandarin Chinese.

**林:**請問您現在在巴黎音樂院是在念什麼學位？

**謝:**我現在在念演奏文憑，在臺灣算是博士。

**林:**最高文憑嗎？

**謝:**是的。

**林:**您怎麼會想要參加這個比賽？

**謝:**因為這個比賽是很大規模的國際賽，也是法國最重要的比賽。基本上在這裡讀書的人都會想來參加。

**林:**您大概準備了多久？

**謝:**幾個月吧？其實很多曲子都是舊的，所以一

**林:**所以您開始認真起來準備的時間大概是？

**謝:**大概從暑假開始。

**林:**大概三、四個月吧？

**謝:**差不多。

**林:**那您是怎麼決定您的曲目的？

**謝:**有一些曲子是比賽單位要求的，然後有很多都是舊曲子。我就是想辦法湊時間，沒有像音樂會那樣安排。

**林:**就是能夠搭配什麼曲子就盡量搭配。

**謝:**對。然後盡量用舊一點的曲子。

**林:**所以如果說有兩首舊曲子可以選，您會選擇比較舊的曲子是嗎？

**謝:**就選比較拿手的吧，或是效果比較好的。

**林:**那像這樣子的話您會和老師討論嗎？還是自己決定？

**謝:**年紀小一點的時候會跟老師討論，現在就比較是自己決定。自己將曲目排出來以後再問老師是否可行，然後我們再一起討論如何修改。

**林:**那您可以跟我說一下您 pre-selection 的曲目嗎？

**謝:**他們[比賽主辦單位]有要求一個慢板樂章，我彈了莫札特奏鳴曲，就是我第二輪的那一首的第二樂章[K. 576]，那也算是指定曲；還有蕭邦練習曲，我彈了冬風 [Etude in A Minor, Op. 25, No. 11]；然後我還彈了德布希的映像[Images, Book I]。

**林:**您在 pre-selection 都是舊曲子嗎？

**謝:**對。

**林:**那您哪一些曲子是為了這個比賽而特地學的呢？

**謝:**我第二輪彈得梅湘[二十首聖嬰的冥想]。還有室內樂[德佛札克第二號鋼琴五重奏]。梅湘是從指定曲表格裡選擇的。

林:指定曲項目裡都沒有您的舊曲目嗎?

謝:沒有。因為都是一些冷門的曲目。

林:室內樂也是新的?

謝:對。

林:那麼第三輪呢[決賽, Final Recital Round]? Commissioned work 是新的, 還有嗎?

謝:對, 那首真的很難, 而且所有在決賽彈奏的人都沒有照譜彈, 因為它的速度真的是兩倍快, 根本彈不出來呀!

林:除了那首, 還有其它新學習的曲目嗎?

謝:您說決賽嗎? 好像沒有, 只有比較新, 但沒有完全新的。

林:比較新是指一年以內學的?

謝:是四、五年前彈過, 最近把它撿回來重新學習。

林:是本來就有的曲子是嗎? 不是特地為了這比賽學的?

謝:本來就有, 以前有表演過的。

林:那兩首協奏曲呢?

謝:兩首協奏曲都是舊的, 有一首比較舊有一首比較新。

林:方便問一下您選哪兩首協奏曲嗎?

**謝:**蕭邦第二號鋼琴協奏曲和巴爾托克第三號鋼琴協奏曲。

**林:**那您對於您的選曲到目前為止編排上都滿意嗎？

**謝:**其實我覺得我的第二輪有點弱。因為莫札特好像比較柔。我也不知道其他人彈什麼，可是莫札特感覺就是弱一點。

**林:**在編排曲目的時候，曲目順序您有特別想過嗎？

**謝:**看我自己好不好發揮。依照我的狀況，基本上按照年代，再來就是看我好不好接下一首。

**林:**您選曲時會優先考慮什麼呢？比如說觀眾的喜好，評審的喜好，或是自己本身的特質？

**謝:**如果沒有要比賽的話應該就是練自己想練的。

**林:**如果是為了比賽，比如說您第二輪的梅湘，您會覺得這是比較吃香的曲子嗎？

**謝:**其實我還挺喜歡梅湘的。因為我個人覺得我還挺適合彈奏梅湘的音樂。決賽的曲目中，我也有安排一首梅湘的作品，只是沒機會彈。

**林:**除了這個比賽，您還有參加 WFIMC 其它的比賽嗎？我知道您比了日內瓦鋼琴大賽。

**謝:**還有里茲，也是去年比的。

**林:**您一年大概參加幾次比賽？

**謝:**大比賽的話大概一到兩次吧。

**林:**其它也有小比賽嗎？

**謝:**小比賽就是為了大比賽，要去暖身一下大比賽的曲目。

**林:**您覺得在這次準備這些曲目當中，最具有挑戰的是什麼？

**謝:**我覺得第二輪的梅湘還挺有挑戰的[“Le baiser de l’Enfant-Jésus,” No. 15 from *Vingt Regards sur l’Enfant-Jésus*].

**林:**您覺得梅湘是最難的曲子嗎？

**謝:**還有那位作曲家[Jarrell]寫的那首[鋼琴大賽委託作曲家為比賽創作的作品]。

**林:**就這兩首嗎？

**謝:**對。

**林:**那您覺得您成功克服這些困難了嗎？

**謝:**應該還算可以吧？

**林:**您剛剛說覺得莫札特有點弱，其它的部分您有覺得想要怎麼調整嗎？還是您覺得這樣的曲目編排是很好的？

**謝:**第二輪的曲目，我第二輪的最後一首是巴爾托克[Op. 8c]，那首有點短。我原本是想放一整套三首曲子，但後來主辦單位說我的曲目太長，所以我只能刪除，我覺得挺可惜的。

**林:**那您覺得這次的比賽有沒有需要調整曲目的地方？

**謝:**我覺得還可以吧!

**林:**這比賽好像每次舉辦時都提供不一樣的曲目。

**謝:**不太一樣，因為上一屆我也有參加，我也是晉級到半決賽，上一屆沒有室內樂。

**林:**您覺得有室內樂比較好嗎?

**謝:**我比較喜歡室內樂，這是一個還挺特別的經驗。

**林:**那麼比較上次和這次的曲目需求，您會覺得這次是比較好的是嗎?

**謝:**差不多耶。

**林:**所以除了室內樂，其它都差不多是嗎?

**謝:**對。

**林:**您覺得這次比賽您哪一首曲子表現最好?

**謝:**我覺得我第一輪海頓彈得最好[Variations in F Minor, Hob. XVII/6]，那天我對彈奏海頓的表現還挺滿意的。

**林:**海頓是新曲子嗎?

**謝:**對，海頓也是新的。

**林:**所以一共三首新曲，海頓[Variations in F Minor, Hob. XVII/6]、commissioned work[Étude No. 2 (Réminiscences)]、梅湘[“Le baiser de l’Enfant-Jésus,” No. 15 from

*Vingt Regards sur l'Enfant-Jésus*].

**謝:**還有室內樂。

**林:**您為什麼會選擇德佛札克鋼琴五重奏, Op. 81]?

**謝:**因為也只有三首可以選。我覺得那首好像最適合我。

**林:**最後一個問題, 請問您對這比賽有什麼想說的話嗎?

**謝:**我覺得他們可以再好好安排一下評審給評語的這個部分。他們感覺不太照顧那些被淘汰掉的選手。

**林:**好的, 今天的訪問到此結束, 謝謝您。

**謝:**謝謝。

**Wei-Ting Hsieh**, (Taiwanese) contestant in the Long-Thibaud-Crespin International Piano Competition 2019.

Interview by Yuan-Hung Lin, November 13, 2019.

Original interview in Mandarin Chinese, translated to English by Yuan-Hung Lin.

**Lin:** What degree are you currently studying at Paris Conservatoire?

**Hsieh:** I'm studying in a performance diploma, which in Taiwan is the same level as a doctoral degree.

**Lin:** Is that Concertiste?

**Hsieh:** Yes, in English it is Concertiste.

**Lin:** Why would you want to participate in this competition?

**Hsieh:** This is one of the biggest international piano competitions, and the most important piano competition in France. Basically, if you study [piano] here, you would want to participate in this competition.

**Lin:** How long have you prepared for this competition?

**Hsieh:** A few months I think, but I already have a lot of old repertoire, so—

**Lin:** When did you start to work very hard on all the repertoire for this competition?

**Hsieh:** From the summer vacation.

**Lin:** So it's about three to four months right?

**Hsieh:** Yes.

**Lin:** How did you decide your repertoire for Long-Thibaud Competition?

**Hsieh:** Some repertoire followed the requests of the competition. And the free choice part, I just tried to see what old repertoire I had and fit it into the time limitation. I did not organize it as my own recital.

**Lin:** So basically, I just tried to fit in the requirements.

**Hsieh:** Yes, and I tried to use older repertoire.

**Lin:** So, for example, if there were two old repertoire you could choose, will you choose the one you learned a longer time before?

**Hsieh:** I choose the one I could perform better, or the repertoire with better effectiveness in the competition.

**Lin:** So, did you decide with your teacher or you decided on your own?

**Hsieh:** When I was younger, I asked my teacher's suggestion. But now, I just selected the repertoire and organized the program order by myself, then ask my teacher if it is ok or not.

**Lin:** Would you please let me know your pre-selection repertoire?

**Hsieh:** They requested a slow movement of classical sonata, I played Mozart Sonata [Mozart Sonata in D Major, K. 576] slow movement, which is the one I also played in the semi-final round. One Chopin Etude, I played Winter Wind [Op. 25, No. 11]; and Debussy.

**Lin:** Are these all old repertoire for you?

**Hsieh:** Yes.

**Lin:** So which repertoire did you prepare particularly for this competition?

**Hsieh:** The Messiaen [*Vingt Regards sur l'Enfant-Jésus* – n. 15 *Le baiser de l'Enfant-Jésus*] in the semi-final round; and the chamber music [Dvořák Piano Quintet No. 2 in A Major, Op. 81]. And Messiaen was selected from the competition repertoire list.

**Lin:** So, is there any old repertoire for you on the competition repertoire list?

**Hsieh:** No. Because those repertoires are all unpopular.

**Lin:** Chamber music is also newly learned right?

**Hsieh:** Yes.

**Lin:** How about the final solo round? The commissioned work is new, what else?

**Hsieh:** Yes, that one [commissioned work] is really difficult. Nobody was following the score, and the tempo marking is super-fast. It is impossible to play.

**Lin:** Apart from that one, any other new learned piece in the Solo Finals?

**Hsieh:** No. Only something newer, but nothing is brand new.

**Lin:** The newer repertoire means learning in one year?

**Hsieh:** Means I learned it a long time ago, and I picked it up recently for competition.

**Lin:** So, they are old repertoire not particularly learned for this competition?

**Hsieh:** I have already performed them somewhere.

**Lin:** How about the two concertos?

**Hsieh:** Both concertos are old repertoire.

**Lin:** Which two concertos did you choose?

**Hsieh:** Chopin No. 2 and Bartók No. 3.

**Lin:** So far are you satisfied on the selection of your repertoire?

**Hsieh:** I feel the Semi-Finals was a bit weaker. Mozart is softer. I don't know what other competitors played in the Semi-Finals, but I feel Mozart is weaker.

**Lin:** Have you thought about why you design your repertoire performance order like this?

**Hsieh:** It depends on if I feel comfortable or not when playing, or the chronology, or if it is easy for me to perform the next piece.

**Lin:** What is your main consideration when choosing the repertoire? Are you thinking about the jury, audience, or just based on your own taste?

**Hsieh:** If it is not for a competition, I'll just choose whatever I like to play.

**Lin:** If it is for competitions, such as the Messiaen at the Semi-Finals, do you think it is a good piece to please the audience?

**Hsieh:** I actually like Messiaen, and I think I'm suitable with this piece. Actually I have another Messiaen in the final solo round, but I don't have chance to perform it here.

**Lin:** Have you ever participated in any other WFIMC competition? I know that you were in the International Geneva Piano Competition.

**Hsieh:** Yes, that was last year. I also went to Leeds Piano Competition last year.

**Lin:** How often do you participate in competitions annually?

**Hsieh:** For big competitions, is about one or two.

**Lin:** Do you also go to the small competitions?

**Hsieh:** Small competitions are just warming up for big competitions. I need to run the repertoire on stage.

**Lin:** What is the most challenging thing for you in this competition [the Long-Thibaud-Crespin]?

**Hsieh:** I think the Messiaen in the Semi-Finals is very challenging.

**Lin:** You think this is the most difficult piece?

**Hsieh:** Yes, and also the commissioned work.

**Lin:** Just these two?

**Hsieh:** Yes.

**Lin:** Do you think you had successfully met the challenge?

**Hsieh:** I think so, maybe.

**Lin:** You said that you think Mozart is a bit weaker in the Semi-Finals. Have you thought about how to adjust? Or do you think it is fine with the set up?

**Hsieh:** The last work of my Semi-Finals was Bartók [Op. 8c]. It is really short. I originally wanted to put a whole set of three pieces, but then the organizer said it was too long, so I can only delete it. It was a pity.

**Lin:** Any other repertoire you think you need to adjust?

**Hsieh:** I think it is fine.

**Lin:** This competition seems to have very different repertoire every time.

**Hsieh:** Exactly. I was here last edition, and I also got into the Semi-Finals, last time they didn't have chamber music.

**Lin:** Do you think it is better to have chamber music?

**Hsieh:** Yes, I like chamber music. This is a special experience for me.

**Lin:** Compared with the repertoire from last edition, do you think this time is better?

**Hsieh:** I think it is about the same.

**Lin:** So apart from chamber, you think everything is about the same.

**Hsieh:** Yes.

**Lin:** Which piece you think you played the best?

**Hsieh:** I think the Haydn [Variations] in first round.

**Lin:** Is the Haydn Variations also new for you?

**Hsieh:** Yes, it is.

**Lin:** So, you have a total of three new works. Haydn, Messiaen, and commissioned work.

**Hsieh:** Also, the chamber music.

**Lin:** Why did you choose the Dvořák Piano Quintet?

**Hsieh:** I think that piece fit me the best.

**Lin:** Anything you want to speak about this competition?

**Hsieh:** I think it would be better if the organizer could arrange the meeting for us to talk with the jury for the comments, it would be nice.

**Lin:** Ok, that's all for today, thank you very much.

**Hsieh:** Thank you.

**Alexander Panfilov**, (Russian) contestant in the Long-Thibaud-Crespin International Piano Competition 2019.

Interview by Yuan-Hung Lin, Paris, November 10, 2019.

**Lin:** Are you currently a student? Are you still studying?

**Panfilov:** Yes, I'm taking piano lessons at the University of Vienna, but I'm done with my formal degrees.

**Lin:** So, you are just having lessons there?

**Panfilov:** Yes.

**Lin:** So, did you study in Vienna formally or elsewhere?

**Panfilov:** No. I did a degree in Russia. We don't really have a system like western degrees. I did five years in the Moscow Conservatory, and then I did four years in Manchester, at the Royal Northern College.

**Lin:** Do you work as a concert pianist?

**Panfilov:** Yes, I do teach my friends or other people.

**Lin:** How long did you prepare for this competition?

**Panfilov:** Essentially, I think I started in August, so it has been about three months.

**Lin:** So, is that usually how long you take for preparation time for different competitions?

**Panfilov:** It depends. If the repertoire is what I have done before, then it could be less time. I would probably start the preparation three weeks before. If there is new repertoire like here, I need more time. Ideally, I'll start early, but it depends on different situations.

**Lin:** So, which competition have you prepared the longest for?

**Panfilov:** I think that would be Géza Anda, because the repertoire requirements were quite a lot.

**Lin:** So, how did you decide to enter this particular competition?

**Panfilov:** Essentially, I look at whether I can benefit in some way from a competition. Now that I have done quite a few competitions, I feel like I should only be doing the competitions that really can help me in some way. And since this Long-Thibaud has a long history, and the name, and it look like that might be some concert chances, I gave it a try.

**Lin:** Apart from this competition and the Géza Anda, have you participated in any other WFIMC competitions?

**Panfilov:** The last one, where I was winner, was Top of the World at Tromsø, Norway. Last summer.

**Lin:** 2018?

**Panfilov:** No, this summer, 2019.

**Lin:** What else?

**Panfilov:** And I did Rina Sala in Italy also. Essentially, I have won about fifteen First Prizes, I think.

**Lin:** I think I saw your name somewhere in Romania?

**Panfilov:** Yes, Enescu, I got Third Prize last year.

**Lin:** So, how did you decide on the repertoire for this competition?

**Panfilov:** Well, I did not really decide because it is very restricted here, very limited. Like in the live pre-selection [round], everyone has to play a second movement of a Mozart sonata.

**Lin:** May I ask you to write down the repertoire for the pre-selection round?

**Panfilov:** Yes. [writes down the repertoire]

**Lin:** Maybe also for the Solo Finals and Concertos, please?

**Panfilov:** Mozart sonata, I don't remember the "K" number, but it is in D Major.

**Lin:** Would you mind singing a little bit of the melody please?

**Panfilov:** [Sings the melody of the first movement.]

**Lin:** Okay, I know what that is, I'll check the "K" number later.

**Panfilov:** They requested the second movement. It is really a weird repertoire. And then, I did Rachmaninoff Etudes, Op. 39, No.1, 2, 5, 6.

For the Solo Finals, the composer piece [commissioned work], I'm so happy I don't have to play it [Laughs].

**Lin:** You don't like that piece?

**Panfilov:** I think everyone hates it. I think he is really unrestricted, especially on the metronome mark. Then, Debussy, because they required a Debussy in the solo final recital round, and Mussorgsky [writes down *Pictures at an Exhibition*], this one is free choice. And for the Concerto Finals, I had to choose two. I had Beethoven No. 1 [Concerto] and Rachmaninoff No. 1 [concerto]. This is not something I typically do in a competition. Since the framework and concerto list here are so narrow, I needed to try my best to choose pieces that fit with it.

**Lin:** When you were choosing the repertoire, did you decide on your own or did you talk to your teacher?

**Panfilov:** I decided on my own.

**Lin:** Are these [Long-Thibaud-Crespin Competition repertoire] part old repertoire or all new?

**Panfilov:** Some are old, and some are new.

**Lin:** Can you mark the new ones, please?

**Panfilov:** Okay, I will mark it so you don't lose it [marks six pieces on the repertoire list: commissioned work, Rachmaninoff Concerto No. 1, Haydn Variations, Fauré Nocturne, Saint-Saëns Etude and Dvořák Quintet]

So, this is basically what I had to learn over the past three months. The Rachmaninoff Concerto was the most challenging, but I like it and it is so nice to have it as repertoire.

**Lin:** So, what was your main consideration in choosing the repertoire?

**Panfilov:** I think the first was that it should work as a concert program, so that it makes sense. Second, it should be competition repertoire, so something that essentially can demonstrate my skills.

**Lin:** So, when you are choosing repertoire, do you consider whether the jury or the audience will like it or not? Or do you just consider yourself?

**Panfilov:** Yes, I do consider this. I think I have some pieces that are quite dangerous to play in front of juries.

**Lin:** Like, for example?

**Panfilov:** For example, Chopin Ballade No. 1. Or—I'm trying to think of something else.

**Lin:** Why is Chopin Ballade No. 1 dangerous?

**Panfilov:** Well, when the piece is too famous, and every person has their own opinion about how exactly you should play it, or there is a cliché, then I think it is not so good for a competition. So, I try to avoid pieces that are too famous, as well as the ones that are too unknown, because people might get confused by it. And so [that] the jury won't think that you are hiding something when playing some quasi-unknown repertoire.

**Lin:** So, how do you think your performance went in the first round?

**Panfilov:** I was quite happy with it, especially the Haydn. For the Rachmaninoff, I think the piano did not allow me to make some different sounds, although the acoustics were good, there were some limitations for me, the Haydn seemed to be more comfortable. But mostly I was happy.

**Lin:** Are you happy with your repertoire choice?

**Panfilov:** I got the maximum out of it. As I was saying, I would not normally play these in the competition, but here the rules are so different from everywhere else.

**Lin:** How did you decide the order of the program?

**Panfilov:** In the first round, of course it wouldn't make sense to play Haydn after Rachmaninoff, so that's it. But, generally, I put the order in the sense of a concert. I tried to finish with something loud. I heard one comment once from a jury member who said to my friend, "Yes, your performance was fine, but you finished too quietly, so—"

**Lin:** What about the other round, what was the order of the program?

**Panfilov:** In the Solo Finals, they required you to play the commissioned work first. And of course Mussorgsky is good to finish with a big climax, and Debussy *Estampes*, I think they have a great connection with each other. Because "estampes" are pictures, and *Pictures of Exhibition* is also about pictures. The influences of Mussorgsky on French composers in this period is also clear.

**Lin:** So, when you were designing your repertoire, you thought about the connection.

**Panfilov:** Yes, and generally I'll do it chronologically, from classical to more contemporary stuff.

**Lin:** So, what were the challenges in practicing the entire repertoire?

**Panfilov:** Well, for me the main challenge was actually learning it. I mean for playing in the competition you have to be super confident. Ideally, you will have already played it many times before, and if there's a strict repertoire you have to learn directly for the

competition, it is all a little bit stressful. Because if you are thinking about what is coming next, it's going to make it difficult. So, for me the main stress was basically learning, the old and new repertoire all together. Thinking about all the music I had to learn for the competition at once, it was quite challenging.

But also a strange thing happened to me. I played Ligeti before, these two etudes [No. 5 *Arc-en-ciel* and No. 13 *L'escalier du diable*] in the second round. But a week ago I started to practice, and I realized that it had left my memory somehow, because I was supposed to play *Devil's Staircase* [No. 13], and I have played it from memory before, but I realized like five days ago that I cannot really do it.

**Lin:** Have you ever had a slip of memory in a competition before?

**Panfilov:** I have never had any major memory slips, but small things, yes. Once I was playing a Spanish piece from Iberia Albeniz, and I think I lost two lines of music. I skipped two lines and jumped to the next one. I think the main worry of many pianists is to forget and be embarrassed.

**Lin:** Which piece do you think is the most challenging? This one [the commissioned work]?

**Panfilov:** Well, essentially, I think it is Ligeti's *Devil's Staircase*. It took me two years to learn it, I think it took me the longest ever, like even longer than Rachmaninoff Concerto No. 3.

**Lin:** Do you think you encountered these challenges you have mentioned?

**Panfilov:** Well, in connection with this strict restriction of repertoire, yes. Especially Ligeti, it was strange for me. Normally when I have already played a piece by memory, it will be good with me for the rest of my life. But with this etude, it did not quite work out that way. I think usually the music is more in my hands. It was really weird. The moment when I got out [on stage], somehow I just could not get it together.

**Lin:** Do you think this competition should make any changes to the repertoire requirements?

**Panfilov:** Well, if I could decide, I'd make it freer, definitely. And I definitely wouldn't leave the Haydn Variations as the only choice in the first round. I mean, it is a good idea to play Haydn, but I would say any piece by Haydn.

**Lin:** Is there anything I have not asked you that you want to say about this competition?

**Panfilov:** I don't know if it is interesting to you, but I think the level of organization at the competition was surprisingly poor. I stayed with the host family, but the problem is that I was told that I could practice at home, but when I started to practice, the neighbor

started banging on the wall. When I went to the competition administration, they said I cannot practice at the school [L'École Normale, the place where the competition was held] because I should be able to practice with my host family, so I had to argue with them. They sent me to another conservatory, which is a bit far away.

**Ryutaro Suzuki**, (Japanese) contestant in the Long-Thibaud-Crespin International Piano Competition 2019.

Interview by Yuan-Hung Lin, November 12, 2019.

**Lin:** Where do you currently study?

**Suzuki:** Currently, I am studying at Scuola di Musica di Fiesole in Florence, Italy.

**Lin:** I thought you were a Paris Conservatoire student?

**Suzuki:** I have finished. Currently, I live in Paris, but I go to Florence to have lessons.

**Lin:** What degree are you doing now?

**Suzuki:** Now I finished everything from Conservatoire, the master and also the post-master's.

**Lin:** So, Italy is just for lesson?

**Suzuki:** Italy is just for lessons. But I think is studying postgraduate would be good for me.

**Lin:** So who's your teacher?

**Suzuki:** Eliso Virsaladze. She is also teaching in Moscow, but for me Florence is more convenient. If I go to Moscow, I have to live there. Here there are many direct flights to Florence, so you have choice.

**Lin:** Do you go, like, once a month or twice?

**Suzuki:** No, I go there only once every two months.

**Lin:** So, you basically study by yourself.

**Suzuki:** Yes.

**Lin:** Are you working?

**Suzuki:** Yes, I'm working, like performing concerts. In Paris, in Japan, or in other countries. And sometimes I teach, but it's just for some friends.

**Lin:** So, you said you have an agent, is that just to help with organizing the concerts?

**Suzuki:** Yes. I have agents in Japan, which is quite good. And in Europe I had one, now I'm changing, so I hope the next one will be better. But I think having an agent is good,

because they can organize concerts, It is not about the number of concerts, but the important concerts, which have more visibility.

**Lin:** Do you have to pay a lot?

**Suzuki:** Well, it depends on the agency. When they organize concerts, I think it is between 15 and 20 percent of the revenue you get from the concert. I don't pay them.

**Lin:** They just take their part.

**Suzuki:** Yes.

**Lin:** How long did you prepare for this competition?

**Suzuki:** Honestly, of course I prepared. I thought about the competition maybe one year ago, because there is an application deadline, so my preparation should have been more than six months. But when it came to the real piano preparation, I mean the practice, it was less than two months. Because I had a big recital in Tokyo on the 29th of August, and afterwards, at the beginning of September, I had several other concerts. So after that I could concentrate on this competition.

**Lin:** So, about two months?

**Suzuki:** Less than two months.

**Lin:** How did you decide to enter this particular competition?

**Suzuki:** That was easy. Because I've been studying in Paris, and I still live in Paris, and for France, it is the biggest competition. Of course, naturally, I thought about it. And also it is quite famous in Japan, so why not?

**Lin:** So did you try a few years ago?

**Suzuki:** Yes, I tried while I was a student at the Conservatoire of Paris. Because actually it is important even for students at the Conservatoire of Paris. When you were there, you feel you really want to do it. So, I did it.

**Lin:** No wonder it is just like a competition for Conservatoire students! You probably have many friends here in the competition.

**Suzuki:** I really do.

**Lin:** Have you participated in other WFIMC piano competitions?

**Suzuki:** Yes, recently I was in the George Enescu competition.

**Lin:** The Romanian one?

**Suzuki:** Yes, I was also in Van Cliburn, but only for the pre-selection [round]. Enescu was until the Semi-Finals. I have done quite a lot of small competitions.

**Lin:** How many competitions do you do in one year?

**Suzuki:** You mean everything?

**Lin:** Yes, small and big competitions together.

**Suzuki:** Let's say about four.

**Lin:** So, for the small competitions, do they just have one round, or do you have to prepare many rounds?

**Suzuki:** You mean even the small competitions?

**Lin:** Yes.

**Suzuki:** Usually nowadays, international competitions with one round don't exist.

**Lin:** How did you decide on the repertoire for this competition?

**Suzuki:** The repertoire. As you know, this competition has quite particular restrictions about what can be chosen.

**Lin:** May I ask you to write down your repertoire for the pre-selection round and the final round, please?

**Suzuki:** Yes. The pre-selection [round] was Chopin Etude [writes down Op. 25, No. 11], and the Scherzo No. 3, and the Haydn second movement of the Sonata in C Major [sings the melody of Hob. XVI/50].

**Lin:** For these three [points to the three pre-selection works], are they old repertoire or new?

**Suzuki:** Old repertoire.

**Lin:** What about these? [Points to the repertoire of the qualifying audition round and semi-final round.]

**Suzuki:** Haydn [Variations in F Minor, Hob XVII/6] is new, Séverac is new, and for the Finals there is one new piece of course, that's for everybody [commissioned work], and one out of the two concertos was completely new.

**Lin:** Which was new?

**Suzuki:** The Rachmaninoff [Concerto No. 1].

**Lin:** So, the new repertoire you prepared particularly for this competition?

**Suzuki:** Yes. So, it means that, including the commissioned work, there were four new pieces, and it was quite a lot. Actually, I chose this concerto [Rachmaninoff Concerto No. 1], because I knew the first Beethoven [Concerto No. 1], and also because I was thinking about either the Second Concerto by Chopin that I know a little bit, or this one (Rachmaninoff). When I heard the first Rachmaninoff, I felt so good, so I selected it. But it was very difficult to learn, it is very difficult. And even for the French music for the second round, there were so many lists, but very particular pieces. You have Boulez and you also have Chabrier. I heard everything. I knew the six Nocturnes by Fauré, so it was very obvious that I was going to use it. But the other one was Séverac, which was new, and I chose it because I liked it. I listened, and I liked it so I wanted to play it.

**Lin:** So, basically, when you are choosing the repertoire—

**Suzuki:** Yes, it's not very strategic, I know.

**Lin:** It's based on your preferences?

**Suzuki:** Yes.

**Lin:** So, did you ever think about whether they would please the audience or the jury? Or suit the competition?

**Suzuki:** No, I don't think I chose the repertoire to please the competition jury or audience. After talking to the jury members, they told me my choice in the first round, I mean the Scherzo [Chopin Scherzo No. 3 in C-sharp Minor] was not the best one because it doesn't show my strong points. It is a brilliant piece, but it doesn't also show the other sides of myself. So, it was not the best choice. And it's true that I didn't choose it in a strategic way; I chose what I wanted to play. I mean, you have to like the piece, otherwise, even if it is a good one for the competition, you cannot play it.

**Lin:** You really have your own strong opinion. You're not thinking about whether this one will be better, you're just thinking about your taste. After talking to the jury, do you regret your repertoire choice?

**Suzuki:** I mean, of course I'm very disappointed with the results, but talking with the jury members was very, very useful.

**Lin:** Do you think they gave you good comments?

**Suzuki:** Yes, I mean, their comments were very constructive. And, this is very good, you can go to the Facebook page of the Long-Thibaud Competition, and they have photos. One photo is from the meeting with the jury [<https://www.facebook.com/Long.Thibaud.Crespin/photos/a.377839335980200/810315929399203/?type=3&theater>], and you will see how well they are organized. Every jury member has his or her own table, and you have only seven or eight [contestants eliminated from the qualifying round of the Long-Thibaud Competition waiting for comments]. So, basically you just wait five minutes, and as soon as there is a place free [at the jury tables], you go and talked directly to the jury members. This is very good.

**Lin:** Not every competition is like this.

**Suzuki:** This is the first time I have seen it that well organized.

**Lin:** Let me double check this. Your main consideration when choosing the repertoire was your taste and your old repertoire right?

**Suzuki:** Basically, I tried to put in something that I know, of course. This is also because I had a concert, so I tried to use the concert repertoire in the competition, it is difficult to play the same thing in competitions and in concerts. But at the same time, you have to choose something which you're good at. So, then it comes naturally. Something old that you know or something new that you like.

**Lin:** Did you talk to your teacher when choosing the competition repertoire or did you just decide by yourself?

**Suzuki:** I decided by myself, then I sent the program to two of my professors, and they said ok, maybe this could be like this. They gave me some advice, but basically it was my choice.

**Lin:** So, one of the professors is this one right? [Points to the professor's name on the competition program].

**Suzuki:** Yes.

**Lin:** And also, the teacher in Italy? [Eliso Virsaladze]

**Suzuki:** Yes.

**Lin:** How do you think your first-round performance went?

**Suzuki:** Honestly, after the performance on my way back home, I knew that I was not going to pass.

**Lin:** Why?

**Suzuki:** Because you feel it. After playing, you just feel it.

**Lin:** Can you describe what kind of feeling you feel?

**Suzuki:** I was very nervous, and I knew that I didn't play with full energy, and that it [the performance] did not have full expression either. So, I really felt that it was finish. Afterward, some of the other people who were listening to my performance, they called me and said, "It was really nice, I think you're going to pass." Then I started to change my attitude, thinking maybe I passed, but even though I wanted to practice for the second round, I couldn't. Even before the results were released.

**Lin:** Oh, I'm sorry about that, but that's competition life.

**Suzuki:** But afterwards I talked with the jury members. And I also watched the video, because one of my friends took a video. I listened to it, and I recognized what it is. Maybe I could have passed, but I still feel I could not, I mean right after playing.

**Lin:** Do you feel ok now?

**Suzuki:** Yes, because the next day after the results of the first round, right after I talked to the jury members, I changed my mind. It was very important for me.

**Lin:** Ok, comparing these two pieces [points to first-round repertoire], is there any way you think you could have performed better?

**Suzuki:** Yes, I mean the jury members, for example, they suggested to me, because I told them that I was also hesitating between *L'isle joyeuse* of Debussy or something like that. They said, "Yes, for example, that would be much better, it shows the colors of the sound." And it is more natural for me.

**Lin:** Do you like the Haydn Variations from the first round?

**Suzuki:** This piece?

**Lin:** Yes.

**Suzuki:** I like it. I think it's quite interesting.

**Lin:** Well, you said you had already participated in this competition a few years ago when you were a student?

**Suzuki:** Yes, two editions ago.

**Lin:** Did you pass?

**Suzuki:** Yes, I was in the Semi-Finals at that time. But I'm sure this time the standard was very high.

**Lin:** Did you also play like this [the same repertoire]?

**Suzuki:** No, it was totally different, completely different. At that time, you had to play the second movement of the Sonata by Chopin, it was totally different. And one sonata in the Semi-Finals.

**Lin:** Did you also need to prepare a quintet in the second round?

**Suzuki:** No, there was no chamber music.

**Lin:** Are you happy with all your repertoire choices this time?

**Suzuki:** Yes, even with the Scherzo [Chopin Scherzo No. 3]. I mean I could have played better, so that's why I said yes.

**Lin:** If you had a chance to decide again, would you still make the same choice?

**Suzuki:** No! Of course, if I had the chance, maybe I would choose *L'isle joyeuse* of Debussy for the first round. But the Semi-Finals, I think it was a good program.

**Lin:** What were the challenges in practicing the entire repertoire for this competition?

**Suzuki:** You mean, if there was a particularly difficult repertoire?

**Lin:** Well, not just this. For example, time management when practicing, or any other kinds of challenges.

**Suzuki:** Yes, as I told you, I didn't have a lot of preparation time, unfortunately, because I had many things going on. And because of that, especially for the Rachmaninoff Concerto, and the piece of Jarrell [Étude No. 2, *Réminiscences*], but especially the Concerto, which was extremely difficult and which was also completely new for me, it took me a lot of time to practice. Even on the day I was on the plane, on the train, the days I almost couldn't practice at all, I still practiced at least six to seven hours a day. If I had time, I practiced at least eight hours. Even in the eight hours, three hours went to Rachmaninoff, one hour to Jarrell, so I had only four hours left, which was not enough. I mean it was not enough to practice everything. So, at one point, I had to decide if I practice one day by concentrating on one thing. And Haydn was also new, Séverac was also new. So, this was the difficulty. I mean, so much new repertoire. So, that's why for me it was difficult to make everything perfect for a certain repertoire.

**Lin:** Did you do your pre-selection [round] in Paris?

**Suzuki:** Yes.

**Lin:** Which piece do you think was the most difficult, or most challenging?

**Suzuki:** For me, Rachmaninoff. But this is because it was new. If I knew it before, maybe not.

**Lin:** Do you think you have overcome these difficulties now? For example, have you prepared the Rachmaninoff well now?

**Suzuki:** Right now, I think I can play the Rachmaninoff with the orchestra.

**Lin:** Do you think this competition should make any changes to the repertoire requirements?

**Suzuki:** Not really. Maybe for the first round, they could have 25 minutes. Because if you include Haydn, which is a good choice I think, it lasts about 10 minutes, even without repeat. And there is a maximum 20 minutes [In the qualifying round, everyone's maximum performance time was 20 minutes]. If everybody has to do something in less than 10 minutes, like eight minutes or something, what can you do? So, if it was 25 minutes, the free choice part could be 15 minutes. So, you could play one etude plus something, or a short classical sonata, or some piece like, some longer pieces. So, it [the allocated time] was a bit too short.

**Lin:** So, comparing this time with two editions ago, which repertoire requirement do you think is better?

**Suzuki:** I don't really remember the repertoire requirements of the last time super well. But I still think that last time, except for the concerto, it was strange. And the first round, I mean the first round when we had to play the second movement of the Second Sonata of Chopin, except for that, I think it was quite free. Like in the Semi-Finals, you had to play one Beethoven sonata, which is more like other big competitions, a classical program. This one [2019] was very particular. The repertoire I had already was very good for the competition.

**Lin:** So, would you say you have many French repertoire pieces on hand?

**Suzuki:** I think so, yes.

**Lin:** They limited the repertoire to French repertoire, but not many pianists have this kind of repertoire.

**Suzuki:** This is true, but if you live in Paris, and if you have studied in Paris for many years, I think it's natural to have it. Or at least to feel comfortable, familiar with French repertoire.

**Lin:** So how many years have you been here?

**Suzuki:** I arrived here at the end of 2008. So, it has been 11 years.

**Lin:** Is there anything I have not asked that you want to say about this competition?

**Suzuki:** The organization I think is very nice. Look at the program, you have the program notes for each piece. For the first round, you have an explanation about Haydn, and the second round, the French pieces and the quintet. I've never seen this in programs for other competitions, I'm serious. And this is only until [the program used] the Semi-Finals. When you get to the Finals, you have a new one.

**Lin:** Did they do this two editions ago?

**Suzuki:** No. It was much worst back then.

**Lin:** Also, the comment time was improved, right?

**Suzuki:** Yes, I think they have more money this time.

**Lin:** So, you enjoyed this time?

**Suzuki:** Yes.

**Lin:** Right, I think that's all, thank you very much.

**Suzuki:** You're welcome.

**Keigo Mukawa**, (Japanese) contestant in the Long-Thibaud-Crespin International Piano Competition 2019.

Second Prize.

Interview by Yuan-Hung Lin, November 17, 2019.

**Lin:** Thank you so much for today. Are you currently the student here [at Paris Conservatoire]?

**Mukawa:** Yes, I'm doing a master's degree, and I'm also in the fortepiano class.

**Lin:** Are you also working as a concert pianist?

**Mukawa:** Mostly in Japan, I have some concerts.

**Lin:** Do you have an agent?

**Mukawa:** Yes, in Japan. In Europe, no.

**Lin:** How long did you prepare for this particular competition?

**Mukawa:** Some pieces I have already known for a long time, because I had already played them in a concert. But some pieces were completely new for me. For the new pieces, I prepared in quite a short period.

**Lin:** So, about how short was the shortest one?

**Mukawa:** My Boulez, I only prepared for two months.

**Lin:** So, how did you decide to participate in this particular competition?

**Mukawa:** One of the biggest reasons is that I'm living in Paris. And of course, I have also known about this competition for a long time, since I was a child.

**Lin:** So, is this the first time you have taken part in this competition?

**Mukawa:** Actually, the last time [the last edition four years ago] I tried to do the pre-selection [round], but I was not selected. So, this is my second time.

**Lin:** Have you participated in any other competitions? I know that your bio is on the program, but maybe you have more experience than that?

**Mukawa:** In France, I have done two other competitions, the Épinal piano competition, and the Ile de France was the other competition.

**Lin:** So, you mostly have done your competitions in France?

**Mukawa:** Yes.

**Lin:** How often do you go to competitions per year?

**Mukawa:** I also participated in competitions in Italy, three years ago. And I won Fifth Prize in the Hammamatsu International competition in Japan last year. This Long-Thibaud is the biggest competition I have done.

**Lin:** Your performance sounded like you are an experienced competitor.

**Mukawa:** Well, I have done a lot of concerts, which helps.

**Lin:** Okay. So, how did you decide on the repertoire for the competition?

**Mukawa:** Mostly I chose the pieces by myself. And I chose pieces I can respect.

**Lin:** What do you mean “you can respect?”

**Mukawa:** The pieces I like.

**Lin:** Okay. How many new pieces did you choose for this competition?

**Mukawa:** Prélude of Debussy, Boulez, and the Second Concerto of Chopin. But fortunately, the jury didn’t ask me to play it.

**Lin:** What did you play in the pre-selection [round]?

**Mukawa:** I played Chopin’s *Aeolian Harp* [Etude], Mozart Sonata in D Major [KV 311], and Liszt *Legend* No. 2.

**Lin:** Did your teacher help you decide the repertoire, or did you decide by yourself?

**Mukawa:** This time I decided by myself.

**Lin:** So how did you decide which piece to play in which round for the free choice part?

**Mukawa:** The limitations are really precise. Actually, I didn’t have a lot of possibilities.

**Lin:** So, why did you play the second round [Semi-Finals] free choice piece in the second round instead of playing it in the first round?

**Mukawa:** Because of the timing.

**Lin:** Let’s talk about the Solo Finals. How did you decide the order of the recital?

**Mukawa:** Actually, the jury members requested me to play the contemporary piece first [commissioned work: Jarrell *Étude No. 2, Réminiscences*], and I have two composers, Bach and Ravel. For me, it is normal to play Bach before Ravel.

**Lin:** For the final concerto round, why did you choose these two concertos?

**Mukawa:** Simply because I had already learned the piece [Saint-Saëns], fortunately. And I had to learn Chopin Concerto No. 2. They are important pieces to me.

**Lin:** Saint-Saëns was old repertoire for you?

**Mukawa:** I just played it in Japan.

**Lin:** So how long have you had this piece?

**Mukawa:** I played it one year ago.

**Lin:** So, you already had experience with the orchestra?

**Mukawa:** No, just with another piano. This is the first time I played this piece [Saint-Saëns Concerto No. 5] with the orchestra.

**Lin:** What was your main consideration in choosing the repertoire for this competition?

**Mukawa:** I have more confidence in French music, because I'm studying in Paris. So, I put mostly French music in each round. And I also know how to play Baroque music, so I know how to play it well. So, I would say I chose the pieces I have confidence with. Of course, I like German music, but I won't choose it for this competition, it is dangerous.

**Lin:** So, how do you think your performance went in each round?

**Mukawa:** I was quite happy with my first round, and the final concerto [round]. For the other two rounds, there were some things that I could have done better.

**Lin:** Which piece do you think you played the best? Maybe Haydn in the first round?

**Mukawa:** Possibly. Saint-Saëns was not perfect, but I enjoyed it a lot. And I think Boulez was not bad, I really practiced a lot.

**Lin:** Is this your first time playing a Boulez work?

**Mukawa:** On the stage, yes.

**Lin:** So, you had never tried Boulez before?

**Mukawa:** No, no.

**Lin:** Are you satisfied with your repertoire choice?

**Mukawa:** Yes.

**Lin:** What were the challenges in practicing this entire repertoire?

**Mukawa:** Of course, the choice of Boulez. And playing the whole mirror of Ravel was challenging for me, because it takes more than 30 minutes. It's not a very brilliant piece, it is a very, very dark piece.

**Lin:** Why did you choose this [Ravel *Miroirs*] in the Solo Finals?

**Mukawa:** Because maybe my style of performance is not to play very dazzling [pieces], but to play with some philosophy. I wanted to show my personality to the jury.

**Lin:** In your case, did you think Boulez was the most difficult piece in terms of technique?

**Mukawa:** Yes, definitely.

**Lin:** Did you encounter any difficulties during your preparation time?

**Mukawa:** Yes. Actually, I misunderstood the rules of the competition. I thought that I could see the score for the Boulez.

**Lin:** You thought you could, but actually you weren't allowed to?

**Mukawa:** No.

**Lin:** So how did you memorize that?

**Mukawa:** So much effort.

**Lin:** So, do you think that this competition should make any changes when it comes to repertoire requirements?

**Mukawa:** I think the rules are very good. It is quite special.

**Lin:** So do you think compared to four years ago, this edition is better?

**Mukawa:** Yes, I would say so.

**Lin:** Is the repertoire more suited to your style this time?

**Mukawa:** Yes! Yes! I would say so.

**Lin:** Okay. So, this time you think the competition repertoire is very good.

**Mukawa:** Yes, for me it is very good.

**Lin:** How about when it comes to the general competition repertoire setting, do you think the requirements are good?

**Mukawa:** Yes, this kind of repertoire could limit the type of candidates.

**Lin:** Is there anything you want to say about the competition?

**Mukawa:** I'm so happy with everything.

**Lin:** Alright! Thank you so much for today.

**Anonymous**, contestant in the Long-Thibaud-Crespin International Piano Competition 2019.

Interview by Yuan-Hung Lin, November 12, 2019.

**Lin:** Are you currently studying in Amsterdam?

**Anonymous:** Yes, that's right. It is the conservatory of Amsterdam.

**Lin:** [Looks at the competition program.] Why does the program show that you are in Salzburg?

**Anonymous:** Yes, they didn't update the information, I was in Salzburg before.

**Lin:** So, do you work as a concert pianist right now?

**Anonymous:** Yeah, I would say so. I'm playing mostly solo recitals, and I'm also teaching in Salzburg as an assistant.

**Lin:** So, you teach in Salzburg, and you also study in Amsterdam?

**Anonymous:** Yeah.

**Lin:** How do you manage the travel?

**Anonymous:** I go to Salzburg once a month. The rest of the time I'm mostly in Amsterdam.

**Lin:** I see. How long did you prepare for this competition?

**Anonymous:** The Long-Thibaud, I would say over a year, I mean for the repertoire of the competition. Of course, some repertoire is older, some is newer. Yeah, I would say about one year.

**Lin:** How did you decide to enter this competition?

**Anonymous:** I heard about it through the conservatorium. I like the repertoire they chose, and also the jury is very impressive.

**Lin:** Martha Argerich.

**Anonymous:** Yes. [Laughs.] Exactly.

**Lin:** Too bad that she was not here.

**Anonymous:** Yes, I know. That's really a pity.

**Lin:** So, do you like French repertoire?

**Anonymous:** Yes, I do. I've always loved the French composers, actually since I was a pretty young age, I have always enjoyed playing French music. So, yeah, it makes sense to do this competition.

**Lin:** So, have you participated in any other international competitions? Like World Federated Competitions?

**Anonymous:** I'm not sure actually. I did some smaller international competitions, like in Spain, and also in the USA before I moved to Europe.

**Lin:** How long have you been in Europe?

**Anonymous:** I think about five years.

**Lin:** How did you decide the repertoire for this competition?

**Anonymous:** Most of the requirements are kind of strict, because they have requirements for the repertoire. Like in the first round, everybody played Haydn Variations.

**Lin:** Repeated 43 times.

**Anonymous:** Yeah, that's a lot. So, a lot of it was trying to choose from the framework. And then for the one with a little bit more flexibility, I listened to the possible choices, and then I chose the one I liked the most. And then for the free choice, I used the kinds of things I have been playing recently. So, I was just trying to fit them in the allocated time.

**Lin:** So, how many new pieces did you learn for this particular competition?

**Anonymous:** For this competition, the Haydn [Variations] I learned for this competition. Also, in the second round [Semi-Finals], there were the French pieces, I chose something from Saint-Saëns, and also from Dukas. Those were also new. And then the concertos, the Mozart Concerto [Concerto for piano and orchestra No. 24 in C Minor, K. 491] was new for me.

**Lin:** So, you're playing the Mozart Concerto. What else were you going to play in the final [round]?

**Anonymous:** Also, there's the Beethoven Concerto [Concerto for piano and orchestra No. 1 in C Major, Op. 15]. The final recital [round], there was also the commissioned work [M. Jarrell Étude No. 2 *Réminiscences*], which was new. And then I was also planning to play Shostakovich Sonata, Scriabin Waltz, the Ravel *Miroirs* [mirrors]. I think that's all.

**Lin:** You said in the concerto round you were preparing to play Mozart Concerto?

**Anonymous:** And Beethoven Concerto.

**Lin:** What did you play in the pre-selection round?

**Anonymous:** In the pre-selection [round], they also had the requirement to play a slow movement from a Mozart or Haydn sonata. So, I played [the slow movement] from a Haydn sonata, and the Tchaikovsky Variations [Theme and Variations, Op. 19, No. 6, in F Major], and then Chopin Etude C-sharp Minor [Op. 10, No. 4].

**Lin:** Could you play Tchaikovsky's Variations in the first round again?

**Anonymous:** Yes. But you could only repeat [the repertoire] from the Pre-Selections.

**Lin:** How long have you known the Tchaikovsky [Variations]?

**Anonymous:** I think maybe in March, so it's been almost one year.

**Lin:** I love that piece. Why did you decide to learn that piece?

**Anonymous:** The Tchaikovsky?

**Lin:** Yes.

**Anonymous:** Actually, my professor in Amsterdam recommended the piece to me. He said that it would be a good piece for me to play, and after I listened to the recording from Gililovs, I just loved the piece and I wanted to play it.

**Lin:** What was your main consideration in choosing the repertoire for the competition?

**Anonymous:** The main consideration I guess was to follow the requirements, and then to try to fit everything into the time limit for each round. I wanted to make a kind of diverse program, so things kind of contrasted in each round. And I think it is just mainly the repertoire I'd love to play.

**Lin:** Did you think that maybe one piece would please the jury more or please the audience more?

**Anonymous:** Actually, no. I didn't think about it. I just played what I wanted to play. And I thought about what I can play well and presented that to the audience.

**Lin:** For competitions, do you usually decide on the repertoire by yourself? Or do you decide with your teacher?

**Anonymous:** I think usually I decide by myself, and then I just double check with my teacher and ask for advice. And maybe I would change a few things, maybe one piece from the first round to the later round. Things like that.

**Lin:** So, you wouldn't change one piece to another.

**Anonymous:** Usually not.

**Lin:** What about the order of the pieces? For example, which piece you play first and which piece you play later?

**Anonymous:** In this competition, they actually required us to play the quintet first in the second round [Semi-Finals]. So, that was already decided. After that, I decided to kind of design my own concert. So, I put the French pieces after, and then the last one was Rachmaninoff [*Variation on a Theme of Corelli*, Op. 42], which I thought was a kind of nice ending to the program.

**Lin:** Why is it a nice ending?

**Anonymous:** It's the longest piece [of the program], because the French pieces are quite short. So, I think it would not be so balanced to end with those [French] pieces. Chronologically, it makes sense.

**Lin:** Nice. Had you played the Brahms Quintet [Op. 34] before?

**Anonymous:** Yes, I played it a few years ago.

**Lin:** So, that's an old piece for you, but you still have to practice, right?

**Anonymous:** Yes, I still need to practice.

**Lin:** So, for the first round, which piece do you think you played best?

**Anonymous:** Probably I would have to say it was the Tchaikovsky, because I have known it longer. And I was the one who chose the piece, it is not a required piece. [Laughs]

**Lin:** Do you like the Haydn [Variations]?

**Anonymous:** Actually, I do. I really like it. It keeps growing on me.

**Lin:** So, are you happy with your repertoire choice?

**Anonymous:** I think I was always happy with the program. The only thing that was maybe uncomfortable was the commissioned work. It was very, very challenging.

**Lin:** So, what were the challenges in practicing this entire repertoire?

**Anonymous:** I guess it is an enormous program. There's a lot of solo music, there's the chamber music, two concertos, the commissioned piece. So, I think for me the biggest challenge was how to manage the time for the whole program. Because, of course you need to work on the whole program, but you also need to really focus on each piece to really bring it to the best level you can. So, I think time management was the most challenging thing.

**Lin:** So, which piece do you think is the most difficult piece?

**Anonymous:** The commissioned work. [Laughs]

**Lin:** Okay. [Laughs] Do you think you overcame these difficulties that you just mentioned?

**Anonymous:** Yes, probably time management was the main thing. And how to fit other things in with preparing for the competition.

**Lin:** Do you think this competition should make any changes to its repertoire requirements?

**Anonymous:** Maybe the only thing is the concerto. Maybe to just learn the concerto that you will play instead of learning two concertos and playing only one of them. [The Long-Thibaud-Crespin Competition requires contestants to prepare two concertos for the Finals, and one will be chosen for them to perform in the final stage.] Because maybe one contestant plays one concerto better than the other, but then, it's kind of a fifty-fifty chance, you don't know which one they will choose. For this competition, I actually think the set-up of the pieces is quite good.

**Lin:** That's good. Do you have anything else to say about this competition?

**Anonymous:** I don't think so.

**Lin:** Okay, that's all. Thank you so much.

**Akiko Ebi**, (Japanese-French) jury member of the International Telekom Beethoven Competition Bonn 2017.

Interview by Yuan-Hung Lin, Bonn, December 8, 2017.

**Lin:** Do you think the repertoire choices that the competitor makes influences the competition results?

**Ebi:** No, not the competition results, but I think the choice of the candidates for the competition, yes. Because the difficulty for even a small piece of Beethoven, it is very easy, but also it is very difficult.

**Lin:** Will a well-played Op. 110 definitely beat at well-played Op. 109?

**Ebi:** For me, I don't believe it at all. But of course, if you play *Hammerklavier*, which is very difficult, as Rolim [Brazilian contestant Ronaldo Rolim] did in the competition, it was very successful. But also it is the same thing if you played a Beethoven sonata very well, it would be the same. There were no difference between the *Hammerklavier* and the other Beethoven sonatas, because the first sonata of Beethoven is also very difficult to play. I think with the judges, they have so many ears and with so much experience, more than fifty years or even sixty years. The most important thing is the quality of the pianist, the understanding of the music.

**Lin:** What qualities are important in being selected for the next round? What is your top priority (technique, repertoire, personality, or something else)?

**Ebi:** Yes, this is a very difficult thing. But the simple way is if you want to listen to him/her play again or not, this is the point. If one gives me the curiosity to listen to more, it means this interpretation is interesting for me, for my taste, for my knowledge as a pianist, as a musician.

**Lin:** I thought Gupta [Ashok Gupta, British contestant] had no hope because he had lost his memory in the second round, what is the reason now he is still surviving?

**Ebi:** It is really, really a shame for us that he couldn't pass to the Finals, because he is really a musician. But his way of showing the technique, the attitude toward the piano. His music was so well profound, but it is not necessary to do every gesture. He could have his gesture for one big time, but not always. I think he is a really good musician. He could go very far.

For his mistakes in the second round, I think it is not so important. We know how he got lost due to our experience, if it was just silly, or a coincidence, these are big differences, and we can see that. For me, he played the best in the first round, then in the Semi-Finals, and then in second round. He had many supporters in the jury.

**Lin:** In this competition, what are your thoughts regarding this result? Are you happy with everything?

**Ebi:** Not everything. Sometimes some of the competitors that I think should pass the second round, like the Russian boy [Georgy Voylochnikov], he played so well, he is really an artist, he definitely will have many audiences. But somehow he didn't pass, that saddened me.

I think competition is giving the chance for young musician to do more, to learn the pieces, to let people know them. So not only the result is the important thing, I think these are also important.

**Lin:** What do you think about this competition's repertoire rules? What are your thoughts about the repertoire for each round?

**Ebi:** It is very well. There is a big German cast. It is very good for pianists. Also for the cello sonata, it was so short, but it shows something. Also, contemporary music is very good, for the taste and the sensibility. Second round is German Romantic round, the design is excellent.

**Lin:** How do you think about the repertoire of Beethoven Competition in Vienna? They need only Beethoven.

**Ebi:** It is possible, like Chopin competition in Warsaw, also requested only Chopin music, it depends. I think the director Mr Pavel Gililov thought that pianists might be able to play other repertoire. But what is very interesting and very intelligent, is that he didn't mix the French repertoire or Chopin. It is completely different and I think it is very smart. With this repertoire in Beethoven piano competition, as pianist, I think it is very well.

**Lin:** Is there anything unique about the repertoire requirements for this competition?

**Ebi:** Yes, the cello sonata, and also of the preparation for the Finals, too.

**Lin:** Why do you think the cello sonata is unique?

**Ebi:** Because there is also violin sonatas, the time we could have is so short, if they can play all Beethoven sonata, it would be better, but we don't have time. The choice is very good from the five [Piano/Cello] Sonatas.

**Lin:** Is there anything you think should be changed about the repertoire requirements for this competition?

**Ebi:** No.

**Lin:** What guidelines are given to the jury?

**Ebi:** Mr. Gililov said to us, because we are all experienced, he trusted us. He told us before the beginning of the competition, we don't have the mark of the point, but a voting Yes/No system. By my experience, I think marking points is not fair, it is more complicated. Yes/No is clearer for everybody, for our self, and there is no artificial will.

**Lin:** Have you ever judged any other international competitions? If so, which ones?

**Ebi:** Yes. There are many. I was in the Warsaw Chopin Competition, Long-Thibaud, Hamamatsu, some of them I can't remember.

**Lin:** Can you name any whose repertoire requirements you find especially beneficial?

**Ebi:** No, I don't think so. Every competition has a guide by somebody, it is possible for the competition, for the music, and he knows by his experience, he has chosen this way to do the competition, and it has its own reason, it is not my role.

**Lin:** How do you organize the repertoire for each round of the competition in Japan, which you were the artistic director?

**Ebi:** The preparation is very long. For Hamamatsu, which happens every three years, it takes lots of energy. We have three to four hundred applications.

For the Kawai competition in Japan, we had put Schubert in the competition; we think nowadays pianists like to play technical stuff but ignore the music, so we decided to have Schubert.

**Ewa Kupiec**, (Polish) jury member of the International Telekom Beethoven Competition Bonn 2017.

Interview by Yuan-Hung Lin, Bonn, December 8, 2017.

**Lin:** Do you think the repertoire choices that the competitor makes influences the competition results? For example, will a well-played Op. 110 definitely beat a well-played Op. 109?

**Kupiec:** No, in this case, actually not. But when there is a free choice, it will. Because you know that the choice of sonata, we had one piece, like in second round, you could choose from a bigger repertoire. Of course, when it comes to masterpieces, I don't think it makes a big difference [between the pieces], but it makes a difference how you're going to interpret it. So, if you find a key of interpretation, a personal key, it is going to be stronger. But just because you learned the piece on the list, and you have absolutely no relation to the piece, of course it is going to influence us, because we all see it. So the choice of repertoire is extremely important, even from the limited, but I don't think someone is going to be better if someone plays Op. 111 or Op. 109, it is really a personal thing.

The pieces are related to the competitors, not related between themselves. You may actually meet a completely wrong choice. These sonatas are so different.

**Lin:** What qualities are important in being selected for the next round? What is your top priority (technique, repertoire, personality, or something else)?

**Kupiec:** Every selection you know, the decisions of jury members are extremely personal, so I could only know about my point of view. What I'm looking for in these young pianists, is the personality, is someone's unpredictability. I like to learn from young people, I don't want to predict every single word. If somebody plays something on stage, we can tell if the teacher told him the idea. And I'm looking very much for the factor which I told you, very personal, very not speculated, but there's some impression that something is happening right now, that something surprising, something that you haven't thought about. And I have seen some surprising performances here in this competition, where I could learn. For me these are the criteria I choose the competitors for the next round. But it is not often a criterion for other people.

It's something original, it comes from the heart, but not speculated. How you look at the music material. I have plenty of students that I tell them what to do. That's something very good of course, but that's not the standard of interpretation, and we often go a little bit to the side so that the interpretation becomes your interpretation. Still you could be very faithful to the interpretation, but still you can make it yours. This is what is so extremely liberating, so fascinating.

**Lin:** In this competition, what are your thoughts regarding this result?

**Kupiec:** We had only two rounds so far, so it's very difficult to say. There is a picture definitely that we have nine members of the jury, everyone has a completely different picture. We're doing Yes/No voting. Here you just need to decide who you want to listen to again for the next round. Everyone projects themselves a little bit. That's why competition is so difficult. The majority decides the people getting to next round, and usually the performers stay in the middle. You just have to respect your colleagues when the result is not what you expected.

**Lin:** What do you think about this competition's repertoire rules? What are your thoughts about the repertoire for each round?

**Kupiec:** I think this is a very interesting one. Especially the combination of Beethoven's works, which is Beethoven itself, and then the combination with other composers. I think it is very challenging for the participants, and also very interesting for the audience. Beethoven's pieces are all different, so genius, that you won't get tired with it at all. When it comes to the very last [Beethoven] sonatas, you have to be a musician, not just a pianist. The repertoire is demanding, but we're looking for a musician.

It is demanding that the late Beethoven sonata appears in the first round. But it is good that we [the jury] could immediately know who understands the music, who does not.

**Lin:** Is there anything unique about the repertoire requirements for this competition?

**Kupiec:** At the moment I'm very happy with it. Of course, every time you have to bring new ideas, you can't always repeat it, but at this moment I absolutely don't have any reservation about the repertoire.

Now many competitions are full of many studies, many virtuoso pieces, That makes it not only difficult to select the pianist, because it's always the same, but it also makes us tired. But here we deal with master pieces. For members of the jury, we have to sit a lot of hours, so I think because of the enormous responsibility of the music and the very difficult choices, it's challenging for us but also refreshing.

**Lin:** Have you ever judged any other international competitions? If so, which ones?

**Kupiec:** Yes. I was in the [jury of the] Sydney International Piano Competition and the Helsinki Maj Lind Competition. I tried to limit myself to not judging more than two competitions in one year.

**Lin:** Which competitions do you feel need to change their repertoire requirements, if any?

**Kupiec:** I don't know. The only thing I could say is I don't like to limit it to one period, one specific composer. It's not healthy for musicians. For the competition only focuses on one composer, it is very dangerous. It's dangerous for the musician and also the

outside world because you're in the drawer; you only concentrate on one thing, and one kind of technique.

**Lin:** Thank you very much!

**Lilya Zilberstein**, (Russian) jury member of the International Telekom Beethoven Competition Bonn 2017.

Interview by Yuan-Hung Lin, Bonn, December 10, 2017.

**Lin:** Do you think the repertoire choices that the competitor makes influences the competition results? For example, will a well-played Op. 110 definitely beat at well-played Op. 109?

**Zilberstein:** Oh! What can I say? An Op. 111 beat Op. 110 [Laughs]? It is difficult to say that here there's an obligation to play one of three last sonatas, so they have to play. The other competitions have more choice for the same round. When there are free program, maybe people don't play late Beethoven sonatas, it is already different. Here it was an obligation, so they didn't have another choice. It's up to the competitor's concepts.

**Lin:** What qualities are important in being selected for the next round? What is your top priority (technique, repertoire, personality, or something else)?

**Zilberstein:** Who plays better [Laughs]. Good playing. I always tried to get a kind of complex sound, for me, very important the quality of the sound. If people just hammer on the piano, it is not a good quality for me. And the understanding of the structure, because there are different forms in many sonatas. You could hear what pianists think, even small details.

**Lin:** Ashok Gupta had a serious memory slip in the second round, why was he still surviving after that?

**Zilberstein:** Sometimes we really don't care if they have some mistakes. For example, Gupta had serious memory problem in the second round, but we already heard his first round, and I know how good he is, so I couldn't forget it after the first round, even though he was not so perfect in the second. Competition is stressful, we're all normal people, even I could have memory problems sometimes.

**Lin:** For you what's the reason to let him pass the second round?

**Zilberstein:** For me, it is because I liked his first round. For me, the music was very clear, interesting, with different characters; and the second round I thought he was more focused on the small parts.

**Lin:** In every round, do you always change your criteria of selecting pianists?

**Zilberstein:** No, I always have the same criteria—the good sound. This is in every competition. I don't do many, but when I go, I have my own way to judge. Just like you, you have something you like, and something you don't like.

**Lin:** In this competition, what are your thoughts regarding this result?

**Zilberstein:** I'm happy with the result, what I'm thinking is totally the same as the result. I think it is absolutely correct. This is the first time I'm really satisfied with the results in so many years.

**Lin:** What do you think about this competition's repertoire rules? What are your thoughts about the repertoire for each round?

**Zilberstein:** It was good, a good structure of a competition. For example, in Vienna where I teach [she teaches in University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna], there is also a Beethoven competition, there is only Beethoven. Here they consider not only Beethoven, they can show also the other side of their talent and other interpretation because first is Bach, then romantic, and then modern. The pianists could show themselves from different sides. Not only by Beethoven, and it is good. Like Tchaikovsky competition, they don't only do Tchaikovsky; they also play other composers' works. There are only a few people concentrating on only one style. Even in the Chopin competition, those people only concentrated on Chopin at that time, but they don't only play Chopin for their whole life. So that's why it's important that people show themselves in the complex.

**Lin:** Is there anything you think should be changed about the repertoire requirements for this competition?

**Zilberstein:** I don't know. For this competition, I think the concept is good.

**Lin:** The Beethoven late sonata appeared at the second round in Vienna Beethoven competition. Do you think instead of appearing in the first round, here should there be any change?

**Zilberstein:** Well, it is clear that they [the three late Beethoven Sonatas] appeared in the first round, so we could directly see the ability of the contestants, because it is difficult [laughing].

**Lin:** Are you following the score when they played the modern music?

**Zilberstein:** No. I just believe them because they learned the music. [Laughing] Actually it is very clear that Ronaldo Rolim played the Brazilian piece, what can I check there? So, I just have my impression there.

**Lin:** Have you ever judged any other international competitions? If so, which ones?

**Zilberstein:** I was at the Busoni Competition four times, which I was the winner of thirty years ago. And also other international competitions.

**Lin:** Can you tell me your opinion of those three winners?

**Zilberstein:** Yes. They all have different personalities. I like all of them. The strongest was the Alberto Ferro, very impressive. I like a lot yesterday from Kitamura [Japanese contestant], he was very free, you could see from the screen, that he closes his eyes and played. Even Ferro was not as free as Kitamura. Lee was also free, but I could see her face, was too much. We don't really need to show all our motion on the face, because the music shows the emotion by itself.

**Lin:** Okay. Thank you very much!

**Nathalie Wappler Hagen**, (Swiss) jury member of the Concours Géza Anda 2018.  
Interview by Yuan-Hung Lin, Zurich, June 12, 2018.

**Lin:** Do you think the repertoire choices that the competitor makes influences the competition results?

**Wappler:** No. It's sort of their choice, we just evaluate their choice. So if they choose Haydn, or Beethoven, it is important for us how they interpret the Beethoven and Haydn instead of the piece itself. When more people are playing the same piece, you could compare directly.

**Lin:** What qualities are important in being selected for the next round? What is your top priority?

**Wappler:** This is decided individually by each jury member in the end. But of course for all of us, it is performance, how do they play it, have the capability to do so, other than just perform the technique. It is about the music, the interpretation, and of course, the intonation. If it is heart touching, do they have own expression of the piece.

**Lin:** In this competition, what are your thoughts of the result so far?

**Wappler:** I was quite happy in the discussion, the evaluation, we had a very good conversation with different arguments and different spot lights. And in the whole procession you think "Oh! That's right! My attention was on another point so I didn't notice about that." So I think in this competition, we found very solid candidates.

**Lin:** How did you decide who gets into the second round and third round?

**Wappler:** We vote "Yes" or "No." This voting is personal. Who has more "Yes" votes gets to the next round.

**Lin:** What do you think about this competition repertoire rules? What are your thoughts of the repertoire for each round?

**Wappler:** I think the Géza Anda competition has an enormous repertoire requirement. I'm not a pianist, I'm only an amateur. So, I'm deeply impressed by all those repertoires, because it is really heavy. I like the broadness of the repertoire because then you really can evaluate what is the range of musicality and the interpretation and the technical knowledge. You could see different side of the performers.

**Lin:** Do you think the organization of the repertoire is good for each round?

**Wappler:** They choose what are they going to perform. It's not for us to say what they are playing. I think the first round is a good mixture between their own choice and the choice of the jury members. And the second round, I like a lot. You have to play a sonata,

a modern piece, it's good mixture. So, I think the repertoire organization is good. And the last round, pianists can make their own choice on which concerto they want to play.

**Lin:** Is there anything you think it should be change about the repertoire for this competition?

**Wappler:** I think it is good for it to stay like this. I like the contemporary music, and I'm happy to hear some good contemporary music here.

**Lin:** Why did you come to judge this competition?

**Wappler:** Because I was asked. They wanted a female in the jury, and they want some different voice from the other side. I was responsible for the children's choir and Germany Forum Orchestra, and amateur pianist, so they asked me if I wanted to come.

**Lin:** Thank you very much.

**Nicolas Hodges**, (British) jury member of the International Ferruccio Busoni Piano Competition 2018/19.

Interview by Yuan-Hung Lin, Bolzano, September 2, 2019.

**Lin:** Do you think the repertoire choices the competitor makes influences the competition result?

**Hodges:** Yes! It is something we discuss; it is partly the presentation of the competitors, what they choose to play. Obviously, it also effects whether they play well because they might choose a piece that is not suited to them, then they make themselves a bad deal.

**Lin:** Do you think a well-played Liszt would beat a well-played Mozart in the competition?

**Hodges:** It is impossible to say. Well-played isn't enough, at this level. Everything is well-played. I don't think a Liszt would be better than a Mozart. I think someone could come to any good competition with Mozart or Haydn instead of just Rachmaninoff or Stravinsky. We're not judging on speed and volume.

**Lin:** What qualities are important in being selected for the next round? What is your top priority?

**Hodges:** Well, the main criteria for me are two things. One is the mastery of the relationship with the instrument, pianistic mastery. The other one is musical mastery. So is not enough to be a great pianist, I think you have to be a great musician as well. The relationship with the text, the understanding of the composers. You have to understand the music and the style, as well as being to be able to play fast and loud, many different sound, this kind of pianistic concern.

**Lin:** In this competition, what are your thoughts regarding this result so far?

**Hodges:** Well, it is a majority decision, and obviously, I stand by the decision of the jury. I could certainly say that I think it is a very good jury, and I agree with the result.

I didn't want many people to get through, I'm very strict, so I'm not going to let people through if it is just okay.

**Lin:** What do you think about this competition's repertoire rules?

**Hodges:** Oh, very good! Very good! Particularly Busoni. Obviously, it's central because of him, but it has also such wonderful music and pianists they play Busoni's music enough, and to force them to look at him at this way is very good. And the chamber music round is really good too. It's really important to see musicians in a wider range. And the new music is also very good as well. They listed twelve pieces instead of just few.

**Lin:** For the international competition you have judged, which one do you think has the best organized repertoire?

**Hodges:** Of the competitions who covered all the repertoire, I would say this one. It's really well organized. The artistic director is really experienced. He's pushing always to improve the competition. I enjoyed it the most [judging here instead of elsewhere].

**Lin:** What's your thought of repeating seven times *Dante* Sonatas in the first round?

**Hodges:** Each pianist has the right to choose their repertoire. You couldn't criticize what they are doing, just like the concerto. Here we have six possibilities of different concertos, but sometimes we get six Tchaikovsky. It is not against the rules, you can't really stop that happening.

In the case of many pieces often played in the competitions, I will suggest pianists to look to other fields and investigate more pieces by Liszt. I mean, there are so many pieces by Liszt. I think it is a general problem of young pianists, in conservatory music colleges as well. They really often choose pieces that they hear their friends play. That ends up being just a small pool of pieces, and it would be lovely if there's a wider range.

**Lin:** Would it be easier to judge if they all play the same piece?

**Hodges:** No, I don't think so. I don't think it really makes a difference. I think we're experienced enough. That's why we're (the) jury. We're experienced enough to be able to judge when there are *Dante* sonatas or not *Dante* sonatas. But I think for the pianists, it is more stressful when you know the other people are playing the same piece. And for the audience, of course it is much more fun when they're varied.

**Dang Thai Son**, (Vietnamese) jury member of the International Ferruccio Busoni Piano Competition 2018/19.

Interview by Yuan-Hung Lin, Bolzano, September 2, 2019.

**Lin:** Do you think the repertoire choices the competitor makes influence the competition result?

**Dang:** Not only in Busoni competition, but the choice of repertoire in competition is really important. Even they have their own rules of selection, sometimes free choice, but especially when there is a category, that is a really good clue. For example, like the jury, we want to see a profile of each one [each contestant]. So, they have to give the general impression. So, the profile has to show their different sides. Some contestants think that they have a kind of pianistic ability, and they make very effective choices so there is a kind of brilliance shining, but only one side. We cannot see the musicality, where the lyric part is, the deepness of the musicality. It is better if the program has more variety, different types of music. It would be better.

Sometimes, not only here, but in other competitions, I could see that an excellent contestant chose an all unknown program, and very much heavy with the contemporary music. I don't care, of course, I could see the reason that he could not pass the first round, and then the feedback from the jury is mostly very tough for them—to judge the contestant generally.

**Lin:** Do you think when they are choosing the repertoire, the Liszt will beat a Mozart?

**Dang:** Who picks up the Mozart is really very brave [Laughs]. If someone is really a wonderful Mozart player, then it really helps. But you have to be very sure that you have very special voice for Mozart, then it helps you. But majority of case, it is a bigger risk.

**Lin:** What qualities are important in being selected for the next round?

**Dang:** Let's say from the first round. My criterion is different from the second to the third. Of course, when you get further, your criteria should be raised higher. So, the first round usually, we tend to have a two groups, one group that very talented, and they are new artists. Sometimes could be unperfected. Their play is not perfect, or sometimes even controversial, but the interpretation, the imagination. And other group, everything is okay, very high, professional. Pianistically and with good knowledge, but nothing special. I tend to favor more the group that is talented even if they are controversial. This is for the first round, let them get into the next round. The more talented, the more possible.

And for the second round, let the criteria be how perfect the performances are.

**Lin:** What are you expecting for the third round [chamber round] to the Finals [Concerto Final]?

**Dang:** Each competition has its own character, different program, and different rules. Personally, my criteria from this third round to the Finals should not be based on only chamber music. We still have to remember the whole profile of the solo round. This is important, that some competitions they combine chamber music like one part of the Finals. Sometimes they combine with the solo recital, or sometimes they combine with the concerto playing with the orchestra. So that would have to be judged as a group, this maybe has better sense. For here, it is kind of easy for some jury members because they will favor the round of the chamber music more than the solo. So personally, I think I should remember the group.

**Lin:** What are you expecting for the winner?

**Dang:** The concerto is very important. How he or she shows the skill as a kind of ensemble, and it not just how to choose the program but how to build up the program from the first round to the final round as a crescendo. If someone only plays the same level in every round, it is not enough. I think, expectation is dangerous.

**Lin:** In any case, if two pianists were on the same level, and only one could get into the next round, how would you make your decision?

**Dang:** Then the majority decides [Laughs]. I'm not very concerned about the bottom, I am concerned about who is on top.

**Lin:** So far what are your thoughts regarding the results?

**Dang:** This time is not an exception. Because I have already judged almost thirty years, many competitions, many types of competitions. I have to say that it is very rare that what I think is 100% the same as other jurors. So, we have to accept that we are different, even on [the matter of] who is good and who is bad. The majority decides the list. Sometimes the contestants are not the same as my voting list. I don't care about the bottom, but if the contestant is having very high marks are on my list and didn't pass, I feel really pained. Like in the second round, one of my top contestants, Osokins [Georgijs Osokins, Latvian contestant]—he didn't pass. I understand why he could not pass because he has a really strong personality, a strong ego. Some like it, some hate it. So, he got an average score. It's not very high.

I tried to be open minded as much as possible, and have a certain limit. In the first round, I was pretty sure that two contestants would pass, Aumiller [Jonas Aumiller, German contestant], but he didn't pass. There is always some reasons that the other jury did not like this contestant. Especially this time we have so many Liszt Dante Sonatas, he seemed to be a bit nervous, so it was not his best, but actually the further he played, the better. He has good balance and good imagination. The second one is among the Asian group, I can show you [he looks in the competition program], his last name is Park [Jae Hong Park, South Korean contestant]. He also played Dante Sonata. His performance was not perfect, I voted for him because I felt he was very talented and had good potential.

Especially in his Haydn piece, and generally he played really loud, so many jurors care a lot about this sonority. I usually care about the good music of contestants, what they tend to say, the idea, and the perception.

**Lin:** What about Shuan Hern Lee?

**Dang:** Shuan Hern Lee was also on my list. He is far from perfect, but young and with talent. There were still many details he didn't do well, little by little, he didn't get through it.

**Lin:** What do you think about this competition's repertoire rules? And what do you think about the repertoire rules for each round?

**Dang:** We could see the competition here, because of the name of Busoni, everyone has to play Busoni, this is very normal. And the character of this competition required a contemporary piece. That is also big part of this competition. I think this is quite okay. Some other competitions, for example, Helsinki competition [International Maj Lind Piano Competition], Contemporary parts are even heavier. And some other competitions, very less, so it depends on the case, but here I think it is very interesting.

**Lin:** What would you suggest of the repertoire for students to go to competition?

**Dang:** It depends on students' personality. Usually, I try to avoid Mozart and Chopin, unless the student really has the character to play these two composers. These two composers are really hard.

**Lin:** What are your thoughts of the commission works for the competition?

**Dang:** I think it is a good idea. Students get the chance to learn the same piece, and it's easy for judging. In commission work, you could see the imagination is so different between pianists, and it is sometimes really fantastic. I follow the music score when they are playing because I'm not the expert of that. It is important to follow the score.

**Lin:** For the international competitions you have judged, which one do you think has the best organization of repertoire?

**Dang:** Actually I don't really care about the program, but I care more about the way they make the selection of the contestants, especially the pre-selection [round] for me. We all know that there are big application numbers applying for the competitions. How to choose from 300-400 to 30 contestants to the official competition, it is important, and it will keep the reputation of the competition. Some competitions did really well. They divided into two round[s] the Pre-Selections. Some competitions, I don't want to name them, I had suggested already, but they didn't listen. They had only one pre-selection round, selected from 400 pianists directly down to thirty pianists, that is not good.

Sometime the directors of the competitions think that the pre-selection round is not important, so they hire the regional jury instead of a good pianist as a pre-selection round jury. That is really not a good way to do it.

**Lin:** Do you have any experience on judging the video pre-selection round?

**Dang:** Yes. It is not easy. Some people recorded in a really good concert hall, and some recorded only with an upright piano. We need to listen very carefully to the details.

**Lin:** Wow, that's really a big different. That's all for today, thank you so much for your help.

**Peter Paul Kainrath**, Artistic Director of the International Ferruccio Busoni Piano Competition 2018/19.

Interview by Yuan-Hung Lin, Bolzano, Aug 29, 2019.

**Lin:** How long have you been artistic director of this competition?

**Kainrath:** About 12 years.

**Lin:** What are the responsibilities as an artistic director?

**Kainrath:** In charge of all artistic questions, looking for the right jury members, being involved in the election process, especially in the first round. We have three steps: video round, first round, and this year the semi-final stage. I was sitting with my two colleagues listening to the video, sometimes we listened two to three times. There were 420 videos we needed to listen to. It took about five to six weeks, and we chose 100 candidates to come to the first round last year.

Apart from this, I have to set up the guidelines of the communication, collect the programs, do the piano festival, so it's kind of general things. Business management.

**Lin:** What is the reasoning behind the different repertoire requirements of each round? Was difficulty level or variety part of the reasoning?

**Kainrath:** Each round represents a part of, or should reflect a part of the personality of the candidates. Of course, also their knowledge on this specific history period that they were asked to play. So, we're still asking for classical sonata, but not anymore the past Beethoven sonata, so the candidate can play Mozart, Haydn, Clementi. And the idea is all rounds are very different, but we would like to give the possibility to candidates to go through it, also for different types of pianists. So here in Busoni competition you could find virtuoso people, and also you could find very poetic tune people. You can see even in the final round, we have a Mozart concerto. You could play a big variety repertoire.

First round for us is very important because we are dealing with a technique point. We want to make sure that the pianists won't have big technique issues. We need professionally trained pianists.

**Lin:** How did the competition choose the jury members?

**Kainrath:** I always try to look to get people on board that are not doing this as a profession. I'm not looking for jury members that they sitting in four to five competitions a year. Why? Because I would like to give to the candidates that are coming to the Busoni the opportunity to play in front of people they've never played for before. If I invited the experienced jury members, maybe they already heard these people many times. The chance for them to listen with a fresh ear would be more surprising.

Second, we know the competition could also be a civil war. It means that you have these jury members, they know each other, some of them are running a competition, they invite each other, it is not necessarily negative, but I tend to involve more knowledgeable people who are active pianists/ musicians on stage. So they bring their experience to the competition, I think I see more gifts from these successful pianists. They dedicate their ten days to listening to these young candidates.

**Lin:** What is the adjudication process and method this year?

**Kainrath:** Voting Yes/No, no discussion. With a ranking.

**Lin:** What kind or kinds of pianists are the competition hoping for in its winners?

**Kainrath:** I think it is the same for everybody. We're always try to find a unique voice. The unique voice on a very high level—a professional speaker, knowledgeable of the text, the understanding of the historical period. We're looking for the pianist who is able to create an atmosphere for the audience. The audience is made by music. The audience comes because of the music. Impressive from stage.

**Lin:** What is the duty of the junior jurors?

**Kainrath:** They are important. They are the local music students, and they are selecting the Special Prizes. It is important also connecting to the local of the festival. Open new ideas.

**Lin:** Is there any repertoire advise you would give to the students trying to prepare for this competition in the future?

**Kainrath:** Busoni competition gives huge freedom on repertoire, and of course, choosing the program is already a message to the jury. And who is able to compose an interesting program? Maybe with some pieces not so well-known, but still interesting. It makes music because the jury members, after listening ten times to a *Dante* Sonata, maybe they are not waiting for the eleventh *Dante* anymore.

**Till Fellner**, (Austrian) President of the Jury of the International Ferruccio Busoni Piano Competition 2018/19.

Interview by Yuan-Hung Lin, Bolzano, September 5, 2019.

**Lin:** What's the duty of a president of the jury?

**Fellner:** Generally, the same as other jury members. I have my own voice, I could vote. As president, I need to represent the jury members and announce the result of each round. Secondly, if there's any issue in the competition that is not in the rules, I have to decide what to do. So far, there is no problem.

**Lin:** Do you think the repertoire choices the competitor makes influence the competition results?

**Fellner:** I cannot talk about the competition. But in general, it is important, which repertoire is chosen. Is it important music or not so important music? How do the candidates build the program? Because for me, forty-five minutes, sixty minutes, is not just piece one, two, three, four, five, it is like a concert. So, it's very important for me that how they build the program.

**Lin:** Do you think a Liszt will beat a Mozart?

**Fellner:** Definitely not! It has nothing to do with this. For example, if somebody plays a pop song, it is definitely impossible. So, I think it's not a good idea. The quality of the music is more important, the taste of the candidates.

**Lin:** What qualities are important in being selected for the next round? What is your top priority?

**Fellner:** For me, it is important that if he/she is a musician or not. I'm looking for an artist, for a musician, or the personality of potential artists. And second, to be able to realize what he feels or what he thinks. Number one is always the music.

**Lin:** So what kind of musician do you prefer? You said that you're looking for a musician, but there are so many kinds of musicians.

**Fellner:** That's a difficult question. I think when you are on the jury, you cannot only accept the musician who has the exact same taste as yourself. Of course, I have my personal taste, but you have to be open minded. And I'm also a teacher, so I know people are different, and I accepted that. But I think they have to stay within the limits given by the music, by the piece. If there's a melody, and they don't play the melody, then this is not about taste, it is about understanding. I think within the character of the piece, you could still be free, and the results could be different. If you listen to different great pianists, they all played differently.

**Lin:** If two pianists are in the same level, how do you decide to choose which one for next round?

**Fellner:** First of all, I don't think there are any on the same level, they all have differences. I usually take the one with better music interest instead of a better technique. But so far, we haven't needed to decide one.

During the whole competition we're not allowed to talk to each other about the competition and the competitors. And I also couldn't talk about this to my wife.

I think this is good, each one is independent. We wouldn't influence each other by discussion.

**Lin:** What do you think about the competition repertoire rules?

**Fellner:** In general, I think it is good. We get to know the candidates from various sides. They have to play Busoni, classical piece, contemporary music, chamber music and concerto. But they are also free to play what they want, so I think it is a very good combination.

**Lin:** What are your thoughts about those contemporary works here in the competition?

**Fellner:** I think it is a very interesting list. The pieces are not extreme, that only the music specialist could play them. They are designed for classical pianists, maybe one to two pieces are difficult, but I think it is durable for them [contestants]. Qualities are all good, and pieces are all very different. It's better than having only one commissioned work to make everyone play the same.

**Lin:** Do you have a favorite one?

**Fellner:** Good question, I haven't thought about it. I had practiced some pieces at home and didn't like them, but when I came here and listened to contestants' play, I feel really interested on their performance.

**Lin:** Is there anything that you think should be changed about the repertoire requirements for this competition?

**Fellner:** I think they [competition organization] already removed one or two Busoni repertoire from the Busoni repertoire list this time, which those are not so important. Generally I think is a good program.

**Lin:** What are your thoughts about repeating Dante sonata in the semi-final round?

**Fellner:** That is just a coincidence. Every year in the school entrance exam, there are always repeating repertoire. For this jury, it is easier to judge. The same pieces are easier to compare.

**Lin:** Have you judged in any other international piano competitions?

**Fellner:** This is my first time. Maestro Kainrath invited me here.

**Lin:** Okay, I think that's all for today, thank you very much.

**Yulianna Avdeeva**, (Russian) jury member of the Long-Thibaud-Crespin International Piano Competition 2019.

Interview by Yuan-Hung Lin, Paris, November 9, 2019.

**Lin:** Do you think the repertoire choice that the competitor makes influences the competition result?

**Avdeeva:** Sure, in a way for sure. On the one hand it is important that the participant also choose which kind of pieces he or she feels comfortable with. So, it means one should go for the pieces where you can present yourself in the best way which you feel musically that you have. That music would be the easiest way to express yourself. That's why I would say the choice of repertoire is very important even more than what is required.

**Lin:** What qualities are important in being selected for the next round? What is your priority choice?

**Avdeeva:** This is my personal opinion, but I'm sure that basically that the performance in the competition actually is not really different from any other concert performance. So basically it is still the same quality that one listens to, or which one seeks for. So first of all, there is the personal view of the music, the piece which you perform. Of course, there is the ability to express yourself within your manual possibility, within your manual ability, I would say so. It's basically all the same thing, so actually it is the personal message which you as a competitor or as a musician you transfer to the audience. Because jury members are also, you know, they are made of meat, and they are still human beings, and they are members of the audience. So, it's basically, I mean, it's always the same thing. This is something I would say, no difference at all between concerts and competition performance. That was also my attitude from the very beginning when I was also participating in the competitions. Somehow it reduces the stress, it feels more like a festival, that you just come and share great music with other people, and it doesn't matter that if somebody is judging your performance. I mean even in the concerts, every listener would, in a way judge, in the sense of he or she liking it or not. So this is a way not to please somebody, first of all it is your own expressions, your own desire, to express music, in your own way. Somebody may like it, and somebody not. Anyway, it's not possible to please all people. So, there is no interpretation which is somehow like the all-round interpretation for everybody, but there is something which every performer is aware of and, yes, you just take the risk.

**Lin:** What do you think about the competition repertoire rules? What are your thoughts of the repertoire for each round?

**Avdeeva:** In this particular competition, I think it is very interesting. First of all, I think that the choice of the Haydn Variations for the first round is indeed a great choice. Because this piece definitely is not a showcase piece. So, it means that you hear actually very quick the way the performer tells in this piece, his or her musical ideas, it is like a mirror. There is nothing that you can really hide yourself behind, those passages, those

impressive places. It is very classical, very pure, a very intimate way. So, it is really a choice, really like a mirror, so I think it is a great piece for the first round. Also, the choice of chamber music, the chamber music for the second round is very good, because chamber music, I think, is one of the most important of being a concert performer. Of course the accent on the French music is important, but all I think is great. There are different types of French music that every candidate could play, from older time to modern like twentieth-century, such as Boulez and Messiaen. Every candidate has the chance to make his/her own choice, In order to show, present him/herself in the best possible way. So, I think this is really great, and of course finals consist of two, also essential parts of the concert's life, the piano recital and performance with the orchestra. So I think it is a great mixture of actually all possible rounds, if I can call it this way. And I think they all are important because the contemporary music is a very important part of our repertoire, and there is also piece which was composed for the competition, I think it is also a great thing that everybody, let's say you have no reference of this piece, so every participant will have to learn, and also have to find his/her own way of understanding and you cannot refer to any recording. So it is just your own feeling of the piece. So, I think this is, sometimes, is difficult to learn, but it is an interesting process, also for participants.

**Lin:** Is there anything particularly unique about the repertoire requirements for this competition?

**Avdeeva:** Well, of course, first of all, there is the amount of the French composers at the second round, where you have to play some French music. But, as I said, it can be something more contemporary, it can be some more classic. I mean Fauré is like a little bit older composer, more romantic style; and you go really contemporary style, like Boulez. I think it is great, even in this specific field, I mean [of] French music. The field is very big. So, everybody can really make their own choice.

**Lin:** Do you think there is anything that should be changed about the repertoire requirement for this competition?

**Avdeeva:** I don't think so. I think this really represents all possibilities, important parts of the concert life. Chamber music, recital, orchestra performance, and also the requirement for the solo pieces are a very different style in classical pieces such as Haydn Variation, and also with some contemporary music. So I think it covers basically the main field of every performance. I think this is a very good choice.

**Lin:** Apart from this competition, have you ever judged in any other international piano competitions?

**Avdeeva:** No, that is my first one.

**Lin:** Congratulations.

**Avdeeva:** Thank you. It is my first judging competition. Of course, I was thinking for a long time whether I should do this or not. Because, you know, for me it is still not so far away that I was also myself participating in the Chopin competition, it was like nine years ago, it is not so far still. And for me, somehow it feels for me a little difficult, once we know how it feels like to stay on the stage, I have a great sympathy for every performer who is performing, who has this courage to prepare to walk out on the stage to perform. So, for me, it is a little difficult, of course you know, because I would love that every performer would go through because, I mean, just the respect for that. But I know that it is not possible. So for me it's not so easy. But unfortunately, it will be less and less people. That's how the competition works, every competition.

**Lin:** Great! That's all, thank you so much!

## APPENDIX B – IRB Approval Letter



**INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD**  
118 College Drive #5147 | Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001  
Phone: 601.266.5997 | Fax: 601.266.4377 | [www.usm.edu/research/institutionalreview.board](http://www.usm.edu/research/institutionalreview.board)

### NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION

The project has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services (45 CFR Part 46), and university guidelines to ensure adherence to the following criteria:

- The risks to subjects are minimized.
- The risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered regarding risks to subjects must be reported immediately, but not later than 10 days following the event. This should be reported to the IRB Office via the "Adverse Effect Report Form".
- If approved, the maximum period of approval is limited to twelve months.  
Projects that exceed this period must submit an application for renewal or continuation.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: 17112101  
PROJECT TITLE: A Study of Select World-Federated International Piano Competitions with a Focus on Influential Factors in Performer Repertoire Choices  
PROJECT TYPE: Doctoral Dissertation  
RESEARCHER(S): Yuan-Hung Lin  
COLLEGE/DIVISION: College of Arts and Letters  
DEPARTMENT: Music  
FUNDING AGENCY/SPONSOR: N/A  
IRB COMMITTEE ACTION: Exempt Review Approval  
PERIOD OF APPROVAL: 11/27/2017 to 11/26/2018  
**Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D.**  
**Institutional Review Board**

#### NOTICE OF INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD ACTION

The project below has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services regulations (45 CFR Part 46), and University Policy to ensure:

- The risks to subjects are minimized and reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered involving risks to subjects must be reported immediately. Problems should be reported to ORI via the Incident template on Cayuse IRB.
- The period of approval is twelve months. An application for renewal must be submitted for projects exceeding twelve months.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: IRB-19-326

PROJECT TITLE: A Study of Select World-Federated International Piano Competitions with a Focus on Influential Factors in Performer Repertoire Choices

SCHOOL/PROGRAM: School of Music

RESEARCHER(S): Yuan-Hung Lin, Elizabeth Moak

IRB COMMITTEE ACTION: Approved

CATEGORY: Expedited

6. Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes.
7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

PERIOD OF APPROVAL: July 12, 2019 to July 11, 2020



Donald Sacco, Ph.D.

Institutional Review Board Chairperson

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