

THE WORLD OF PIANO COMPETITIONS



THE WORLD FEDERATION
OF INTERNATIONAL
MUSIC COMPETITIONS

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2024

Phillip
Lynov

*Musical
Voyager*

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PERPETUAL 1908


ROLEX



W E L C O M E

Dear readers,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

JAN JIRACEK VON ARNIM

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



THE WORLD OF PIANO COMPETITIONS

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is published twice a year by PIANIST, as a part of the regular edition, and also worldwide as a separate magazine.

PIANIST (regular edition) is published four times a year in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Luxemburg, Liechtenstein, the Netherlands and Belgium.

www.pianist-magazin.de
www.pianistmagazine.nl

Online access

www.pianostreet.com
www.pianist-magazin.de/archiv

Publisher

Forte Media / PIANIST
Heistraat 16 a
5691 CA Son en Breugel
The Netherlands

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Monday – Friday 10.00 – 13.00 h

Subscription Enquiries

Subscriptions are available for this separate edition
(€ 14 a year) or as a part of PIANIST Magazine,
German or Dutch edition
please check: www.pianist-magazin.de
E-mail: admin@fortemedia.nl
Phone: +31 (0)49 97 91 062
Monday – Friday 10.00 – 13.00 h

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Stay updated!

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THE WORLD FEDERATION
OF INTERNATIONAL
MUSIC COMPETITIONS

WORLD FEDERATION OF INTERNATIONAL MUSIC COMPETITIONS

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

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

www.wfimc.org



European Union of Music
Competitions for Youth

EUROPEAN UNION OF MUSIC COMPETITIONS FOR YOUTH

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

www.emcy.org



ALINK-ARGERICH FOUNDATION

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

www.alink-argерich.org



PIANO STREET

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

www.pianostreet.com

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Claire Huangci March 2022

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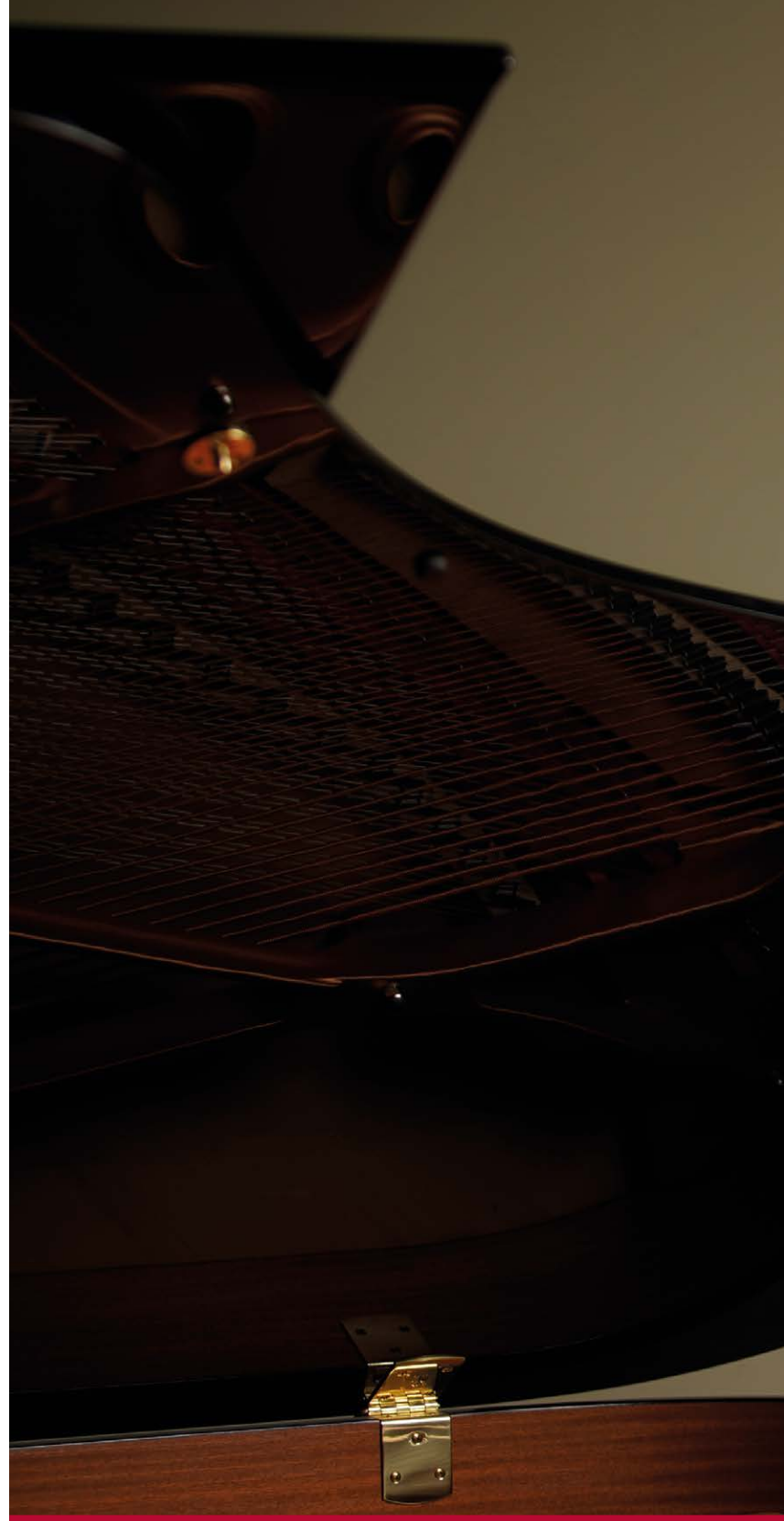
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Phillip Lynov

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

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

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



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

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

A portrait of a young man with dark hair and a light beard, wearing a dark pinstriped jacket over a white shirt. He is standing next to a grand piano, with the keyboard and part of the frame visible on the left. The background is a neutral, light-colored wall.

Musical Voyager

EMIL MATVEYEV

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What is your personal repertoire focus or preferences?

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

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

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

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





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

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

In 2022, you made your debut in the Berlin Philharmonic with Rachmaninov's second piano concerto in the main auditorium and in the finals at Takamatsu you played the third concerto. When playing Rachmaninov, how much do we rely on fact or tradition? His recordings demonstrate a relaxed approach, unsentimental, straightforward and light approach contrasting with modern performances' dramatic and grandiose flair.

When discussing Rachmaninov's music, it's essential to consider the composer's personality and life, as these factors greatly influenced his style. While his music is often described as accessible and open to listeners and performers, Rachmaninov himself was a reserved person. This reserved nature was reflected in his performance style, characterized by strictness and severity. By contrast, his music as a composer was marked by its openness and sincerity. His 3rd Piano Concerto unquestionably ranks among the greatest piano concertos. It stands out as one of the few works where he fully expressed himself, unveiling his controversial inner world. Beyond its reputation as a tour de force of pianistic bravura, the concerto resonates with profound emotional depth, a wealth of melodies, and technical brilliance. However, I believe that despite Rachmaninov's acclaim as a pianist and the great support of loved ones, he always experienced

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

Rachmaninov often seems to prefer faster tempi.

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

What about classical music in the future?

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

PATRICK JOVELL