

Issue 4 | March 2021

WFIMC now

CONDUCTING

A CONDUCTING COMPETITION

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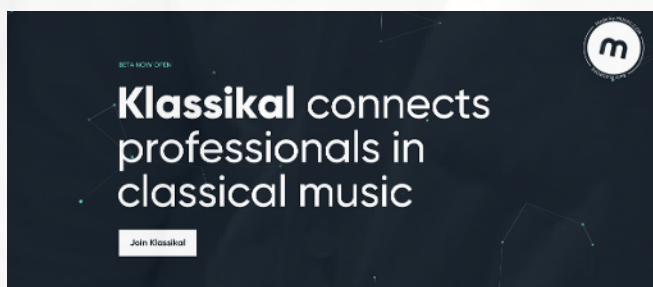
3 CONDUCTING A CONDUCTING COMPETITION

Rob Hilberink takes a closer look at the current state of international conducting competitions around the world



7 GOING KLASSIKAL

After perfecting its highly successful vacancy and audition platform, the muvac team takes on a new challenge



8 BACK TO THE FUTURE:

With *Monteverdi Circle*, violinist Pavel Berman creates a new online platform for Musicians, with a strong focus on education



9 COVID AGENDA

An updated competition calendar for the coming months

11 MARCH LOUNGES

An impressive lineup of artists and professionals in our online meetings



12 NOTICEBOARD

Rob Hilberink

CONDUCTING

A CONDUCTING COMPETITION

Conducting is an odd discipline, especially for young professionals who spent most of their time waiting in the wings, before they have an opportunity to rehearse on their instrument... the orchestra. Even though the conductor is probably the most universal recognizable musical profession, it is also definitely the most elusive one. Even more so, it is the profession which doesn't have a clearly defined education process nor career path. According to Isaac Stern this might be because "a conductor has an inner basis that is never learned." Or as Herbert von Karajan put it: "the only thing that really counts is the (conductors, red.) quality as a human being."

Without other people I am voiceless!

Leonard Bernstein

But then again, the profession of a conductor encompasses so many things. Not only are they required to have 'people skills' and an impeccable communication technique, they must also have a vast knowledge of four centuries of repertoire, have an understanding of the performance technique of dozens of instruments, have a perfect hearing and understand acoustics. And that is just the basics. Michael Tilson-Thomas correctly called it a 'hybrid' profession, as the conductor now-a-days is also expected to be a coach, an editor, an artistic director, a



Leonard Bernstein and Seiji Ozawa, 1980

spokesman, a fundraiser and a marketing icon. As many of these qualities can only be learned by experience over time, it can be very difficult for a young conductor to live up to the many expectations. Luckily things are changing rapidly, especially in the last years the landscape of chief conductors has become remarkably younger and diverse. It seems like orchestras are also looking for new, inspirational voices.

It seems kind of contradictive that there are so few hands-on learning possibilities for a profession that relies so much on experience. As many conductors will tell you, their breakthrough has been based mainly on luck, by stepping-in last-minute. You would think that a competition would be a perfect tool, especially for this discipline. But, compared to other disciplines, there actually existed only a limited number of competitions. This often shows in the number of applications, which often reaches more than 500 candidates.



The competition was my most important learning experience Gustavo Dudamel

Luckily, we are seeing a revival of conducting competitions around the globe and the last decade we have welcomed four new conducting competitions as member.

The longest existing conducting competition is the one in Besançon, a founding member of the WFIMC. They started in 1951 and this year they will host their 57th edition. One of it's first winners famously is Seiji Ozawa, who is now part of the planning committee of the other long-existing Tokyo Conducting Competition (since 1967). Another long-serving member is the Fitelberg Competition in Katowice, who has been a member for exactly 40 years.

With these stories of success you wouldn't believe that organizing a conducting competition has proven to be equally challenging. There have been many famous conducting competitions in the past, for

instance the Karajan Competition in Berlin, famously the starting point of the careers of Mariss Jansons and Valery Gergiev. In New York many shortlived competitions have been held, including the Mitropoulos Competition (won in 1964 by Edo de Waart), the Stokowski Competition (won in 1989 by Marin Alsop) and the Maazel Competition. The same can be said for London, with the Player Competition (won in 1974 by Simon Rattle), the Rupert Competition (won in 1976 by Ivan Fischer) and the Donatella Flick Competition, which still exists today.

The main obstacle of a conducting competition is that it requires the collaboration of a full orchestra, preferably for a longer period of time. Not only has this proven to be difficult to arrange, but it also is an expensive operation. That is why most of the existing competitions are organized by, or are closely connected to an orchestra. With Besançon being the main exception, they collaborate in each edition with a different orchestra.

For instance, the Princess Astrid Competition is organized by the Trondheim Symfoniorkester, and The Mahler Competition, which joined WFIMC in 2018, by the Bamberg Symphony. As one of the very few, Bamberg has been able to host a live competition in 2020. Even with a limited audience, a smaller scale orchestra, and part of the jury following the competition online, they still managed to host a competition closely to the original format.

Also originally scheduled to take place last year was The Toscanini Competition in Parma, the only conducting competition entirely devoted to Italian Opera. It has now been rescheduled for 2021.



I was not sure if I would make it to Europe. I didn't know if they would let me into Germany, and in the end I got through the border in Frankfurt only three hours before getting on stage for the competition. After spending 2 nights at the airport, with no luggage, unable to enter the country, I finally arrived in Bamberg. It was already very late, and it was the last chance to catch up and conduct. It was extremely stressful...

Wilson Ng, 3rd Prize winner at the 2020 Gustav Mahler Competition in Bamberg, Germany

The last few years, many new conducting competitions have seen the light of day, among others in Hong Kong, Manchester and Budapest. And November 2021 will see a new project in South Korea: the KSO (Korean Symphony Orchestra) International Conducting Competition at the Seoul Arts Center.

Last summer a new competition was held in Paris called 'La Maestra'. As the name suggests, it was founded with the purpose to

advance the possibilities for young female conductors. As the project matched with the 'Zeitgeist', it quickly received worldwide attention. As it fueled the discussion whether or not you should achieve equality by creating separate platforms. According to the current statutes of the WFIMC competitions should be open to all genders.

Even though the first edition needed to be postponed from March to September 2020, it has still proven to be successful and thus achieved its goal: creating awareness for the position of female conductors. It will now become a biennial event.

Another new competition, I feel hesitant to talk about, it is the one in Rotterdam (ICCR), that coincidentally I am hosting myself. After 7 years of preparation and completing the online selection round we have decided to postpone the first edition to June 2022.



Conductors should be the ones who strive for innovation Ivan Fischer

ICCR introduces a completely new structure, where 6 young conductors, without elimination, will have the chance to work with numerous orchestras during multiple rounds.

Each round is devoted to a different genre (contemporary music, historically informed practice, opera, etc.) and is a full project with rehearsals and a concert.

I think it is safe to say that WFIMC can look forward to welcome more conducting competitions as a member in the future. Not only the new ones, but also competitions with a rich history and strong reputation like The Malko Competition for young Conductors in Copenhagen, and the International Sir Georg Solti Competition in Frankfurt.

But above all: let's hope that the four member competitions scheduled for this year will actually be able to take place, starting with the Katchaturian Intl. Conducting Competition in Yerevan, Armenia, this June.



UPCOMING WFIMC CONDUCTING COMPETITIONS

Yerevan	19th edition (2nd conducting edition) 6-12 June 2021
Besançon	57th edition 13-18 September 2021
Tokyo	19th edition 27 September– 3 October 2021
Parma	1st edition 19- 23 October 2021
Trondheim	22nd edition (3rd conducting edition) November 2022
Bamberg	7th edition June 2023
Katowice	11th edition 10-24 November 2023

WFIMC 2021 General Assembly

Hosted by the Premio Paolo Borciani International String Quartet Competition

13–16 June 2021
Reggio Emilia, Italy



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FONDAZIONE
iTEATRI
REGGIO EMILIA

GOING KLASSIKAL

After perfecting its highly successful vacancy and audition platform, the *muvac* team takes on a new challenge

We still remember the year 2010, when the website with the funny sounding name *muvac* first went online. Some people may have been sceptical back then, but its success since then speaks volumes: 293 institutions from 28 countries use the platform today- orchestras, competitions (Leeds, Paganini, and others), choirs, academies and universities. The database is huge: 45.000 musicians are registered; more than 6000 auditions have been held using the software. Available in four languages and specialized in music, *muvac* keeps improving its site with its 7-member staff.

Luis Perandones Lonzano, zealous founder and Managing Director of *muvac*, has built on the success of his company to develop a new platform exclusively for professional musicians: **klassikal.com**. After three years of preparations, a preliminary version of the site went online last October. It is hard to describe *klassikal* with one sentence: „search and discover, find and be found“ may be a short answer. It's a virtual marketplace for projects and performances, a virtual space where artists, agents and promoters can meet and exchange ideas.

Musicians can register a basic profile for free, but with this they can only get information on certain projects and apply. In order to create their own profile page, to „be discovered“ and to communicate with others, a membership fee must be paid (currently, membership is for free on the beta website). The members of *klassikal* include individual musicians, ensem-



*Luis Perandones Lonzano, the mastermind behind **klassikal***

bles, festivals, projects, promoters, foundations, and agencies. First partnerships with EVA (European Festivals Association) and REMA (Early Music Association) show the great potential of this platform, which is intended to create a new network among wellknown artists and newcomers, among agencies and venues, big and small. Already after three months of trial run, a significant group of artists and organisations has registered- from Gulbenkian Orchestra, La Cetra, or Vienna Symphony to a sizable number of venues, festivals and concert series.

For laureates of international competitions it could be a valuable tool to gain visibility and create interaction. If things go well, a free *klassikal* membership may soon be on offer for winners of WFIMC competitions.



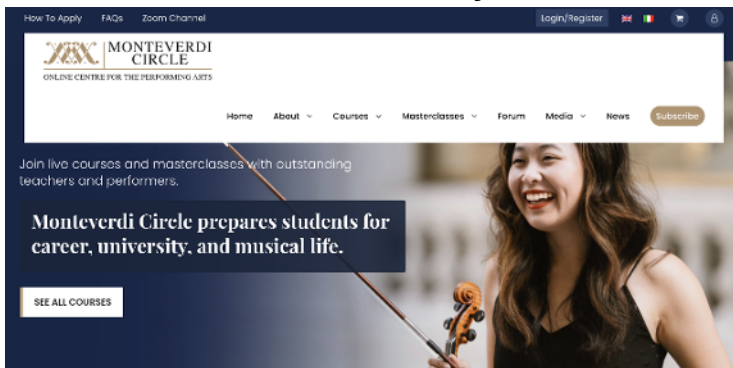
for more information, go to
www.klassikal.com

Back to the Future

MONTEVERDI CIRCLE

A new online music centre from Italy

Without Covid, the music world would never have embraced audiovisual media the way it did during the past year. The Berlin Philharmonic's Digital Concert Hall exists since 2008, but only the current crisis showed its real potential and importance. Many have followed Berlin with various measures of success. One thing always was missing, however- a digital platform for music education. Not a music school for beginners, but the opportunity to study with world-class artists, online. Sure, lockdowns and school closures forced many artists to teach on zoom and facetime. But the possibilities of a digital platform dedicated to professional-level teaching, to masterclasses and first-hand insight in the work of the world's great artists, were never fully realized. Or were there? A quick search reveals a number of websites such as iClassical, dakApp, MasterClass.com, and others. But they seem to offer mostly prerecorded content, and offer no forum or interaction with the famous teachers they advertise.



Realizing these shortcomings, Como-based violinist Pavel Berman and his partner Eva Bindere created *Monteverdi Circle*, a new website which will offer (via zoom) actual lessons and masterclasses for students while enabling subscribers to watch and learn from others. Participants have to pass a video audition and can choose between regular courses of up to one year, intensive courses of three months, or masterclasses. Making Monteverdi the namesake of his new project, the platform will focus on sharing and exchange, encourage participation, and also provide a space for young composers and their work. Among the regular faculty will be Silvia Marcovici, Boris Garlitsky, Rena Schereschewskaja, Yulia Deyneka, Sonia Prina and of course Pavel Berman. Future projects will include Salvatore Accardo, Steven Isserlis, Thomas Demenga, Ivan Monighetti, and Daniel Oren. **Monteverdircle.com** will go online at the end of March.



AGENDA

WFIMC Competitions March-May 2021

19-28 March

EPINAL FRANCE

Concours International de Piano d'Épinal
last three rounds postponed to March 2022

21-30 March

BELGRADE SERBIA

International Jeunesses Musicales
Competition (Cello)

25-26 March (Semifinal)

24 April (Final)

LYON France

Lyon Intl. Chamber Music Competition

*The 2021 competition is taking place on video.
The final will take place in Lyon pending local conditions.*

26 March- 1 April

ANDORRA

Andorra Intl. Saxophone Competition
will be held pending local conditions

1 April- 3 May

TEL AVIV ISRAEL

Arthur Rubinstein Intl. Piano Master
Competition

*The 2021 competition will be held in a new
format that combines online competition with
live performances.*

*Stages I & II (the recitals) will be recorded in
five venues around the world: Beijing, London,
Potsdam, New York, and Tel Aviv, and will air
on the competition website, on 1 – 10 April.*

*The final stage will take place in the halls in
Tel Aviv between 29 April – 3 May, with the
Israel Camerata Jerusalem, a String Quartet,
and the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra.*

8-17 April

JAEN SPAIN

International Piano Competition Prize Jaen

16 April-5 May (preliminary round)

13-18 September (Finals)

BESANÇON FRANCE

Concours Intl. de Jeunes Chefs d'Orchestre
de Besançon

*The preliminary round will take place with two
pianos, at venues in Berlin, Paris, Beijing,
Montreal and Besançon. Finals will take place
in Besançon pending local conditions.*

19-28 March (First Round)

18-21 October (Final Rounds)

VIENNA AUSTRIA

Intl. Beethoven Piano Competition
The first round is taking place online.

AGENDA

MARCH- MAY 2021 (continued)

26 April-14 May

MONTREAL CANADA

Concours Musical International de Montreal
the competition will be held online

3 May- 9 June

BRUSSELS BELGIUM

Queen Elisabeth Competition (Piano)

2021 will take place with the following modifications:

-The number of semi-finalists is limited to 12 instead of 24. Each semi-finalist will play his recital and concerto during one performance, and not on two different days.

The number of finalists is limited to 6 instead of 12.

All candidates will be reimbursed 50% of their travel costs.

-Semi-finalists who do not proceed to the finals will each receive an amount of €2,000 instead of €1,000.

6-15 May

MARKNEUKIRCHEN GERMANY

Markneukirchen International Instrumental Competition (*Violin, Double Bass*)
competition postponed to 4-13 May 2023

6-15 May

PRAGUE CZECH REPUBLIC

Prague Spring Intl. Music Competition (*Piano, String Quartet*)

13-23 May

BUCHAREST ROMANIA

George Enescu Intl. Competition (*Piano*)
first and second rounds have been held online in September 2020

22-24 May (Eliminatory Round)

19-20 September (Semi-Finals)

23 October (Finals)

PARMA ITALY

Arturo Toscanini International Conducting Competition

27 May- 5 June

ZURICH SWITZERLAND

Geza Anda International Piano Competition

WFIMC Lounges March 2021



Addressing the Challenges of an Evolving New Normal.

Our world won't be the same when this pandemic is over: many changes we thought to be temporary might be here to stay. From quarantine and rapid testing, from audience restrictions to social distancing on stage, from short term planning to date collisions, the list goes on, the problems multiply. Listen to a distinguished panel of artists, agents and managers presenting their views on our future.

Speakers: Nathalie Stutzmann, David Baile, Atholl Swainston-Harrison, Alicia Adams

Hosted by Marja-Leena Petas- Arjava

THURSDAY, 4 MARCH
11:00 NYC – 17:00 Geneva

Live Streaming Ideas and Solutions

When the Berlin Philharmonic Digital Concert Hall opened in 2008, no one knew the importance of this new format. Thanks to Covid-19, Live Streaming has become common place and is being used by competitions around the world. Still, many organisations worry about the high cost and the technical problems involved. Our panel will discuss the potential, the opportunities, and the problems we face when dealing with Live Streaming.

Speakers: Till Janczukowicz, Dominique Meyer, Marcus Barker, and others

Hosted by Peter Paul Kainrath

THURSDAY, 18 MARCH
10:00 Geneva – 18:00 Tokyo

NOTICEBOARD

Klaviertrio
Gesang
Bläserquintett
Oboe
Trompete
Klavier
Viola
Kornett
Klarinette
Flöte
Violoncello
Fagott
Harfe
Klavierduo
Horn
Sireichquartett
Kornett
Kornett
Kornett
Orgel

Internationaler
Musikwettbewerb
der ARD

The **ARD International Music Competition** in Munich has decided to hold the entire first round of its 2021 edition (Piano Duo, Voice, Horn, and Violin) **online**. All candidates accepted in the preselection will have to submit videos with their respective repertoire by June 25, 2021. From the second round on, the competition will be held as usual. If the Covid situation allows, all events will be public. For Semi-final and Final, a video live-stream is also available.

info: br.de/ard-musikwettbewerb/

Graz is back! February 2022 will see the next edition of „**Franz Schubert and Modern Music**“ in Graz, Austria. With the disciplines Piano Trio and Lied Duo, the competition once again presents the unusual combination of contemporary works with the music of Franz Schubert. Schubert loved Graz, had many dear friends in the city - and still does so today.

Besides a number of new features like an extended jury with a number of promoters and agents, and a „new formats“ contest, the competition always offers a special highlight with its commissioned work. British composer, and Master of the Queen's Music, **Judith Weir** will contribute a new piece which is kept secret until the last moment,



and which will have to be performed by the Lied duo competitors after only 36 hours of study time.

5-14 February 2022 **info:** schubert.kug.ac.at



The **Joseph Joachim Violin Competition** in Hannover has confirmed it will take place from September 26 to October 10, 2021. Despite the pandemic - related restrictions, preparations are in full swing: "We will take place - we want to send an important signal in these challenging times", says Oliver Wille, Artistic Director of the competition. "We want to motivate the young musicians to make the competition their goal and to pursue their musical careers", adds Antje Weithaas, also Artistic Director of the competition.

To facilitate applications, the competition has extended the application deadline by three weeks until April 15, 2021.

info: jjv-hannover.de