



Making the Case *for* Competitions

Among almost 70 WFIMC member music competitions scheduled for the year 2020, only 12 took place. Most of these 12 were held before the pandemic even hit, and only a handful „survived“ the worldwide lockdowns and restrictions. The year 2021 is looking somewhat better, but mostly because competitions have taken the initiative to go online - some only in part, some entirely. Among some of the more prominent is the Leeds International Piano Competition, which just finished its first round of recordings. Its Chief Executive Fiona Sinclair writes, „From the outset, we knew demand was likely to increase for our 2021 competition. Pianists had more time at home practising their repertoire and crafting their applications. But we were not prepared for the avalanche of submissions we received: an increase of 43%. Intensified through the lens of lockdown and cut off from their audiences, it was humbling to read the hopes and dreams of musicians contained in each submission“.

The Leeds is not the only competition seeing a rise in applications. Around the world, interest in competitions has increased. With live performances cancelled almost everywhere, with thousands of musicians having lost their work, being unable to make a living, many have turned to competitions as a way to salvage their future and career. Interestingly, prize money has become less important over the years - it is career management, public relations, performance contracts and recording projects that really can make a difference.

For many, going to a competition is like becoming part of a family. „Their encouragement meant so much to me“ says Yekwon Sunwoo, winner of the 2017 Cliburn Competition. „Their sincerity and warmth can make you feel like a part of the family! It does not matter where you come from, or how you do in the competition. Everyone there is so welcoming and shows sincere appreciation for you and your work.“

Obviously, an online competition cannot offer the same kind of care and devotion that a live competition would. But in the end, „being part of the family“ is key: competitions will work hard to promote their winners, to give them the public exposure and media presence they need.

While in the past, video recordings have been used only for preliminary rounds, recorded performances and livestreams have become now commonplace up until the finals. Cooperations with piano makers, recording studios and concert halls around the globe ensure a video and audio quality far above what we have been used to, and the future will certainly bring further

innovations and improvements. While some competitions have worked with holography, the Chopin Competition has already announced its next edition with live streaming in virtual reality. A year ago we started to become worried about the impact that Covid-19 would have on classical music. Cuts in government funding and increasingly restrictive health regulations threatened, and keep threatening, our competitions. But today, a year later, while many of us are still struggling, it has become clear that competitions will not only survive this crisis- they will have become more important than ever for the future of young artists.

FLORIAN RIEM

2021 WFIMC PIANO COMPETITIONS

Competition dates

CITY | COUNTRY

Competition Name

Information | Application deadline

Please check wfimc-fmcim.org

for individual competition information and websites!

All information is subject to change.

3–29 May 2021

BRUSSELS | BELGIUM

Queen Elisabeth Competition

no audience – all rounds live streamed

queenelisabethcompetition.be

6–15 May 2021

PRAGUE | CZECH REPUBLIC

Prague Spring International Music Competition

First round online; live from second round

no audience – all rounds live streamed

festival.cz/en/

10–13 May 2021

MONTREAL | CANADA

Concours Musical International de Montreal

Finals – online

concoursmontreal.ca/en

21–23 May 2021

BUCHAREST | ROMANIA

George Enescu International Competition

Semi-Finals and Finals / no audience – live streamed

festivalenescu.ro/en

27 May–5 June 2021

ZURICH | SWITZERLAND

Geza Anda International Piano Competition

geza-anda.ch

23 June–2 July 2021

VALENCIA | SPAIN

21st Iturbi International Piano Competition València

pianoiturbi.dival.es/en

2–18 July 2021

SYDNEY | AUSTRALIA

Sydney International Piano Competition
online
thesydney.com.au

3–15 July 2021

BARCELONA | SPAIN

Maria Canals International Piano Competition
mariacanals.org/en/

8 July–11 August 2021

CLEVELAND | OHIO, USA

Cleveland International Piano Competition
hybrid
pianocleveland.org

24 August–3 September 2021

BOLZANO | ITALY

Ferruccio Busoni International Piano Competition
concorsobusoni.it

2–8 September 2021

MUNICH | GERMANY

ARD International Music Competition (piano duo)
first round online
br.de/ard-musikwettbewerb

8–18 September 2021

LEEDS | UK

Leeds International Piano Competition
second round, semi-finals and finals
leedspiano.com

12–19 September 2021

BUDAPEST | HUNGARY

Franz Liszt International Piano Competition
zeneiversenyek.hu/en/

14–26 September 2021

ZHUHAI | CHINA

*Zhuhai International Mozart Competition
for Young Musicians*
en.zhmozart.org

24 September–3 October 2021

DORTMUND | GERMANY

International Schubert-Competition Dortmund
Application deadline: June 15, 2021
schubert-wettbewerb.de/en/

2–23 October 2021

WARSAW | POLAND

Fryderyk Chopin International Piano Competition
chopin2020.pl/en

6–17 October 2021

VERCELLI | ITALY

Viotti Competition
concorsoviotti.it

18–21 October 2021

VIENNA | AUSTRIA

International Beethoven Competition Vienna
first round online
https://beethoven-comp.at

26 October–7 November 2021

SHENZHEN | CHINA

China Shenzhen International Piano Competition
csipcc.com.cn

27 October–7 November 2021

WEIMAR | GERMANY

International Franz Liszt Piano Competition
Application deadline: 1 June 2021
hfm-weimar.de/liszt

12–29 November 2021

HAMAMATSU | JAPAN

Hamamatsu International Piano Competition
www.hipic.jp/en

24–27 November 2021

BRATISLAVA | SLOVAKIA

Johann Nepomuk Hummel International Piano Competition
Application deadline: 31 May 2021
first round online
filharmonia.sk/en

29 November–4 December 2021

MANCHESTER | UK

James Mottram International Piano Competition
details to be announced
rncm.ac.uk/jmipc-info/

2–11 December 2021

BONN | GERMANY

International Telekom Beethoven Competition Bonn
Application deadline: 14 May 2021