



The Minnesota International Piano -e-Competition offers a special opportunity for young pianists worldwide to participate in a competition of the highest artistic quality and integrity. Our artistic vision is to bring young artists, with the promise of lasting and important careers, to the public's attention.

Alexander Braginsky, Co-Founder and Artistic Director

Jeffrey Wirth, Co-Founder and CEO

Dr. Stella Sick, Managing Director, Newsletter Editor

From the Artistic Director

Greetings,

A lot has happened since our last letter came out. On November 18, I went to NYC to attend the debut recital of our last winner Jie Chen, presented at the Alice Tully Hall. It was a big success! There were about 600 people in attendance, and Jie played superbly, bringing them to their feet at the end; not an easy task in NYC. There were a couple of concert agents among these present, and we were held up waiting for quite some time backstage, as one of them engaged Jie in a long talk. We shall see...

A long and exhausting process of selecting the participants for February's Virtual Auditions has come to an end. We received 132 applications — an increase of more than 60% over the last competition. The level was so high

that I found myself having to increase the number of the admitted to 68, instead of the expected 60. When you want to break the rules, it helps being the Artistic Director!

And speaking of the rules: some things are going to change. As you can see, we have added "Minnesota" to the e-Competition's name. I felt that we need to make sure everybody knows we have an actual home "on the ground". Too many were getting the impression that e-Competition is happening somewhere in the Internet space; and music is being performed on electronic instruments. We are preparing a major overhaul of our website to explain clearly and concisely the way it really works. In the meantime, our popularity is rapidly growing: my student Jason Wirth, who is studying in NYC now, tells me that whenever he men-

tions where he is from, every musician asks if he have heard about the e-Competition. He says, "Yes, a couple of times..."

On a personal note: I went back to Moscow, for the first time in over 33 years. It was an exciting trip, and it was great to be back where I was born. But, I'm staying put. Happily, I might add. After all, I have lived most of my life in Minneapolis.

Now off to China, Japan and Los Angeles, to attend the Disklavier recordings in January. Stella Sick is going to coordinate the ones in New York and Paris. Don't you feel sorry for her? We'll let you know what transpires, but in the meantime, have a Happy Holiday season and may the New Year bring you the best!

Alexander Braginsky



Alexander Braginsky, Jie Chen and Stan Zielinski, Director of the Yamaha Artist Services International after Jie's New York Debut Concert in Alice Tully Hall, November 18, 2005

Inside this issue:

Meet the Applicants	2
Meet the Screening Jury	2-3
Disklavier/Video Recordings	3
Upcoming Local Events	4

Meet the Applicants

132 applicants

27 countries

5 audition sites

1 winner

The initial application screening has come to a close, and it is very exciting to see so many young musicians interested in the competition. A thin trickle of envelopes that started back in October turned into an avalanche, with one day bringing more than forty applications to my desk! I guess, be careful what you wish for. . . Now that the selection process is over, let's take a closer look at our pool of applicants. The Competition drew 132 young pianists, who represent twenty-seven countries: Australia, Belarus, Canada, China, Ecuador, France, Georgia, Hungary, Indonesia, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Mexico, Morocco, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Romania, Russia, Serbia, South Korea, Taiwan, Ukraine, United Kingdom and the United States. The most represented



*Viktoria Korchinskaya-Kogan,
Second Prize Winner '02*

country was the United States with 23 applicants, with China and South Korea as close seconds (with 19 and 17 applicants respectively). The competitors came with a wide range of backgrounds: from seasoned competitors and active recitalists to the young but ambitious grade school pupils (such as our youngest applicants, the 15 year-old twins from Indonesia).

Choosing pianists who would advance to the next round was a daunting task, and not just because of the quantity, but primarily due to a truly high quality of applicants. The sixty-eight who were chosen to continue is a very impressive group, that includes a number of former competitors, and even prizewinners, from the 2002 and 2004 Competitions. Vital Stahievich, Esther Park, Joshua Izzard

and Viktoria Korchinskaya-Kogan and Edisher Savitsky from the inaugural competition as well as Inna Faliks, Konstantin Krasnitsky, Boris Feiner, Marouan Benabdallah, and the fifth prize winner Hanna Shybayeva are vying for the top prize.

The sixty-eight Disklavier round participants represent twenty-two countries. In this next stage they will be competing for the chance to come to Minnesota and perform in person. The contestants have a choice of five different locations to do these preliminary auditions (Disklavier/Video Recordings). And the task of selecting the next 24 contestants who will compete in Minnesota will be up to Screening Jury. The Twin Cities audience will have a unique opportunity to hear these performances in February, 2006 (*see Disklavier/Video Recording Sessions, p. 3*).



Claire Huangci, 16, the youngest participant of the Disklavier auditions.

Meet the Screening Jury

This year the Minnesota International Piano-e-Competition is happy to present the following distinguished musicians as our Screening Judges:

Alexander Braginsky, the Artistic Director of the Minnesota International Piano-e-Competition, will reprise his role as the non-voting Chair of the committee. Mr. Braginsky was born and educated in Moscow. His repertoire extends from Baroque to

avant-garde. He has performed more than 20 world premieres, most of which were works commissioned and written for him. He concertized extensively in the former USSR, Israel, England, Belgium, Italy, Germany, Taiwan, People's Republic of China, Spain, France and the United States. Braginsky has recorded for a variety of record labels, and has performed for radio stations worldwide. Braginsky serves as a professor on

the faculty of the International Music Summer Course in Vienna, Austria, and has given numerous master classes. Currently, Braginsky teaches at the University of Minnesota School of Music, where he is Professor of Piano.

Accomplished performer and academic **Rees Allison** is Professor of Piano and Chair of the Music Department at Hamline University. Dr. Alli-

son, who has performed as a soloist with the Minnesota and St. Louis Symphony Orchestras, is currently working with the chamber groups The Musical Offering and The Hill House Chamber Players.

Edmund Battersby, American born and trained, is a pianist of international reputation. He has performed with many of the country's top orchestras and has played recitals in major capitols around the world. He has recorded for Musical Heritage Society, Koch International, Marco Polo and Naxos. A versatile chamber musician, he has played with groups such as the Tokyo Quartet, Orion Quartet and at festivals including Library of Congress, Santa Fe, La Jolla, Mostly Mozart (NY) and the Seattle Chamber Music Festival. He is a member of the distinguished piano faculty of Indiana University, Bloomington.

Alvin Chow has appeared throughout North America and in Asia as orchestral soloist and recitalist. In addition, he has performed extensively in duo-piano recitals with his wife, Angela Cheng, and his twin brother, Alan. Mr. Chow has performed in major concert halls of the United States, Europe and Asia. He has been heard in national broadcasts on National Public Radio's "Performance Today" and on CBC Radio in Canada. Formerly a professor at Southwest Missouri State University and the University of Colorado at Boulder, he is currently on the artist faculty of the Oberlin Conservatory of Music.

International ambassador for piano music, **Paul Pollei**, native of Salt Lake City, is a Founder-Director of the Gina Bachauer International Piano Foundation which sponsors festivals and international competitions. Dr. Pollei is a devoted teacher to many prizewin-

ning students and is a frequent lecturer for teacher workshops and master classes in America and throughout the world. Dr. Pollei is very active in the work of the National Conference on Piano Pedagogy, the Music Teachers National Association, and the World Federation of International Music Competitions.

The name of **Sontraud Speidel** is familiar to many as a member of the International Jury for the 2002 and 2004 competitions. Sontraud Speidel, won the J.S. Bach International Piano Competition in Washington D.C. at the age of 18. She is a prolific performer and recording artist. Speidel, has given recitals in both solo and chamber music, and has performed with orchestras throughout Europe, North and South America, Israel and Asia. She currently serves as Professor of Piano at the State Music University of Karlsruhe, Germany.

Shanghai
Hamamatsu
New York City
Los Angeles
Paris

The Disklavier/Video Recording Sessions

On December 7, 2005 the Minnesota International Piano-e-Competition announced the 68 contestants who are invited to participate in the Disklavier Audition Round. These Disklavier/Video Recording Sessions will take place over the months of January and February 2006. The dates and locations are as follows:

Shanghai, China — January 9-10
Hamamatsu, Japan — January 13
Los Angeles, CA — January 19-20
New York City, NY — January 26-28
Paris, France — February 1-3

During this round, the young pianists will each perform a 20-25 minute



Photo by Travis Anderson

*Virtual Auditions 2004
Sundin Hall, Hamline University*

program on an acoustic Yamaha concert grand piano that is equipped with the Disklavier, fiber-optic recording system. The Disklavier is capable of capturing every key and

pedal stroke as high resolution MIDI data and accurately reproducing the performance. During these auditions, the Disklavier's performance-capture feature will be synchronized with a simultaneous video recording.

During the Virtual Auditions, that will take place **February 10-12, 2006** at Sundin Hall, Hamline University, the Screening Jury will watch these players projected on a large screen while a nine-foot Disklavier piano reproduces their performances.

The Screening Jury will choose twenty-four contestants to come to Minnesota and compete in person in July of 2006.



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Upcoming Local Events

Virtual Auditions

The Minnesota International Piano-e-Competition would like to invite you to **The Virtual Auditions at Sundin Hall, Hamline University, St. Paul on February 10-12, 2006.**

This event is free and open to the public.

It is the first opportunity to hear amazing young musicians and pick your favorites. You will also witness the fascinating use of the Disklavier Technology. (see **Disklavier/Video Recording Sessions**, p. 3)

The Virtual Auditions will last all day each of the three days, and you are welcome to hear all or any portion of it. A detailed

schedule of events will be available on our website after February 5, 2006. We hope to see you there!

Jie Chen performs Benefit Concert

Please mark your calendars: **Jie Chen**, the winner of the Second International Piano-e-Competition is coming to Minnesota to give a benefit concert at **Sundin Hall, Hamline University, St. Paul on Friday, April 7, 2006 at 8:00 pm.** For more information and ticket reservations please contact Stella Sick at (763) 416-3256 or piano@ecompetition.org

