

***The 22nd International Chopin Piano Competition in ASIA – Final Round***  
***Elementary School 1st & 2nd Grade Category***

Among the enormous numbers of young pianists enrolled in this year's Chopin Competition in Asia, we heard many excellent performances. I am aware that these young people have invested a lot of work, time, and talent in preparing their often difficult programs. The force which allowed them to devote themselves to this difficult art, as I deeply believe, is love for music. I hope that this wonderful feeling will accompany them constantly on their way to achieving the highest possible goals in this art. I sincerely wish them this.

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At a very young age, creating the right, easy and comfortable pattern of movements and position at the piano is quite important. Also, sensitivity to sound quality should be built up from the very beginning.

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Dear Participants of the Final Round of the 22nd International Chopin Piano Competition in ASIA,

I would like to congratulate you on performing in the final round of the competition!

I must emphasize that I am really happy that thanks to the great effort of the whole IMC Staff, despite the very difficult pandemic situation, affecting nearly every country in the world, we could meet in some way again this year.

It was a great honour and pleasure for me to listen to your fantastic, impeccably prepared performances! My sincere congratulations on your wonderful talents and hard work, as well as on extraordinary contribution of all the teachers, whose task – especially this year – is hard to overestimate.

My message would not be complete without some thoughts concerning piano playing I would like to share with you.

First of all, when we think about participating in any competition, we should remember that it should never be the aim itself, but only the way; a possibility to meet different people and learn their opinion and view, to share our way of thinking and interpreting, sometimes to motivate ourselves or verify our skills. The real aim is always the music, the art and our development, enrichment of our feelings, emotions, experiences, making our understanding deeper and deeper.

I think that also a good, adequate, and wise choice of repertoire is essential – not always preparing the most demanding pieces is the best idea.

When taking piano playing in general and especially performing Chopin pieces into consideration, it would be good to take great care of (among others):

- very natural communication, making music speak; mostly linear way of thinking and natural musical 'breathing';

- creating long phrases, shaping every motive and phrase, but also thinking about the whole construction;
- beautiful, singing (with the image of good legato and bel canto idea), very colourful, rich and noble sound;
- awareness of musical structures, including formal aspects, harmony, gestures, etc.;
- awareness of the history of the pieces, musical stories 'hidden' in the pieces, but also our personal ideas we want to share with the audience;
- awareness of characters as well as of roots of the particular genres (which can be especially important e.g. in dances, with their folk, court, or national music basis);
- good balance (between voices, between many layers in the whole structure, between notes in a chord etc.);
- good, supporting, and varied use of pedals (always with awareness of particular instrument, acoustics and the real musical aim of using them in a particular moment);
- avoiding any unnecessary tension in body (including especially back, shoulders, arms, and forearms);
- listening to what is really happening, finding some distance and really good balance between 'input' (meaning what we want to do and what we are doing) and 'output' (what really comes out);
- ...in the end – feeling some pleasure because of the little act of creation we are always experiencing while performing a musical masterpiece!

Wishing you all the best in your future lives and careers.