

The 23rd International Chopin Piano Competition in ASIA
Message from Polish Jury Members
Elementary School Grade 5&6 Category

●Jury member A

After hearing 80 candidates of this group, I would like to congratulate students and their teachers for very good preparation of competition programmes, consisting of selections of Polish Music. Allow me to draw particular attention to the following elements for possible correction:

- 1) In Szymanowska's and Chopin's polonaises, the first beat of the bar should be more prominent and the withholding of the 5th and 6th quavers should be applied. I would also recommend to emphasise the contrast in character between sections A and B, while maintaining unity of tempo;
- 2) Chopin's Impromptus should not be approached as technical exercises; the figurative line should be treated melodically, particularly in the oft-performed Fantaisie-Impromptu;
- 3) I suggest to pay more attention to the development of the student's personality and their timbral and emotional imagination, thus allowing them to derive more joy and enthusiasm from musical performance.

●Jury member B

Most of you enjoy playing piano - keep it in mind.

After working hard with help of your teachers express music simply from your heart.

Pay attention to your posture playing piano - the quality of sound depends also on it.

Excessive body and arm movements are unnatural and prevent you from concentrating on the music.

Read and respect carefully all markings in the score.

Feel and create more contrasts of expression using different touch of the key, varying the sound, articulation and dynamics.

Think of using pedal as an important means of expression.

Good luck for your musical future!

●Jury member C

Dear Participants, I would like to congratulate you for all your performances in the Competition and for qualifying to the Final. I listened to your recordings with great pleasure and I fully appreciate the enormous amount of work you put into preparing for the Contest.

Almost all of the finalists presented very high piano skills and technical preparation. However, I would like to draw your attention to a few aspects which, in my opinion, could or should be taken into consideration in the further development of your artistic work.

My first reflection after listening to all the presentations is the necessity of being more engaged with the content and emotional depth of the piece. Having a great piano technique at your disposal, you have all the possibilities to delve deeper into the piece and show more interpretive details, show how you understand the piece and what you want to express through the music. This

will require a certain dose of creativity and artistic imagination.

Another important element I would point out is the care given to sound quality. When we build an expressive climax, especially in forte dynamics, we have a need to support it with a full sound - this is natural and proper. However, it can never be a hard and harsh sound, but a deep and noble one - especially when we talk about the Chopin's music. Being sensitive to sound is not only a search for its beauty, but also a care for its variety and a desire to bring out different colors of sound from the instrument, and consequently the use of different types of articulation. We can safely say that Chopin's favourite type of articulation was legato cantabile. The other, very frequently used articulation was leggiero - both kinds of creating the sound were missing in many of the Chopin's forms presented during the Competition - particularly the singing nocturnes, lyrical ballades, or dances. The use of varied articulation and a wide range of colors of the sound is essential for showing the different layers of sound, emphasizing the leading voices in the piece, and achieving the right balance between them. It is never the case that all notes are equally important - some of them are our artistic goal, others only lead us to that goal.

Another element of performance that in many cases needs to be constantly improved is the natural use of agogic in the piece. The sense of musical time is very important in building expression, climaxes, in giving the piece a natural narration. Much is contained, in such a beautiful, yet difficult to grasp, Chopin's term "tempo rubato". Naturally, this does not mean evenly; sometimes the manifestation of naturalness will be a greater breath, a calming, and sometimes a kind of impatient "stretto". All this, however, while maintaining the continuity of the narration and the long phrase.

One more aspect I would like to touch upon in relation to the competition presentations is the correct reading of the text. I have two issues in mind, firstly a too literal reading of dynamic, agogic or articulation marks. When you see a staccato dot or an accent, remember that a lot depends on the context and the character of the piece. We will play the accent differently in piano dynamics, and differently in forte. We play a different kind of staccato in a lyrical Waltz, and a different one in a lively Oberek. The second, more literal meaning of correct reading of the text is playing correct notes and rhythmic structures. It was quite common to hear misread notes that significantly altered the harmony and therefore the musical sense of a piece. Today we have access to many editions, recordings and we can easily verify this kind of elementary errors, which show, as it were, a very superficial approach to the piece.

I realize that performing in front of a camera and microphone without the presence of an audience and concert atmosphere does not come easily. Nevertheless, I wish you, Dear Pianists, to find joy and inspiration for creating music "live", to find a certain spontaneity in yourself and discover your musical personality.