

# The 24th International Chopin Piano Competition in ASIA

## Feedback from the Jury

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Round of Professional Category

#### ●Jury A

- I strongly felt that the contestants were very eager to participate.
- It seems that they can work more on how to prepare for public performances and how to set their mindset for the stage. I am looking forward to see how they develop those skills in the future.
- I think it would be good if they could feel the acoustics of the hall while performing. I hope these participants will take part in this competition again.

#### ●Jury B

Above all, let us not forget that simplicity was the goal of Chopin's teaching and playing. Don't abuse tempo rubato, please. It is especially important in the Sonata form (the sonata form is deeply rooted in classicism). Analyze the structure of the piece: themes, harmonies (major and minor keys, diminished accords, modulations, and the relations between them), climaxes, cadences. You have to decide which phrases are more important and which are less. If you like to say everything in every phrase you will miss the point of the construction. Don't overuse the pedal (the harmony must be clear as in Mozart's music). In a hall as large as Yuri Hall, you need to use much less pedal than you normally would in a classroom. The upper voice should be more pronounced. Don't forget about the articulation of the left hand. Very often you can find interesting contrasting lines there. The rests are a very important part of the music. Try to listen to them more carefully in a large concert hall (reverberation makes it hard to hear pauses). Consider the balance between all lines carefully. The contrast is a very important interpretation's tool (including dynamic, articulation, color, balance). Use this tool correctly and depending on the nature of the piece. "Flat" playing is like speaking without intonation. The full, rich and noble sound (in piano and forte dynamic) is a very important element of Chopin's aesthetics, and the vocal phrasing is also very characteristic of his narrative.

#### ●Jury C

Thank you for your performances in the prestigious final round. The sonatas by Chopin are very demanding. I would like to advise you to read these masterworks more classical, more structural, seeing more universal music symbols, not only pianistic tasks or sound beauty. The motifs, the harmony are meaningful, and the polyphony, especially in opus 58 should be always clear.

#### ●Jury D

Today's interpretations are of different technical and artistic level. In general, pianists don't pay enough attention to the sonata form of the "First Movements" and the dynamic contrasts between the main parts are too poor. As a result, the structure tends to fall apart and we lose ourselves in too many notes and details. Another thing – the majorities of performances are too fast, sound mechanical (especially the 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> movements) and suffer from a lack of expression in the main melodic lines. I strongly encourage all these young performers to deepen their knowledge and understanding of the romantic style and focus more on the musical aspect of their repertoire.

### ●Jury E

This year, the restrictions from Covid-19 were finally relaxed and we were happy to welcome jury members from Europe in the original setting of the competition. I also enjoyed listening to unique performances presented by international participants. I must say both sonatas by Chopin are especially complicated compositions among all of his works, and they demand thorough and detailed reading of the score from the performers. Also, performers are required to listen to the acoustics of the hall carefully and control it, so I encourage all of the participants to be more sensitive to the sound they create. Anyhow, I hope that all the participants will be able to demonstrate their full potential in the upcoming concerto round in two days.

### ●Jury F

- You all practice well and your fingers move well, but the quality is poor. I would like you to put more weight on the keyboard and play with rich sound even on a full concert grand piano. Playing on the keyboard doesn't mean simply touching the surface of the keys nor hitting them, but playing with the soul of the sound. It is pointless to just play fast like a race.

- Please pay more attention to the balance, not only the one between left and right hands, but also to that of chords. The top line is important, but other voices are also important. Use a different touch for each voice to create a good balance as a whole. Train your "slow muscles" for better finger control.

- Do not always play p, f, >, <, etc. in the same way. It must be helpful to understand which section you are in and what kind of music is needed. This way, your expression will change. The most important thing is how to plan and structure the music.

- Chopin had a unique approach to L.H., especially the bass and its progression and harmony. Do not make music only with the melody on R.H. You must feel the rich harmony and connect it to the expression.

### ●Jury G

Needless to say, Chopin sonatas, the largest works in Chopin's oeuvre, are masterpieces, which demand utmost technical and musical challenges from the pianist. It is also noted that character between Sonata No. 2 and Sonata No. 3 is quite different.

In Sonata No. 2, most of the participants prepared the first movement well, but it was a pity that the scherzo was played rather carelessly musically and tonally, and the dialogue in the trio was not fully enjoyed. In the enigmatic finale, legato is of course the basic technique, but it seems like the pianists were too busy to move their fingers and didn't carefully think about how deep the pedal should be pressed, depending on the acoustics of the hall. As a result, the unison sounded rather unclear.

In Sonata No. 3, the first movement was played either too rough or too light, which lacked quality as a grand opening for the entire sonata. In the development, more attention could have been paid to the counterpoint. Regrettably, the second movement was least prepared both technically and musically. The third movement needed a delicate and rich expression that could remind us of the peaceful days that Chopin spent in Nohant, but it was a little too rough. There were some issues in the finale, but in general, it was played with enthusiasm and youthfulness, which I enjoyed listening to very much.

### ●Jury H

There were many who had good musical flow and ideas, but unfortunately did not have good balance, or did not listen to their own sound well. Also, some of them sounded as if they copied what they had heard on YouTube without proper technique of how to produce the sound. As a result, although the melody was played beautifully, crescendo was carried out rather rapidly or L.H. was not accurately played...etc. I think it is a good idea to spend more time learning the basics of how to produce beautiful sounds.