

The 25th International Chopin Piano Competition in ASIA

Feedback from the Jury

Final Round of Concerto B

●Jury A

-- (e minor) With the regard to the tempo of the first and second themes, care should be taken not to give the impression that the tempo of the second theme drops off endlessly. In the quartet version, the pianist's discretion is particularly required.

-- (e minor) In some performances, the final note was not placed well in the exposition, development, and recapitulation sections. This is caused not due to omission (cut) of the accompaniment part, but because the pulse was not felt properly and also because the final note was not reached.

-- There were many performances with initiative, and even in the lyrical sections the direction was clearly maintained and always interesting to listen to, but I would have liked to have heard for moments of pianissimo beauty.

●Jury B

Unlike the two pianos at the 2nd round, the final was ensemble with a string quartet that had only one rehearsal, but all eight participants brought out their individual talents making the final round a very rewarding competition. There may have been little happenings along the way, but I was impressed by the way you concentrated on your performance until the very end.

●Jury C

--I would like you to seek out attractive sounds.

--The pianist is the leading role, so I want the energy and the personality to lead the string quartet.

--As an ensemble, it is important to ensure that the breathing/waves are conveyed to the members of the string quartet, unlike when playing solo pieces.

●Jury D

When you play a concerto, you have to create a climax that can be heard more than when you play a solo. It would be important to listen to each other with quartet and make music together rather than settling things within yourself.

●Jury E

When performing Chopin's works, first find out in which period they were written. The period can be divided into three main periods, and one has different styles and characteristics of Chopin's music from the other. The early period includes works from the Warsaw period, many of which require brilliant light tone, known as brillante style. The middle period is the period after he left Warsaw, when Chopin's distinctive style was developed. The mature period of his later years is not only a period of summation of his creative activity, but also the appearance of harmonies that foreshadow the music of the future impressionism.

Once you are aware of these, think about what it really takes to perform the piece, what is the truth written on the score, Chopin's intention and the meaning of the music, and patiently explore how you can realise this by playing the piece.

I have referred to various points in my comments in the past competitions. I felt the same way about this competition. When pedalling, look carefully at the score and understand Chopin's original instructions. Your body should be relaxed, never stiff at the shoulders, elbows or wrists, and your fingertips should fit firmly on the keyboard. Always listen carefully to the balance between the right and left hands, play the melody with rich resonant sound, and play the accompaniment modestly and gently. Look carefully at the articulations (slurs, staccato, tenuto, long accents, etc.) and expressive notes (sostenuto, sotto voce, etc.) and consider which expressions and techniques are appropriate. In terms of tempo, do not suddenly slow down or suddenly play fast without specific instructions. Dynamic markings should not just be strong or soft, but should be created with an image appropriate to the place. Be imaginative with contrasts of light and shade and duality, etc., so that a variety of expressions can be realised.

Finally to the teachers: It is very valuable for students to enjoy music in these difficult times, and I thank you for helping them to do so. Education is about identifying what skills each student has, and what they lack, and what they need. The environment around our students is changing dramatically, so we must try to teach them in a way that is appropriate to the times. And in order to develop the talents of each student, whose inner (mental) life is different from the others, it is essential to be flexible, to have a broad perspective and to improve the skills of the teachers themselves on a daily basis.

●Jury F

As for my comments and suggestions to the pianists - those I had the opportunity to listen to during this year's Competition, I must admit that they do not differ from the comments I made earlier, in the previous many years of my contact with the Competition.

The pianist, or rather I prefer to say - a real artist, does not play the piano, but tells his story not with his fingers, but with his artistic imagination. Single notes are words, a phrase is a sentence, a piece is a whole story. Only with this understanding and transmission of music can we reach the soul of the listener and convey all the emotions and expressions of music.

Of course, I could write - as I have done many times before, about the importance of Chopin's "legato cantabile" - legato done with the fingers and not with the pedal, about the sense of harmonic structure, about articulation, precise pedalisaton, about naturalness of playing which Chopin paid so much attention to, about playing without any artificial "gadgets" often only aiming at arousing the applause of the audience, about a sense of time in the music and flexible narration not subjected to excessive pressure of the metronome, which often disturbs the artistic imagination in favour of correct but mechanical playing.

Please remember, the important purpose of participation in competitions are not the awards! Competitions help us to consciously increase our repertoire, they give us specific and deadline tasks, they have a positive influence on our ambition and concentration at work. Competitions are the important and positive element in the development of every musician.

To conclude my comments, let me convey from the bottom of my heart, my best wishes to all participants of the Competition, also to their teachers and parents. I wish you all much of joy from the artistic achievements of their children and students.