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[ARTS&CULTURE] Emerging female film composer - Ching-Shan Chang

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Ching-Shan Chang won the First Prize, the Best Variation and the Best Tonal Music in the 7th International Antonín Dvořák Composition Competition

[Reporter: Yuan-Ting Yang/Taipei] "Winning the first prize in the 7th International Antonín Dvořák Composition Competition definitely is an immense compliment to my improvising skills!" Ching-Shan Chang, a 21-year-old composition major student at Eastman School of Music in the U.S.A., entered the 7th International Antonín Dvořák Composition Competition organized by Korean conductor Young-Chul Choi, and descendants of the renowned composer Antonín Dvořák. She successfully secured first place and two special prizes including the Best Variation and the Best Tonal Music prizes.

As the final round of the 7th International Antonín Dvořák Composition Competition began on July 24th, finalists were challenged with composing 2 individual pieces with designated themes provided by the committee - one of them is to require a certain style while the other remains a freestyle composition. The competition demands that each competitor showcase their abilities and musical strengths within 5 days.

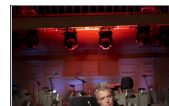
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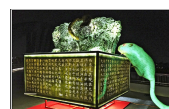
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“I started composing as soon as I saw the themes.” Unlike other competitors who spent the majority of their time conceiving ideas, Ching-Shan confidently shared that inspirations readily came to her. She finished the first piece on the third day and the other within another two days. Ching-Shan revealed one of the judges and founding members, Young-Chul Choi, was shocked with her fast progress and spoke highly of her capabilities and talent. As expected, Ching-Shan brought home the first prize, 2 special prizes and a cash prize, according to the announcement in the awards ceremony.

Ching-Shan’s music talent since a young age has not been limited to composition and she is equally passionate about piano performance--as soon as her schedule allows, she will fly from the US back to Taiwan to hold piano recitals. “Composition is a profession behind the curtains. The glory in a competition like this is often not recognized by or celebrated with the general public like those famous instrumental competitions, and that is why I aim to pursue both (composition and piano performance).” Ching-Shan firmly believes that holding piano recitals regularly is not only a means to keep the audience up-to-date with her musical growth, but also inspires her career as a composer in the long run.

“As of now, 99% of the famous film composers are male. I hope to someday cut through the fierce competition as an established female film composer,” Ching-Shan explained. Additionally, she feels that by combining her classical music background with her film scoring skills, she can bring a wider audience to resonate with her music. “To me, a lot of contemporary music sprints to the front of music trend, leaving its audience behind.” Ching-Shan looks forward to bringing back the audience by finding the magic balance between sophistication and accessibility with her unique background and vision.

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