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[EXCLUSIVE] Ching-Shan Chang wins the First Prize in the 7th International Antonín Dvořák Composition Competition

2016/8/5 下午 01:50:41 Reporters: Wen-Nan Shi, Chien-Hua Chen

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Ching-Shan Chang with her certificates.

Ching-Shan Chang from Taiwan not only won the first prize in the 7th International Antonín Dvořák Composition Competition but also two special prizes including The Best Variation and The Best Tonal Music a few days ago in the Czech Republic. Today, the Campus Team conducted an exclusive interview with her to learn about the competition. Ching-Shan explained that positive critiques from the judges truly are motivating affirmation and encouragement on her talents in music composing and improvising.

As the most prestigious composition competition held in the Czech Republic, the focus of the International Antonín Dvořák Composition Competition is to discover young emerging talents. Finalists are tasked with the challenge of completing two cohesive pieces based on themes provided by the committee within 5 days--one in a certain style while the other is open to any style.

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Upon completion, the two music compositions will then be handed to the jury panel. The rules of the competition are as follows: first, every contestant has their own individual room and they can only use the piano provided by the competition. Second, the contestant may only compose in the room and all of their belongings must remain in the room upon departure. Lastly, there will be no internet available; as the rules need to be strictly followed, the competition poses a formidable challenge to composers to demonstrate their skill while maintaining their originality and creativity under time pressure.



One of the jury members visited Ching-Shan Chang in her room.

Ching-Shan revealed the other contestants shared with her that they spent the first two days planning the structure of the music” while she felt inspired as soon as she saw the themes. As her musical ideas and the overall structure quickly occurred to her, she finished the first piece in 3 days and the other one within another 2 days. The jury noted after their visit to Ching-Shan’s room to observe and evaluate her progress that they were absolutely amazed by her quick execution and think highly of her abilities.

[Video]

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Ching-Shan Chang sharing the process of the competition, her thoughts and feedback from the judges.



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When we asked her about the reasons why she decided to study abroad, Ching-Shan Chang replied “the music industry in Taiwan does not seem promising as the market is relatively small, I would like to broaden my horizons and open up possibilities by applying to schools in other countries.” She was accepted to 4 schools including Eastman School of Music, Manhattan School of Music, Mannes School of Music, and was first place in the well-known composition department in National Normal Taiwan University. She eventually decided to pursue her dream at Eastman School of Music because her mentor since age 12, Gordon Shi-Wen Chin, received his Ph.D in composition from Eastman. Ching-Shan looks up to Mr. Chin as her model and planned to follow in his footsteps.

“After entering Eastman, I slowly started to discover the direction I wanted to take. Eastman provides solid classical training without putting too much pressure on their students. They even explore music theory prior to the Baroque period and how it has developed since then. Thanks to their tutelage, I was able to make steady progress with my techniques in composition and piano performance as well as enrich my knowledge in how music has evolved in every aspect” Ching-Shan explained, additionally, Eastman’s partnership with Rochester Institute of Technology (R.I.T) hosting general meetings for filmmakers and composers also helped plant a seed of interest in the film industry for her.

[Video]

Ching-Shan Chang sharing reasons behind her decision to pursue composition at Eastman School of Music and what she has learned.



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Ching-Shan Chang at the awards ceremony in the 7th International Antonín Dvořák Composition Competition.

As a child prodigy who started producing meaningful musical output at the age of 4, Ching-Shan has an incredible memory in piano playing - she can perfectly repeat the music and its structure after a single read. In 2002, her first composition, "Rhapsody on A Little Fish" was selected by Junior Original Concert held by YAMAHA and her talent has since been showcased under spotlight. In 2013, she became the youngest-ever Taiwanese student accepted into the composition department at Eastman School of Music, complimented with \$23000 worth of scholarship every year to help her fulfill her dream. Although she has obtained the highest honor from the 7th International Antonín Dvořák Composition Competition this time, those around her seem confident that she will eventually reach her goal, whatever that may be.

[EXCLUSIVE] Ching-Shan Chang: Expecting to merge classical music with her film scores

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