Press Release 8 March 2021

The third edition of the Basel Composition Competition

The jury of the third Basel Composition Competition is pleased to announce this year’s winners - the three compositions were selected last night

The third iteration of the Basel Composition Competition took place from 4 – 7 March. Due to the circumstances of the pandemic, the Competition Foundation held the competition on site, in the new Don Bosco Basel Music and Cultural Center, but without the presence of the audience. The concerts could be followed free of charge by livestream, on the competition’s Youtube channel. The final concert on 7 March was broadcast for a fee on the streaming platform IDAGIO on the same day.

The edition’s 12 selected compositions were premiered during the first three days of the competition by three of Basel’s orchestras - Basel Chamber Orchestra, Basel Symphony Orchestra and Basel Sinfonietta. However, the first concert of the competition with the Basel Symphony Orchestra conducted by Francesc Prat on 4 March was cancelled because a member of the orchestra tested positive for COVID-19. For this reason, the jury had to judge the four works of the composers concerned (Artur Akshelyan, Christian-Frédéric Bloquet, Eneko Vadillo, and Oliver Mattern) on the basis of their recordings of the dress rehearsal on 4 March and the scores. The other concerts of the Basel Sinfonietta and the Basel Chamber Orchestra on 5 and 6 March took place as planned.

The compositions were selected by a distinguished jury, chaired by the Swiss composer Michael Jarrell. The jury also comprised composer Usunck Chin, the composers Beat Furrer and Andrea Lorenzo Scartazzini, and the director of the Paul Sacher Foundation, Dr. Felix Meyer.

On 6 March, after the premiere of all the works, the jury announced the final compositions for this year’s competition:

Artur Akshelyan (ARM) – “Three Pieces for Orchestra”
Andrea Mattevi (ITA) – “Respiro sul lato dell’abisso”
Miguel Morate (ESP) – “COMME S’EN VA CETTE ONDE”
Eneko Vadillo (ESP) – “SCULPTEO”
Yiqing Zhu (CHN) – “DeepGrey”

These compositions were performed again during the final concert (7 March). The two works of Artur Akshelyan and Eneko Vadillo, whose premiere concert was cancelled on 4 March, were recorded again. Directly after the concerts, the jury meeting was held to determine the winning compositions. The winners were announced live on IDAGIO:

Yiqing Zhu (CHN) – “DeepGrey” 1st place, awarded CHF 60,000
(1st place donated by the Isaac Dreyfus Bernheim Foundation)
Artur Akshelyan (ARM) – “Three Pieces for Orchestra” 2nd place, awarded CHF 25,000
Miguel Morate (ESP) – “COMME S’EN VA CETTE ONDE” 3rd place, awarded CHF 15,000

Michael Jarrell, president of the jury, said of the competition: “The jury is very enthusiastic about the quality of the works performed in the final. We awarded first prize to Yiqing Zhu because he has a freshness in his musical language, which is able...
to render the energy of sound and a rich palette of colours, and because he has an excellent command of the orchestral instrument. He undoubtedly represents the expressions of a younger generation of composers."

Christoph Müller, founder and organizer of the competition, said: "Even after the third edition of the BCC, we are overwhelmed by the flood of creativity from hundreds of composers who applied with new works. We are grateful that we were able to hold the competition, even under difficult conditions. The twelve works performed reflect the diversity of styles, forms and concepts in contemporary music creation. We very much hope to have achieved our goal of significantly expanding the repertoire for orchestral works with this edition as well. We will ensure that the works performed will be brought to the attention of the music world and, ideally, be performed again."

The winners and jury members will be available for further questions and discussions. You can watch the final concert online here for the next 3 months: https://app.idagio.com/live/event/basel-composition-competition

The video recordings of concerts 2 and 3 of the competition will be available on the BCC's YouTube channel (see link above) from around the end of April.

For further information, please contact:

Anna Read, PR Manager (anna@wildkatpr.com)

www.baselcompetition.com