

# CONG BI

Absolute Prize for Category I - WPTA Finland  
International Piano Competition 2019



*"The WPTA Finland IPC provides an excellent stage for young pianists who want to advance and improve their performance skills. I was lucky enough to participate in the 2019 WPTA Finland IPC and won the Absolute Prize for Category I, which is a great encouragement and honor for me. In this competition, I played three pieces. According to the different music images of each work, I carefully try to figure out the content and intention that the composer wants to express, so that I can better analyze and interpret the whole work, and enrich the music thoughts that I want to express, and it was also because of this IPC, I had the honor to attend the piano conference, so I have many opportunities to be connected with piano professors and performers from around the world. I think performing is all about the energy exchange that occurs between the performer and the listener. When we perform, the more energy the performer put into the music, the more energy is reflected back from the audience. It was an excellent experience to exchange with all the great artists. I began to prepare for the selection of music and practice of this conference several months ago. In addition to the performance of the opening ceremony, I also had attended two master classes with Lasidor Bajic Music College."*

**- Cong Bi (China)**

*WPTA Finland has awarded him a scholarship to attend World Piano Conference 2019 in Serbia*





# YOU LI NG

## BRONZE AWARD FOR CATEGORY E 1ST WPTA FINLAND INTERNATIONAL PIANO COMPETITION 2019

I arrived at Weimar on 20th Oct to have masterclasses with Prof. Nesterenko. The Weimar Intensive Piano Course was held on Weimar, Germany for 5 days from 21st to 25th Oct 2019. Weimar is a beautiful city full of musical attractions that will make us feel closer to great musicians.

Prof. Nesterenko is a kindhearted person. She prepared such a comfortable and beautiful lesson environment for me so that I could relax and enjoy the lessons we had together. I had a chance to work on several pieces with her. She taught every piece in detail and was always patient, listening to every phrase of music I play, and taught me not only techniques but also to musically approach each note I played and enjoyed playing the pieces alongside her beautiful singing. She also talked a lot about wrist, elbow, arm movements, and how correct movements were crucial for good sound production and more importantly to prevent any injuries to ourselves. We can do so by having relaxed arms and elbows, and also to not entirely depend on the wrist or arm as it is risky..

She also talked a lot about specific types of phrases, examples being when there is a lot of running notes, or when there is a lot of separate notes, we should never "listen" to every single note, instead should listen to the whole body, and embrace the harmonic and melodic quality from all the notes combined. I think this Intensive Course has brought my music journey to another level, not just from the perspective of piano technique, but also my confidence in playing the piano. I really am grateful for this experience which I will treasure in my heart. Sharing my appreciation to WPTA Finland IPC Committee for this golden opportunity with this generous scholarship. I would show lots of gratitude to Prof. Nesterenko again. I hope to participate in a similar piano course in the near future.



# ARIANNA CASTELLANI

*Gold Award for Category C - WPTA  
Finland International Piano Competition  
2019*

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The experience we had with the WPTA IPC was very positive and above all, it was a great opportunity to publicize and enhance Ariadne's talent. When we sent the video via internet to the WPTA Finland International piano competition, we didn't think we would get such positive result, because the video we sent was a piece that Ariadne had played in public for the first time, but everything went well. It was very positive that we were able to attend the masterclasses in Procida instead of Leon, where we could not attend because we were involved in other musical events at the same time.

The location of the island of Procida was wonderful and allowed Ariadne (and also us, her parents) to do some days of vacation in a beautiful sea. These are Ariadne's words: I'm very happy to have won this award and above all it was a great experience to do these masterclasses in Procida with Maestro Giuseppe Devastato. It was really very useful and fun, especially because the Master was very kind, nice and gave me some good advices. The concerts were very nice and also the organization was great. We will definitely come back next year, thanks.





# TITUS LEONG

*Silver Award for Category D - WPTA Finland International Piano Competition*



I am happy and honored to participate in the WPTA Finland IPC and to receive Silver Award in Category D. I would like to take this opportunity to share some of my thoughts and experiences.

I was awarded a scholarship of 250 Euros to partially cover the course fees of the Weimar Intensive Piano Course "Transformation of Mastery" that I attended, conducted by Professor Elena Nesterenko.

My mum and I arrived in Weimar on 20 May 2019, and the first lesson with Professor Nesterenko began the next day. During the lessons, I had a chance to play several pieces for her, ranging from Haydn to Berkovich. From the start, I could see that she was very dedicated and patient when she listened to my playing. We worked on the details of each piece. She demonstrated the way how I should play for certain parts, and even recorded our session! I also remember she explained what the composer wants to express emotionally through the music and how they are phrased together to make beautiful music. In addition she also advised me to improve my technique by having a good approach and correct touch to the keyboard.



In general, I feel that her instructions are clear and I have gained so much insight from her that makes my repertoires more interesting to play and to listen to.

I would like to thank the WPTA Finland IPC Committee, Professor Elena Nesterenko, my piano teacher, Ms. Natalya Kunetsova and my dear family for believing in me. I have been blessed by this trip to Germany and hope to go there again to learn more in the future!



"WHAT THE WINNER SAY" SERIES

# ARIANNA SALVALAGGIO

*Silver Award for Category B - WPTA Finland International Piano Competition 2019*

It was the first online competition for Arianna (6 years old) and we are very happy about the result. At first we had some difficulties understanding the right category for Arianna, but then we had no other problems and everything went just fine. Finally, we accepted the scholarship award.

About the experience at the Mimas Festival in Procida:

- We arrived at Procida island on the 20th of July, together with Arianna's piano teacher (Francesca Vidal), and the other piano student and our dear friend Arianna Castellani with her parents. On that same late afternoon Arianna attended the first lesson with Professor Devastato in the beautiful Santa Margherita Nuova Church. During the lesson Arianna played Gillock "Fountain in the rain" and Chopin "Waltz in A minor".
- The day after we had the second lesson during which Arianna played Debussy "The little negro" and Slonimsky "Cartoons with adventures".
- That same evening Arianna performed in a concert playing Gillock "Fountain in the rain", "Chopin Waltz in A minor" and Debussy "The little negro".
- On July 22th Arianna attended the third and last lesson during which she played Mozatti "Tango", Bach "Prelude in C minor" and Pozzoli studio n.20 from "24 piccoli studi facili e progressive".
- On July 23th Arianna performed in a evening concert playing Gillock "Fountain in the rain", "Chopin Waltz in A minor", Mozatti "Tango" and Debussy "The little negro".

The lessons and the concerts were held in Santa Margherita Nuova Church. The lessons were very helpful: Professor Devastato was extraordinarily able to approach a 6 years old student and to explain to her how to best interpret the piano pieces she was playing and how to improve her technical skills. Also we were glad to see that Professor Devastato's teaching method is similar to the one of Arianna's piano teacher. Arianna was very enthusiastic about the whole experience.

