

THE WORLD PIANO TEACHERS



ASSOCIATION FINLAND PRESENTS

# THE 6TH WPTA FINLAND INTERNATIONAL PIANO COMPETITION

*The Competition Jury 2024*

*Jeremy Wing Kwan Wong*

*Jacob Lidåkra*

*Carles Lama*

*Chen Qu*

*Elena Nesterenko*

CO-ORGANIZER

IN COLLABORATION WITH



## Jeremy Wing Kwan Wong

## Singapore / Finland



Jeremy Wing Kwan Wong is an accomplished Singaporean concert pianist, chamber musician, composer, and music theorist. Based in both Finland and Singapore, Jeremy is a full time faculty at *Sibelius Academy, University of the Arts Helsinki*, the president of *World Piano Teachers Association, Finland* and an associate faculty at *School of Music, Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts, Singapore*. His versatile performance and teaching experiences led to regular appearances in music festivals, competitions and performance masterclasses in Asia and Europe.

As a young concert artist, Jeremy received an accolade of academic and performance awards. Under the tutelage of Professor Boris Kraljevic, he finished his Diploma in Performance as the "Best Graduate" of *Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (NAFA)* in 2009. Subsequently, he received the prestigious arts scholarship from *National Arts Council Singapore* to continue his Bachelor studies at the *Royal College of Music London, UK* which he graduated with First class honors and the highest recital points. Thereafter, Jeremy completed his Masters of Music degree from *Sibelius Academy, University of the Arts Helsinki*.

A laureate at international competitions, his compositions, "Variations and Theme" and "Miniatures for Duo Accordions" were premiered in Helsinki Music Center and were lauded with the 'Vittoria Caffa Righetti Award' at the 26th International Music Competition in Italy. At the same time, he was a top prize winner in the artist category of the 7th International Piano Competition in Milan. Jeremy has since performed extensively in Helsinki, Finland where he is also recently been appointed as artistic director of a *Andreaskyrkan* and East meets West cultural concert series.

Alongside his international performing career, Jeremy is a reputable piano and theory pedagogue. The core of his teaching methods revolves around a constructivist approach to enacting musical meaning, inner hearing, and theory-led applied improvisations into one's performance. Having written and published numerous pedagogical works on teaching piano improvisation and performance analytical theses. His three-volume book titled *Fundamentals with Theory & Improvisation: An Applied Improvisation Method* was completed in year 2014 followed by *An Applied Improvisation for Adult* in year 2018. His two academic research papers, *Tonal organization of three Schubert Sonatas from a Schenkerian Perspective and Phrase structure and Formal Functions in the Opening Themes of Tchaikovsky's Seasons op. 37*, was published in 2013 and 2017 respectively.

Jeremy is currently pursuing his doctoral degree at the MuTri doctoral school at *Sibelius Academy, University of the Arts Helsinki*.

## *Jacob Lidåkra*

## *Sweden*



Swedish pianist, Jacob Lidåkra made his debut in Musikverein in Vienna in 2016, and has since been a highly demanded artist. He holds a master's degree from the Sibelius Academy, where he studied with renowned piano professor, Liisa Pohjola. He has also participated in master classes for Fabio Bidini, Stanislav Ioudenitch and Dmitri Bashkurov. He has performed with the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra and Norrköping Symphony Orchestra with Daniel Harding and Per Hammarström.

He has been the recurring artist at Lake Como International Piano Academy and the International Holland Music Sessions for several years, which led to many solo recitals in numerous venues all over The Netherlands.

Jacob Lidåkra won second prize and prize for best contemporary piece in the Stockholm International Music Competition, won second prize in the Ljunggren competition in 2016 and was the winner of the Yamaha Finland competition in 2017.

Besides being an active soloist, Jacob is also a well sought after accompanist. He has played on several Scandinavian tours with Nordic Song Festival, accompanied singers in the Mirjam Helin International Singing Competition in Helsinki and is also teaching at the Birgit Nilsson-masterclasses for professional singers. In 2013, Jacob Lidåkra co-founded the Aurora Piano Quintet, and some recent chamber music partnerships have included the Van der Pals-quartet and flutist Janne Thomsen.

Jacob Lidåkra is an experienced educator specialising in solo piano, lied-duo, chamber music and accompaniment and he has given frequent masterclasses at OrkesterEfterskolen, the only boarding school in Denmark specialized in classical music. He currently holds the position as the head of chamber music program, and is also the founder and artistic director of OrkesterEfterskolen's Chamber Music Festival.

*Carles Lama*

*Spain*



Steinway Artist and concert pianist, co-founder and director of the label KNS Classical and artistic director of several cycles and festivals of music, Carles Lama has also won a reputation for mentoring a wide number of young talents.

Together with superior studies in piano performance in Spain, Paris and United States and having directed the Conservatory of Music in Girona -from 2006 to 2012 – he studied Music Business, Branding and Digital Marketing and has founded Music Talent Lab, and presented workshops and lectures in many different institutions in order to guide and enlighten the musicians 'careers.

At the same time, he has taught Master-Classes around the world and has been jury member of many renowned international competitions.

He is member of the acclaimed "Carles & Sofia piano duo" with his wife Sofia Cabruja, with whom they have played around the world, including venues like Carnegie Hall, Palau de la Música Catalana, Sala Verdi or Teatro Solís, among others. They have been praised by public and critics alike as one of the best piano duos in the world. Their discography of more than 10 CDs includes masterworks for four hands and brilliant and demanding orchestral transcriptions, as well as original and exclusive projects created by the duo, including the transcription of the opera "Goyescas" or a "Lieder Project", with transcriptions for four hands of Brahms, Schumann and Schubert lieder repertoire.

In 2021, he was appointed President of WPTA SPAIN – Comunidad de Madrid. Always committed with social needs, he has a UNICEF award for his humanitarian aid.

In 2012, together with his wife, they founded Concerts4Good, Music on a Mission, a solidarity project. And in 2020, they created their own Foundation: Carles & Sofia Music Foundation.

He has been recognised as a Paul Harris Fellow by the Rotary Foundation and has received the Golden Star for the Professional Excellence, the Golden Medal for the Merit at Work and the European Golden Cross.

## Chen Qu

## Finland / China



Chen Qu stands as an esteemed Finnish-Chinese classical pianist and music educator. Currently serving as the Executive Director of the Singapore International Music Competition, Artistic Director of the World Piano Teachers Association (WPTA) Finland, and contributing to the boards of the International Artist Association Finland and the International Performing Arts and Cultural Organisation Singapore, Chen is a multifaceted leader in the musical arts and education field.

With a distinguished background encompassing performance, music pedagogy, and arts entrepreneurship, Chen has been instrumental in providing invaluable opportunities for talented young pianists worldwide to showcase their artistry on prominent global stages.

Chen's Classical music educational journey is marked by excellence, holding both Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Music from the Sibelius Academy, University of the Arts Helsinki,

majoring in Classical Piano Performance and minoring in Piano Pedagogy, Chamber Music, and Singing. Her mentorship under renowned Finnish pianists Teppo Koivisto and Juhani Lagerspetz has shaped her into a concert artist and music educator. Furthermore, she completed the teacher's pedagogical studies in Finland and also received a Diploma in Music Performance from the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts, University of the Arts Singapore.

Having earned the highest-graded exam piano certifications from prestigious institutions such as Shanghai Conservatory, China Conservatory, and the Chinese Musician Association, Chen's international recognition includes accolades such as the Second Prize at the 3rd Irmiler International Competition in Dalian, China. Third Prize in the senior section of the 7th International Piano Competition in Milan, Italy, and a Silver Prize at the Asia International Piano Competition in Korea. Her achievements extend to winning the First Prize at The North International Music Competition in Stockholm, Sweden, and being awarded the Third Prize at the International Grand Music Competition in Moscow, Russia. She is also a recipient of scholarships from the Sibelius Academy Foundation and Taiteen Edistämiskeskus grants.

In addition to her roles in academia and artistic direction, Chen is an avid performer, renowned for her mastery of both classical repertoire and Chinese folk music. Since 2015, she has graced major venues across Helsinki, captivating audiences with her virtuosic performances and emotive interpretations.

In 2023, Chen ventured into the realm of entrepreneurship, founding Bravori, an EdTech startup that seamlessly merges technology and music education. This initiative aims to revolutionize music practice through a unique app designed to enhance student practice and provide teachers with insights into their students' progress, fostering more efficient and personalized instruction. The digital application, stemming from the UniArts Hub Helsinki, has garnered support and recognition from various international programs in Finland and the UK.

## *Elena Nesterenko*

## *Germany*



The piano art of Elena Nesterenko absorbed the best traditions of Russian and German performing schools. Captivating expressiveness, the depth of penetration into the very core of composer's emotional content and huge range of subtlest nuances with brilliant musical energy. Upon graduating with honors from the Ippolitov-Ivanov Music Academy in 1989, Elena entered the Moscow State Tchaikovsky Conservatory in the studio of Eugene Mogilevsky and Professor Elena Richter. She continued her post-graduate studies in Groningen, Netherlands in 1997 with Professor A.B.Makarov-Goldfeder having received top prize at the Mazarò del Vallo International Piano Competition in Italy on the same year. Elena also holds a Master of Arts diploma from Munich in the class of Prof. Gerhard Oppitz. Since 1998, Elena performed extensively in major cities across Europe. As an avid performer, she has worked with Regensburg Philharmonic Orchestra, Yaroslavl Symphony Orchestra,

Kostroma Symphony Orchestra and her debut CD, containing works by F.Liszt A. Scriabin and Shostakovich lauded positive reviews from legendary pianists like Alfred Brendel and Grigory Sokolov. Elena gives regularly masterclasses in Arcore, Italy, Groningen, the European Centre in South Korea, Moscow, Kostroma, Russia, Walderbach, Germany, and at Tallinn's Alion Baltic International Music Festival. She has also appeared frequently of the Classic Channel 4 of Bavarian Radio and Television, the Moscow Radio 1 as well as on the Russian television, and on the Italian RAI and Dutch radio and television networks. From 2011 to 2014, Elena has performed more than 150 concerts related to "The Universe of F. Liszt" as well as concert tour throughout Germany with collaboration with famous German lecturer and orator, Lutz Görner.

Elena is a Steinway Artist and the artistic director of Classics at Regen. She is also the founder of Maestro Academy, Weimar Intensive Piano Courses, and part of the festival faculty of International Music Festival "Music is the way of life" in Kostroma, Russia.