

The sixth edition of the *Nuova Coppa Pianisti* was a great success!

Jury President Balzani: "I am sure *Maestro Luisi* will push the level of this competition to even greater heights"

On September 8th, 2016 the **Osimo Piano Hours Festival** concluded, with 98 participants in the competition and a total of 120 pianists. The artists were presented throughout each day and evening of the festival on the stage of the Theater *La Nuova Fenice* of Osimo. **Maestro Gianluca Luisi**, artistic director of the last six editions, called it "an auspicious stage that brings luck to the pianists".

The remarkable number of countries which were represented at the festival — Italy, Korea, Ukraine, US, Russia, Romania, Turkey, Japan, China, Kazakhstan, Serbia, Bulgaria — contributed to a continuous flow of cultural exchange. The true spirit of the event provided the opportunity for each participant to measure themselves against an international field, while also being heard by a prestigious jury in a nurturing atmosphere.

Participation would have been even greater if it wasn't for the level of concern after the earthquake that occurred in the days immediately preceding the competition.

*«Many of those interested - declared *Maestro Luisi* - sadly had to cancel their participation in the event after learning about the earthquake. Fortunately, we are safe here. We just heard some noise and suffered no damage. As for the success of the competition, we are very pleased. In spite of the timing, which coincided with the *Busoni* (another prestigious Italian competition), the results have been great and the above mentioned- let's call them "difficulties" - didn't distract the pianists' focus from the event».*

In the age category competition, known as the *International Youth Piano Encounters*, participants showcased extraordinary talents. **Tommaso Speciale** (first overall prize with a 99/100 score) and **Matteo Liberatore** (first overall prize with a 98/100 score) established a high level right from the beginning of the *Enfant Prodige* category (ages 10 and under).

The other young artist winners were:

- Category A (ages 11-13) **Samuele Giovanni Valentano** (first overall prize with a 98/100 score),
- Category B (ages 14-15) **Maria Francesca Di Molfetta** (first overall prize with a 98/100),
- Category C (ages 16-19) **Isabella Ricci** (first overall prize with a 98/100 score).

Ten pianists were selected for the finals of the *Nuova Coppa Pianisti* International Competition: **Anna Bulkina, Elia Cecino, Giulio De Padova, Vasyl Kotys, Muraad Layousse, Andrea Molteni, Daria Parkhomenko, Axel Trolese, Yano Yuta, Yi Yi.**

Ukrainian pianist **Vasyl Kotys (born 1984)**, first place winner of the sixth *Nuova Coppa Pianisti*, received a scholarship worth 2,000.00 euros offered by Simonetta Giuliodori, CEO of Gr Elettronica SRL. In addition, he won paid concert engagements, promotion and publicity in Italian and foreign concert societies, and appearances with the Orchestra Filarmonica Marchigiana (FORM) during its 2016/2017 season in important theaters within the *Marche* region of Italy.

The other *NCP* winners were:

- Second Prize: Russian **Daria Parkhomenko** (born 1991). 600.00 euros scholarship with a diploma offered by "Lions Club International Osimo" presented by Sandro Giuliodori;

- Third Prize: **Anna Bulkina** from Turkmenistan (born 1986). 300.00 euros scholarship and a certificate offered from “Don Carlo Grillantini” Foundation from Osimo presented by Elisabetta Leonardi.

Special awards were assigned and offered by Dr. Moritz von Bredow, curator of *London’s Keyboard Charitable Trust*:

- Chinese pianist **Yi Yi**, won the **Grete Sultan** Award worth 250.00 euros - dedicated to the memory of pianist Grete Sultan, for best interpretation of a composition written after 1975;
- The 15 year old Italian pianist **Elia Cecina** won the **Beethoven Prize** worth 250,00 euros for best interpretation of a Beethoven sonata.

*** Maestro Vincenzo Balzani, was appointed president of the jury for the 2016 edition. The Nuova Coppa Pianisti, that is also a member of the Alink - Argerich Foundation, is the oldest age category contest of our country, founded in 1968. Current artistic director, Maestro Luisi, baptized it as ‘Nuova Coppa Pianisti,’ revisiting it, adding an international component divided into two rounds (eliminary and finals), and placing it within a music festival, Osimo Piano Hours Festival. At the time of the announcement of the finalists, you expressed that you were pleased to have heard a high level of playing. Was it difficult to choose the winner? What in your opinions are the merits of the competition?**

Balzani: *«I had the opportunity to compare the new competition with the old one, because I was a jury member with Sergio Perticaroli as president, during the time of Marco Cola’s artistic direction. The level has risen to an international standard under the new direction and I found all the winners and finalists very interesting. I have to say it would be appropriate, in my opinion, to have two age categories of participants within the International Nuova Coppa Pianisti section well: young artists and professionals. Namely for young pianists up to 21 years who participate in a competition for the first time with the purpose of measuring themselves with other pianists of their own age from every part of the world; and for thirty-year-old pianists that, sadly, too often just come to win monetary awards and concerts. A few years ago the great Elisso Virsaladze expressed to me her disappointment in often encountering the same three or four pianists making rounds on the competition circuit who, like gunmen of the Wild West, scoop up first prizes leaving no opportunity to the youngest ones competing at the same level. It is clear that this isn’t only the NCP’s problem, because it is a problem of international competitions worldwide. I’m sure Maestro Luisi will make the competition more innovative and relevant, especially because of the concerts and recordings he facilitates for the benefit of its winners. Ad maiora!»*

The “festival within the festival” is been the **Osimo Open Day Yamaha**. Linking it with the accordion festival presented by M^o Marco Patarini is a way to have young people play, connect, and spread the culture of music.

But the competition isn’t only a showcase, it also provides the opportunity of being heard and noticed by a relevant international jury, to receive awards and scholarships, and to be introduced to Italian and international concert societies. In addition, they are offered the opportunity to try two wonderful pianos—the **Bosendorfer 280 Vienna Concert** and **Yamaha CFX** —prior to their performances, in addition to other various instruments located all around the historical center of Osimo.

New and noteworthy this year was the **MyC “My Competition” Festival Recording Sessions**. At the conclusion of the competition, during 7th and 8th of September, every pianist that took part in the sixth edition of the *Nuova Coppa Pianisti* (16-36) had the chance to record free of charge a

professional audio-video for their own personal promotional purposes in the theatre with technician, *Maestro* Raffaele Cacciola.

«The combination of awards, festivals and recordings proved to be a winning combination - pointed out Maestro Luisi - thanks to the collaboration of the Marche region, the communal administration of Osimo represented by mayor Simone Pugnaroni, and everyone that believes in this initiative. Gratitude is also expressed to our sponsors: CEO of GR Elettronica srl, BBC Filottrano, Fausto Montecchiani, Korg Italy of Osimo». And «it's truly a terrific formula - concluded the mayor of Osimo during the closing night of the contest - that we will sustain in the following editions. To host such a huge musical event is a great honor for Osimo».

Any plans for next year?

«Absolutely! - says Artistic Director Luisi - we'll try to create bridges between Italy and the rest of the world. This vision will be entrusted to **Cristina Altamura**, performer, teacher and associate artistic director of the competition in the United States (US); **Pamela Pinto**, musician, teacher and journalist, as publicist and managing vice director of the competition; as well as **Dr. Moritz von Bredow**, friend of the competition and curator of *London's Keyboard Charitable Trust*. An important aspect will be the renewed institutional support of the "Don Carlo Grillantini" of the Osimo foundation, the "Lions Club International Osimo", the support of "A.S.S.O." Corporation. And, of course, the ever stronger collaboration between the Competition and Campana Institute».

By: Pamela Pinto

Translation: Cristina Altamura