



FestivalDC.com

Celebrating the Richness of our Multi-Cultural Communities of Greater Washington, DC

ARTS AND CULTURE

WIPAC's Festival of Music 2019: "For the Love of Music"

by [H and L Polgar](#) • July 20, 2019

For the love of music. What other reason could there be for pianists, who also are full time professionals in another fields, to travel many, many miles to participate in the 2019 Washington International Piano Arts Competition's Festival of Music? It is a celebration of the art of piano performance and creates an opportunity for artists to display their mastery and love for the instrument. The competition is in its 17th year and stands as the second oldest of its kind in the world for Amateur pianists, following "Le Concours des Grands Amateurs de Piano" in Paris, France.

The Competition began with great fanfare at a reception hosted by the Embassy of Argentina to welcome the 26 contestants. WIPAC founders, [Chateau Gardecki](#) and John Gardecki and WIPAC President Michael Davidson wished the pianists great success. Patroness of the Arts Lola Reinsch acted as the impromptu MC encouraging the artists to perform and giving the audience a taste of what was to come during the 4-day competition. Dr. Joyce Silverman-Wright, sponsor of the 1st prize award was also present to meet the artists.

The July 18 competition was held at the George Washington University Corcoran School of Music. This year's Chairs of the Competition Committee were Judith Ramage and John Dassoulas.

Every contestant played with distinction. Just to comment on a few of the remarkable pianists, Vivienne Fleischer performed the Rachmaninoff Prelude Opus 39, No. 5 in E flat major with energy and a fiery interpretation; Judy Darst performance of the Schubert Scherzo from Sonata 10 in B flat major was approached with an emphasis on the melodic content, with a delicate touch; Deirbhile Brennan's Scarlatti was played with clarity and a rich tone; in Andre Leonard's performance of Rachmaninoff and Mozart works he exuded a strong sense of musicality and had a distinctive sense of presence. It was a gift to listen to the artistry of the 26 contestants and their selection of a very diverse repertoire over the two days of preliminary competition.

Stepping up to the next level, twelve contestants were chosen for the semifinals. They were Deirbhile Brennan, Jeanne Craig, Vivienne Fleischer, Jeni Kong, David Lee, Johnathan Lee, Juliette Lu, Reiko Osawa, Kathleen Penny, Robin Stephenson, Utako Tanigawa. Wei Ling Wang.

As the competition came to a close, Chateau Gardecki read a quote from Plato that captures WIPAC's mission, "Music gives a soul to the universe, Wings to the mind, Flight to the imagination and Life to Everything." Indeed, as WIPAC celebrates its 17th year, over 300 pianists from around the world have had the distinction of participating, spreading a message of good will on a global level. As Michael Davidson explained, WIPAC is not only a competition to encourage and provide a venue for talented classical music pianists, but also a vehicle that can contribute to their growth as musicians and as people.



