

Prize winners of the Cello Masterclasses & Concerts 2018

Closing concert and prize giving ceremony took place on 30 September in Kronberg

For eight days, the Cello Masterclasses & Concerts once again proved that Kronberg is the “World capital of the cello” (Mstislav Rostropovich). Over 160 cellists from 41 countries aged between 11 and 29 formed a visible presence in the town and were the guests of some 130 Kronberg families. The up-and-coming cellists took part in public masterclasses with Frans Helmerson, Gary Hoffman, Jens Peter Maintz and Wolfgang Emanuel Schmidt. In the evenings, the tutors then took to the stage with their former pupils, bringing yet another aspect of this year’s motto, “Cello Generations”, vividly to life.

In his closing address, Raimund Trenkler, Founder and Chairman of the Board of the Kronberg Academy Foundation, remarked: “For eight days we have experienced pure cello friendship, this unique sense of community that distinguishes and connects cellists across the globe (...) Collegial friendship, respectful recognition, the openness to learn from one another, and the willingness to grow together – personally and artistically. In short, an attitude that we would like to see more of in our society. We, and our 160 plus students from so many of the world’s countries, have experienced this again.”

Eleven masterclass participants were chosen to perform in the concluding concert on 30 September. Their concert set the scene for conferral of the prizes and scholarships, which are traditionally awarded at the end of the Cello Masterclasses & Concerts. The prizewinning cellists for 2018 are:

- Landgrave of Hesse Prize (shared)
Elia Cohen-Weissert (23 years, Israel)
Erica Piccotti (19 years, Italy)
The Landgrave of Hesse Prize is a sponsorship award worth a total of €5,000. The prize includes an opportunity to perform at the next Kronberg Academy Festival.
- Boris Pergamenschikow Scholarship
Ivan Karizna (26 years, Belarus)
The Boris Pergamenschikow Scholarship, which is worth €400 a month, is awarded to a young cellist over a period of two years to fund expenses incurred in the furtherance of his or her cultural and intellectual development.
- Frans Helmerson Award (shared)
Birgitta Elisa Oftestad (16 years, Norway)
Yuki Sayama (21 years, Japan)
This sponsorship award in honour of cellist and educator Frans Helmerson, which carries prize money of €2,500, is awarded to a chosen active participant aged 27 or below.

- Kronberg Academy Scholarships
KangHyun Lee (24 years, South Korea)
Friedrich Thiele (21 years, Germany)
A Kronberg Academy Scholarship includes the opportunity to participate in the masterclasses of the following Kronberg Academy Festival (2019) and the next Cello Masterclasses & Concerts (2020).

The next Cello Masterclasses & Concerts will take place in late September 2020 in Kronberg.

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About Kronberg Academy

Kronberg Academy is a cultural institution unique within Europe that trains and sponsors highly gifted young musicians who play the violin, viola and cello. Renowned musicians such as Ana Chumachenco, Christian Tetzlaff, Tabea Zimmermann and Frans Helmerson are among the Academy's professors. There are some 25 places on the Bachelor's and Master's programmes at the Academy, with the degrees awarded by Frankfurt University of Music and Performing Arts. The Professional Studies and Precollege study programmes, as well as the study programme for pianists focusing on chamber music, enhance the range of courses on offer. Founded in 1993, the Academy is predominantly financed by private donations. Its Founder and Chairman of the Board is Raimund Trenkler and Prof. Dr Friedemann Eichhorn is its Artistic Director. The members of the Artistic Council are Marta Casals Istomin, Yuri Bashmet, Christoph Eschenbach, Gidon Kremer, Sir András Schiff and Mstislav Rostropovich († 2007). In addition to running its study programmes, Kronberg Academy organises several concert projects and many other performances, as well as the internationally acclaimed Kronberg Academy Festival, which takes place every two years.

Press photos

Prize winners and tutors of the Cello Masterclasses & Concerts at the closing concert on 30 September 2018 in Kronberg's Stadthalle (Municipal Hall). Left to right: Raimund Trenkler, Prof. Dr Friedemann Eichhorn, Rainer Prinz von Hessen, Ivan Karizna, Tatjana Pergamenschikow, Erica Piccotti, Elia Cohen-Weissert, Birgitta Elisa Oftestad, Yuki Sayama, Friedrich Thiele, KangHyun Lee, Frans Helmerson.

Photo: Patricia Truchsess

http://www.kronbergacademy.de/fileadmin/user_upload/18-09-30_Preistraeger_Dozenten_CMK2018_c_Patricia_Truchsess.jpg



Cellist Birgitta Elisa Oftestad (16 years, Norway) at the closing concert of the Cello Masterclasses & Concerts in Kronberg on 30 September 2018. She was presented with the Frans Helmerson Award.

Photo: Patricia Truchsess

http://www.kronbergacademy.de/fileadmin/user_upload/18-09-30_Birgitta_Elisa_Oftestad_CMK2018_c_Patricia_Truchsess.jpg



Cellist Erica Piccotti (19 years, Italy) at the closing concert of the Cello Masterclasses & Concerts in Kronberg on 30 September 2018. She was awarded the Landgrave of Hesse Prize together with Elia Cohen-Weissert (23 years, Israel).

Photo: Patricia Truchsess

http://www.kronbergacademy.de/fileadmin/user_upload/18-09-30_Erica_Piccotti_CMK2018_c_Patricia_Truchsess.jpg



Biographies of the prize winners and scholarship holders

Elia Cohen-Weissert

Elia Cohen-Weissert was born in Jerusalem in 1994, began playing the cello at the age of seven and initially studied at the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance, supported through a scholarship from the America-Israel Cultural Foundation. At 14 she took up studies at Berlin's Julius-Stern-Institute and later began her bachelor's degree with Jens Peter Maintz. Since October 2016, she has been studying at the Queen Elisabeth Music Chapel in Brussels with Gary Hoffman. She has performed with a variety of orchestras as well as at festivals and in major concert halls in Russia, Israel, the USA, Germany, Prague, Belgium, Croatia and Portugal. She has also won prizes in national and international competitions, including second prize in the Antonio Janigro International Cello Competition in Zagreb. The Queen Elisabeth Music Chapel loans her a cello made by Jean-Baptiste Vuillaume. During the Cello Masterclasses & Concerts 2018 she was taught by Gary Hoffman.

Erica Piccotti

Born in Italy in 1999, Erica Piccotti studied in Rome with Francesco Storino at the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia and with Antonio Meneses, who taught her both at Bern University of the Arts and at the Walter Stauffer Academy in Cremona. In 2013, she received the special honour of the Alfiere della Repubblica for outstanding musical achievements by young artists, an order of merit bestowed by the Italian President Giorgio Napolitano. In addition to winning numerous prizes in Italian instrumental competitions, she won first prize in the 2014 Antonio Janigro International Cello Competition in Zagreb as well as second prize in the 2017 International Johannes Brahms Competition in Pörschach. In May 2018 she took part in Chamber Music Connects the World. Since October 2017, Erica Piccotti has been studying with Frans Helmerson on the Master's programme at Kronberg Academy. These studies are funded by the Benno und Ursula Stork-Wersborg-Stipendium. During the Cello Masterclasses & Concerts 2018 she was taught by Jens Peter Maintz.

Ivan Karizna

At the age of seven, Ivan Karizna, born in Belarus in 1992, began studying with Vladimir Perlin. Between 2009 and 2014 he completed studies with Jérôme Pernoo at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse Paris, followed by a two-year postgraduate course. He won third prize in the 14th International Tchaikovsky Competition in 2011 as well as first prizes in the 2015 Società Umanitaria Musical Competition in Milan and the 2016 "Dr. Luis Sigall" International Musical Competition in Chile. 2017 saw him win fifth prize and the audience prize at the Queen Elisabeth Competition in Brussels. He was also winner of the Young Concert Artist European Auditions. Ivan Karizna took part in Chamber Music Connects the World in 2012, and in the Kronberg Academy Festival in 2017. Since October 2016, he has been studying with Frans Helmerson on the Professional Studies programme at Kronberg Academy, funded by the Virtuoso Scholarship. During the Cello Masterclasses & Concerts 2018 he was taught by Jens Peter Maintz.

Birgitta Elisa Oftestad

Born in Norway in 2002, Birgitta Elisa Oftestad has been a young student at the Barratt Due Institute of Music in Oslo, where she has been taught by Ole Elrik Ree since 2015. In addition to this, she has also been studying with Truls Mørk at the Norwegian Academy of Music in Oslo since 2016. In 2018, she won the "Virtuos" competition for talented young

musicians organised by the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (NRK), gaining the Norwegian Soloist Prize and selection to represent Norway at Eurovision Young Musicians 2018 in Edinburgh at the same time. Since the age of eleven she has given regular performances as a soloist and chamber musician, at festivals and national celebrations. She plays a cello by G Gagliano (circa 1780-1800). During the Cello Masterclasses & Concerts 2018 she was taught by Frans Helmerson.

Yuki Sayama

Yuki Sayama was born in Japan in 1996. In 2015, he graduated from the High School of the Toho Gakuen School of Music, since which time he has been studying with Dai Miyata and Sumiko Kurata at the college of the same institution. He has won first prizes in various cello competitions, including the 55th Kamakura Student Competition and the Music Competition of Japan for University Students in 2016. In 2017, he played under Seiji Ozawa in opera project run by the Seiji Ozawa Music Academy. That same year he performed with the Ozawa International Chamber Music Academy Okushiga. 2013 and 2015 saw him take part in the Kusatsu International Summer Music Academy & Festival and receive tuition from Tamás Varga of the Vienna Philharmonic. During the Cello Masterclasses & Concerts 2018 he was taught by Frans Helmerson.

KangHyun Lee

Born in South Korea in 1994, KangHyun Lee began playing the cello aged eleven. He already has a great number of recitals, chamber concerts and performances with orchestras in Seoul, Busan, Tongyeong, New York, Tokyo and Fukuoka under his belt, including solo concerts as a "Rising Star" with the Korean Symphony Orchestra and with the Tongyeong Festival Orchestra under Michael Sanderling. He was a semi-finalist in the 11th Witold Lutoslawski International Cello Competition, and has won first prize in the Joong-Ang Music Competition in South Korea. In addition, he has attended masterclasses with David Geringas, Miklos Perenyi, Arto Noras, Tsuyoshi Tsutsumi, Julius Berger, Wen-Sinn Yang and David Finckel. He is currently studying with Troels Svane at the Lübeck University of Music. During the Cello Masterclasses & Concerts 2018 he was taught by Frans Helmerson.

Friedrich Thiele

Born in 1996, Friedrich Thiele has been studying in Weimar with Wolfgang Emanuel Schmidt since 2016. From 2011 to 2016 he was a young student in Leipzig under Peter Bruns. He has already won several prizes in national and international competitions, most recently gaining third prize and the audience prize at the 2015 TONALi Competition in Hamburg and first prize in the 2017 "Ton und Erklärung" competition in Munich. Since 2010, he has received funding from Deutsche Stiftung Musikleben and he plays a French cello on loan from the German Musical Instruments Fund. He has performed as a guest soloist with the Brasilia National Theatre Symphony Orchestra, Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen, Munich Radio Orchestra, Orquesta Sinfónica Simón Bolívar and the Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra. Chamber music commitments have taken him to the Mariinsky Theatre in St Petersburg, the Vadim Repin Trans-Siberian Art Festival, Heidelberger Frühling and to Munich's Gasteig in 2018. During the Cello Masterclasses & Concerts 2018 he was taught by Wolfgang Emanuel Schmidt.