

# WFIMC now

## ORGAN COMPETITIONS PULLING ALL THE STOPS

## BACK IN BUSINESS THE RUBINSTEIN 2021

## 3 **SAINT MAURICE TURNS 20**

The Swiss Organ Competition reinvents itself for its 10th edition



## 5 **BACH-ON-WHEELS**

A fun answer to the pandemic's restrictions in Montréal



## 6 **PIPE DREAMS**

The Canadian Organ Competition on the Silver Screen

## 9 **THE SYDNEY-** reinvented

Australia's premier competition takes place entirely online



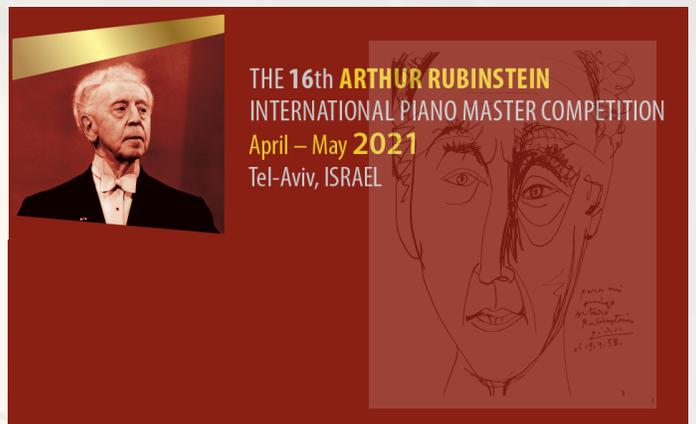
## 10 **BACK TO BUSINESS**

The Rubinstein Competition 2021  
Florian Riem reports from the first major competition in 2021 to take place live

## 14 **GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

## 15 **COVID AGENDA**

An updated competition calendar for the coming months





# PULLING ALL THE STOPS

## Saint Maurice turns 20

It was in spring 2014 when the tiny mountain village of Saint-Maurice d'Agaune in the South-Western Swiss Alps caught world-wide attention: a grand exhibition at the Louvre in Paris showed the immense treasures of the famous Valais monastery. Not without a cause: Saint-Maurice was founded in 515, and its abbey is the oldest Christian monastery in the Western world to have existed without interruption in its original location. Its *Laus Perennis*, or perpetual prayer, has been going on, day after day, for the last 1,500 years.



Needless to say, this extraordinary abbey makes for an amazing venue for its biennial International Organ Competition. Both of its organs were built by famous Swiss maker Kuhn: the grand organ from 1950 (its predecessor was destroyed by a landslide), and the new choir organ from 1985.

The competition, which celebrates its 20th anniversary in 2021, will hold its 10th edition this summer and pays homage to two eminent organists: Georges Cramer (1901-1981), who inaugurated the grand organ and initiated the construction of the choir organ; and Canon Georges Athanasiades (born in 1929), who created the competition in 2001 and served as its artistic director until recently.



### ***The 10th Intl. Organ Competition of Saint-Maurice will take place Aug. 11-15, 2021***

Under the new leadership of Music Director Charles Barbier and organist Thomas Kientz, the competition will see a number of significant changes: masterclasses and symposiums with international artists, concerts and live broadcasts, on organs all over the region, recordings of laureates, and many other activities will make the whole event seem like a festival.

Rather than keeping an Artistic Director as Chair, the competition's jury will be led by different artists every time. These artists themselves will not be organists- in 2021 Ecole Normale Pianist Jean-Marc Luisada will be president of the Jury.



This is intended to create more flexibility and artistic freedom rather than focussing on a particular school. Besides the president, the jury

will always consist of three women and three men in order to create more opportunities for women.

The Saint-Maurice usually sees between 30 and 60 applications, mostly from Europe (France, Switzerland, Germany) and Asia (especially South Korea). While it is held venues differing greatly in size and acoustics, there is one thing that makes a truly Swiss Competition with a Swiss sound: most of its instruments were built by the Swiss manufacturer Kuhn in Männedorf on Lake Zurich.

The 10th International Organ Competition of Saint-Maurice will take place from August 11-15, 2021.

[www.concoursorgue.ch](http://www.concoursorgue.ch)



### **Grand Prix de Chartres postponed to 2022**

Initially postponed to 2021, the 27th International Organ Competition „Grand Prix de Chartres“, dedicated to improvisation, will take place from August 25 to September 4, 2022, due to the ongoing health crisis in France. Program & regulations will be available on the website of the "Association of Great Organs of Chartres", from August 1, 2021. [orgues-chartres.org](http://orgues-chartres.org)

### **Bach-Competition Leipzig cancelled**

The 22th International Johann Sebastian Bach Competition has been cancelled. Instead, a streaming music festival will be held from 11 to 20 June 2021. [bachwettbewerbbleipzig.de](http://bachwettbewerbbleipzig.de)

### **The Longwood Gardens International Organ Competition**

Every three years, the organ world's brightest young talents are invited to compete in the picturesque setting of our Gardens for the \$40,000 Pierre S. du Pont First Prize, the largest cash prize of any organ competition in the world. The next Longwood Gardens International Organ Competition will take place June 20–24, 2023. [longwoodgardens.org](http://longwoodgardens.org)





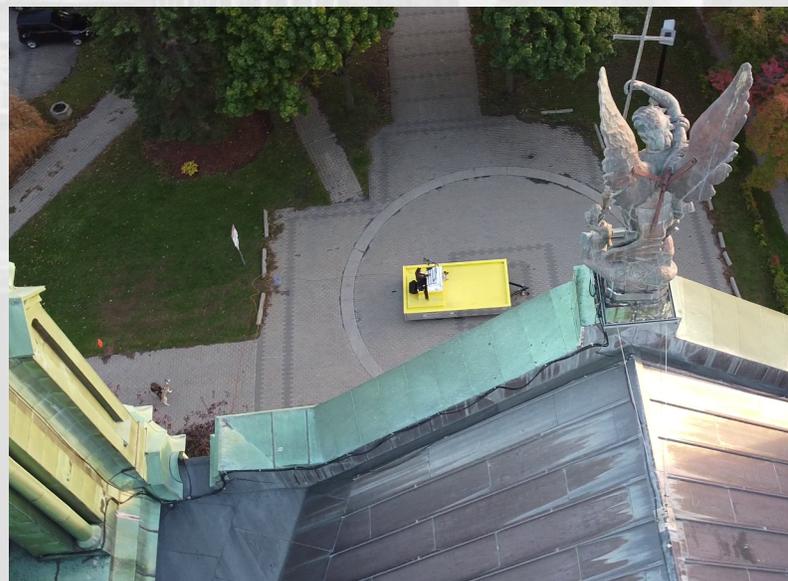
## Montréal: Building creative outlets during the pandemic

# BACH-ON-WHEELS!

When considering how to foster greater appreciation of the pipe organ among the general public, the Montreal-based Canadian International Organ Competition recognized a challenge: pipe organs are building-sized instruments that normally live in either churches or concert halls. While Montreal has no shortage of impressive and historic pipe organs built in a range of musical styles, exposure of the public to organ music is contingent on their presence in the venues containing pipe organs. Recognizing an opportunity to reach a wider audience and hoping to create performance capacity during the COVID-19 pandemic, the CIOC unveiled the *Bach-Mobile* in the Fall of 2020, assisted by funding from the Conseil des Arts de Montreal.

The *Bach-Mobile* consists of a portable, digital organ mounted on a trailer. The CIOC's specific setup employs the computer software *Hauptwerk*, a digital organ simulator which takes midi input signals from the organ console and plays back recorded samples taken from real pipe organs. The software offers all the functionality of a pipe organ, and additionally enables performers to select a variety of *sample sets* taken from historically important organs worldwide. Most importantly, the compact size and portability of the setup makes it possible to hold concerts in almost any outdoor space imaginable.

The ability to present organ music in public spaces affords not only the possibility of holding organ concerts without the necessity of a venue containing a pipe organ, but also serves as a promotional tool for the CIOC's triennial competition and other events. The *Bach-Mobile*, with its eye-catching modern design juxtaposed against its classical pipe organ sound, is sure to pique the curiosity of any passerby in a public space. In addition to its vast potential as an outreach and awareness tool, the *Bach-Mobile* will also be used as an additional practice instrument during the International Competition, which the CIOC could make available 24 / 7 to the competitors without needing to coordinate with the regular competition venues. Overall, the CIOC expects to see great returns on the investment that is the *Bach-Mobile*, and intends to use it to its full potential during the Summer of 2021.



# Pipe Dreams



## PIPE DREAMS

*The Canadian International Organ Competition on the Silver Screen*

To an average audience member, a classical music competition will seem to be both strikingly familiar and yet somewhat enigmatic. The familiarity stems from the adoption by most Classical music competitions of the generic blueprint integral to many competitive events—ranging from cook-offs to video game tournaments to the Olympic Games. To this extent the process witnessed in Classical music competitions is nothing unusual: a group of competitors at the top of their field try for one or more prizes, with their performances adjudicated by a panel of expert judges. The enigmatic aspect has much to do with the musicians and the nature of their art. While most of the public is familiar with at

least some Classical music, especially thanks to its prevalence in film and television, to see a great performer in a competition leaves most people awestruck—wondering how that performer is capable of such feats of musicality and virtuosity, but unfortunately to a large extent they may find themselves unable to answer that question. It can seem as if an invisible curtain separates the curious audience member from the performer, as if the two live in different worlds.

Award-winning producer and director Stacey Tenenbaum reported such an experience when she attended the inaugural 2008 edition of the Canadian International Organ Competition. *“The organ just seemed like a magical thing which must be impossible to play”* says Tenenbaum, bringing light to the fact that in the CIOC’s case, the pipe organ as an instrument can be as fascinating and mysterious as the people who play it. Tenenbaum approached the CIOC in 2015 with the idea of making a feature-length documentary about the upcoming 2017 competition, an idea that was received with great enthusiasm. And so, *Pipe Dreams* was born.

*Pipe Dreams* follows five CIOC candidates on their journey to the competition, beginning with their own preparatory work months in advance of the competition and ending with the final round and announcement of the prize winners. The film goes far beyond merely portraying the competitors as they’d appear to any attendee of the (public) competition rounds, presenting a compelling narrative of each of the competitors, focusing on their hopes and fears, their relationships with their teachers, mentors, and loved ones, and their methodical discipline while preparing for the gruelling three-round competition. This was made possible by agreements with the CIOC and with the competitors themselves, which gave the film makers full back-stage access from day one to capture the critical moments in each of their stories leading up to the competition. Tenenbaum has said that for her, it was extremely important to capture as much detail as possible, and this included filming on-location at each of the competitor’s hometowns, some of which were as far as Germany and China. In the same vein, the film features a great variety of

organ music including many contemporary (non-public domain) works, something that Tenenbaum says was important in order for audiences to appreciate the vast array of sound and music the organ and its players are capable of producing.

With a captivating subject (a pipe organ competition), characters with compelling stories, beautiful visuals and varied filming locations on several continents, and a wealth of great and diverse music, Pipe Dreams has all of the ingredients of a superb documentary film. One question remains, however, and this is how these elements might be assembled into an account of the competition that speaks universally- to audience members for whom the pipe organ or Classical music might be unfamiliar. *"Everybody likes to watch interesting people working hard, overcoming fears, and possibly triumphing. That is a formula that works whether it is a film about Classical music or a documentary about shining shoes"*. Speaking further to this persuasive formula, Tenenbaum says she was inspired by other documentary films about competitions of all sorts, and also by sports documentaries and dramas. *"I think that at this level of competition, the organists are very much like Olympic athletes. There is that intense pressure and the constant practice which is the same in music and sport"*.

***"five very different and extremely talented young people following their dreams"***

In Pipe Dreams, the personalities and stories of each of the five competitors are brought to the forefront. Alcée Chriss III, from Texas, discusses how the musical traditions he grew up with in the Gospel church eventually led him to becoming a competitive organist. Chriss describes his decision to include Jazz in one of his competition programs, in relation to the rarity of his position as an AfricanAmerican competitive organist. Acknowledging that the decision wasn't without risks, Chriss nonetheless saw it as a musical expression that would be true to himself and hearken back to the musical traditions of his childhood. Another competitor, Yuan Shen, hails all the way from China, and much of her narrative

focuses on her relationship with her father, who is also her mentor. Shen's father was a pioneer in bringing the electronic organ to China, and Shen herself wishes to continue on that path to encourage the proliferation of the pipe organ and its music in her home country. For Tenenbaum, it was these stories that made Pipe Dreams so much more than just a competition film: *"For me, Pipe Dreams is about five very different and extremely talented young people following their dreams"*.

Another competitor, Nicholas Capozzoli from Pittsburgh, PA, shared some of his thoughts and experiences as a star of the film. *"Initially, it was a little unnerving to be filmed all the time, but eventually I got used to the presence of Stacey and the crew and grew to enjoy their support and encouragement of me as a competitor."* As a high-profile organist, Nicholas also says that the documentary helps to expose audiences to the pipe organ and people who play it. *"Organists are often hidden away from view in a loft, but the documentary features the organists up close, and the audience gets a sense of the diversity of both the instruments themselves and the people who play them"*.



Pipe Dreams was premiered in April 2019 to full-capacity audiences and great praise at the Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival in Toronto. In conjunction with the premiere, the CIOC presented the "Piping Hot Rematch" concert. This event brought together four of the film's stars to relive the excitement of the competition before a packed audience at St. Paul's Bloor Street in Toronto. Subsequent theatrical screenings included Demand. Films screenings in Vancouver, Ottawa, Connecticut, New York, and Missouri, as well as a three-week run at the Cinéma du Musée in Montreal. The film has also been screened in Japan (NHK), and Sweden (SVT), with upcoming screenings planned in Taiwan. The film has garnered critical acclaim and has received numerous press accolades including in the Wall Street Journal and TV insider, and coverage in Entertainment Weekly, the Los Angeles Times, and The New York Times. Currently, the film is available for streaming in the United States on Hulu, iTunes, and Amazon Prime, and is

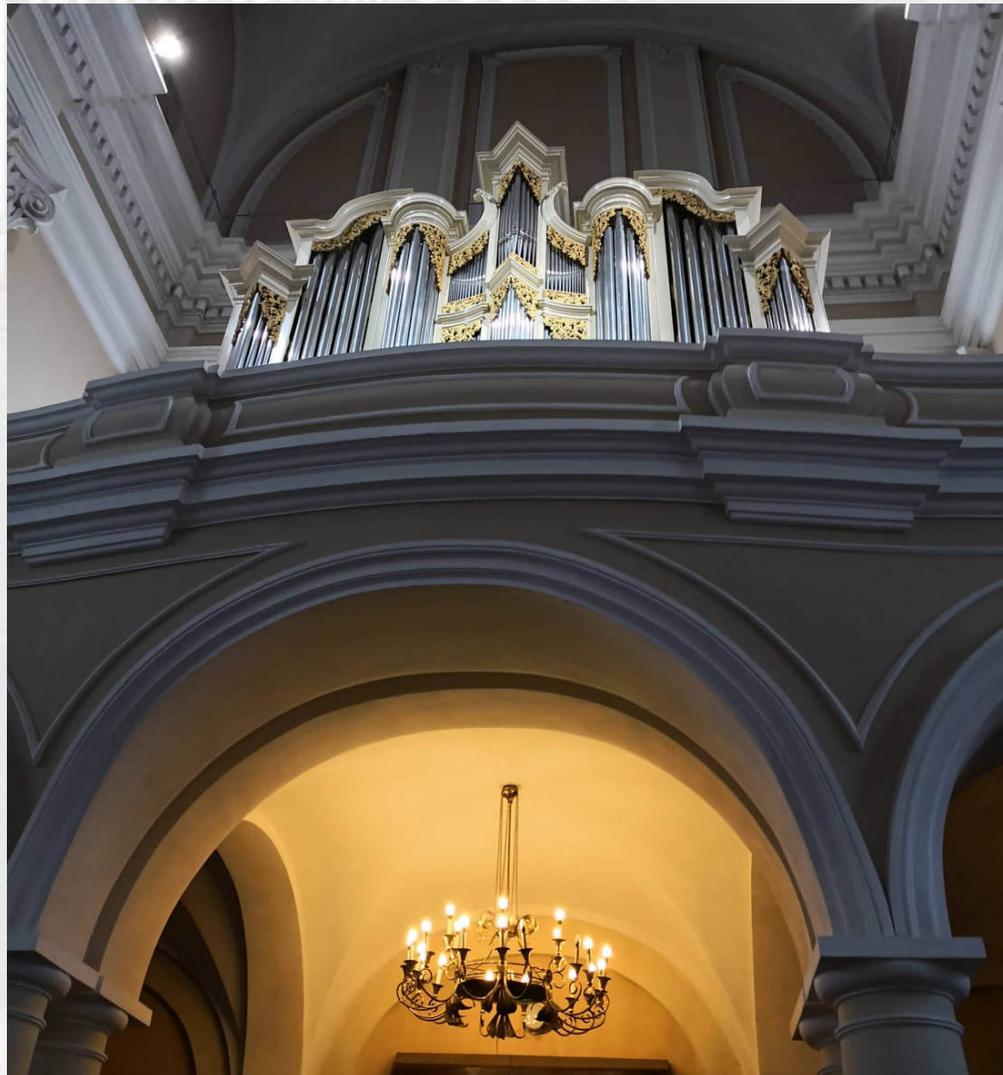
available in Canada on CBC Gem.

For the Canadian International Organ Competition, Pipe Dreams was nothing less than a godsend. *"(Pipe Dreams) is something that we would never have had the means to produce ourselves, and Stacey obtained all of the funding for the documentary- a testament to how much she believed in the project and to the quality of our competition"*, according to Thomas Leslie, CIOC's executive director. *"The film isn't seen through the lens of a pipe organ specialist, giving it a strong public interest appeal in addition to providing a unique platform for the featured organists. Millions of people have seen the film, meaning they are aware of (CIOC), and we still get emails from people who have seen the film and want to know the dates of our next competition. (Pipe Dreams) will pay dividends for our organization for years to come."*

## **Baltic Sounds:**

# **The M. K. Čiurlionis International Organ Competition**

The last International M. K. Čiurlionis Piano and Organ Competition was held in Vilnius in September 2019: an event that traditionally, every four years, invites to Lithuania performers from all over the world. The competition was named after Mikalojus Kostantinas Čiurlionis and is one of the major music events in Lithuania, fostering the timeless musical legacy of the great Lithuanian composer. New professional music talents constantly emerge at the competition; it also promotes works by contemporary Lithuanian composers. The next International M. K. Čiurlionis Piano and Organ Competition will be held in 2023!



# Sydney International Piano Competition Reimagined

Like member competitions everywhere, the 2020 Sydney International Piano Competition was thrown into uncertainty as the world grappled with a new threat that, as we now know, would change how we viewed and approached the simplest of things in our daily lives. Rather than simply 'calling it quits', *The Sydney*, tackled the problem of how to stage their competition head on, harnessing the latest technology to achieve a completely reimagined competition in 2021, held entirely online.

Australia closed their international borders early in the pandemic and to date it is almost impossible for non-Australian travellers to enter the country, which made it impossible to stage a live international competition in Sydney. The online transformation will now see all 32 competitors record in their home countries and cities, with each competitor being given the scope to navigate how they can compete safely for the winner's crown. Working closely with each competitor, *The Sydney* enabled venues, pianos, recording equipment and technicians to ensure performance submissions for all three competition rounds were captured in advance and at their best for the judges.

The pre-recorded, high definition broadcast of competitor recitals will be post-edited into 28 sessions and aired 'on demand' from 1 - 18 July. No one, bar the jury, will know who progresses through to the Semi's and Finals until the broadcast dates, maintaining the thrill for competitors and audiences alike. A gala opening concert featuring 2016 winner Andrey Gugnin and the Tchaikovsky Symphony Orchestra in Moscow, filmed exclusively for *The Sydney*, will herald the launch of competition on 1 July.

An unlimited digital season pass to all performances is priced from \$350 AUD with single tickets priced from \$15. To watch online book [HERE](#).

<https://thesydney.com.au/>



SYDNEY  
INTERNATIONAL  
ONLINE PIANO  
COMPETITION



# Back in Business

# THE RUBINSTEIN 2021

*WFIMC Secretary General Florian Riem about his visit to the Arthur Rubinstein International Piano Master Competition 2021*

In what was to be my first trip abroad outside of Europe this year, I felt slightly anxious when my half-empty Air France- jet touched down at Ben Gurion. Remembering the stringent cross-examinations of past visits, I stepped out of the plane in to a deserted terminal. To my surprise, there was no live passport-control, only a machine, which read my passport without a hitch. Customs was non-existent, instead a fence in the arrivals lobby directing everyone to the Covid19- Testing center. Uneasy, I went to the counter, somehow expecting the stringent regime of Asian airports I had experienced last year. Instead, a young Israeli student with her mask half off took down my name and address. Few minutes later, a quick swab and I was free to go. The result would be sent to me in a few hours, they said (it arrived four hours later). This was the first of four tests I took while in Israel.

Among the candidates, jury and visitors of the competition, the lucky ones were exempt from quarantine- albeit only after taking a serological test to determine whether one was actually vaccinated (The competitors were not so lucky- all finalists from abroad had to arrive two weeks early and go into isolation). However, much worse than the actual testing was the huge administrative effort the competition office had to make. In order to get exempt from quarantine, and to leave the country, the results of the serological test along with a number of other documents above all had to be approved by the Israeli ministry of health. Kudos to the competition who mastered all this without fail!

Being the first competition in 2021 to be held live, The Rubinstein also had a live jury: Arie Vardi, Yefim Bronfman, Thomas Duis, Taiseer Elias, Christopher Elton, Tomer Lev and Craig Sheppard. Three more jurors did not make it to Israel due to restrictions: Menahem Pressler (97!), Ewa Poblocka and Hung Kuan Chen watched the finals unfold on their screens at home. Two of the jurors were former winners of the competition: Hung Kuan Chen and Thomas Duis. Always euphoric and never without a smile, Thomas Duis at a reception suddenly turned emotional when he recalled the competition of 1986- a life-changing event for the seasoned German professor.

prompting standing ovations in the audience and even a profuse reaction in the jury. Pérez, a 28-year old student at Hans Eisler, made for a perfect winner: unpretentious, charismatic, with outstanding musicality, staggering technique and in total control. The orchestra followed him from the very first note. Pérez did not only win the first prize, but also the audience prize and a host of other awards (Chairman Vardi smilingly told him not to keep standing and not sit down in the ceremony, as he won one prize after the other).

*Masked and unmasked jury: Christopher Elton, Thomas Duis, Craig Sheppard, Yefim Bronfman (at Ben Gurion Airport)*



*Cunmo Yin, Juan Pérez Floristán, and Shiori Kuwahara at the Awards Ceremony*

Interestingly, Jury Chairman Arie Vardi had also been judging when Duis won in 1986. Indeed, Vardi has been a steady companion of the Rubinstein since his first jury posting in 1977: at that time, Vardi was 40, while jury Chairman Arthur Rubinstein had been 90.

The Grand Concerto Finals were held on two evenings, both expertly accompanied by the Israel Philharmonic under Shanghai conductor Xi-An Xu. But while some of the concertos sounded slightly underwhelming, the IPO also showed its real world-class skills when Spanish pianist Juan Pérez Floristán presented a fast and fiery Rachmaninov II,



But the other finalists did not disappoint either- among them Shiori Kuwahara, a Japanese pianist and former Busoni winner (2nd Prize), and Cunmo Yin from China, a former winner of the Bonn Telekom competition (3rd prize). Besides the first three prizes, which come with medals designed by Picasso (Rubinstein and Picasso were close friends), there are many other prizes, so no-one has to go home empty-handed. As all six finalists are presented center-stage at the ceremony, this is a very nice gesture.

Both grand concerto finals were held at the Charles Bronfman Auditorium in central Tel Aviv- a fitting

venue since this 2500-seat hall was inaugurated in 1957 by Arthur Rubinstein himself- with the Israel Philharmonic and Leonard Bernstein conducting. Health regulations allowed an audience of 75% capacity, but even with a strict health protocol (masks mandatory at all times, and no entry without a green pass), the performances felt very much like “real” concerts. A great beginning for a country whose music scene had been virtually silent since the outbreak of the pandemic. The 2021 Rubinstein also marked the first major competition going live this year- bringing back to life also the hopes and dreams of countless young musicians.

*Standing Ovations for Juan Pérez Floristán at the Charles Bronfman Auditorium (3 May 2021)*



日本メンバーによる国際音楽コンクール世界連盟

WFIMC

# ラウンジ

Monday, 31 May 17:00 JST / 5月31日(月)午後5時

## コロナ禍での国際コンクールの在り方

コロナ禍にみまわれて1年余り、生活スタイルの大きな変化を強いられました。国内外の往来も難しくなり、芸術分野でも、公演、イベント、さまざまな行事が中止、延期を余儀なくされています。このような状況の中での国際コンクールの在り方、アーティストたちは今どんなことができるのか、各国のコンクールはこのコロナ禍でどう対処しているのか、などをテーマに、3人のパネリスト中心に「WFIMCラウンジ」を行います。ぜひ参加してみませんか？



Kyoko Takezawa  
竹澤恭子



Noriko Ogawa  
小川典子



Florian Riem  
フロリアン・リィム

**Visit the first WFIMC Regional Lounge, all in Japanese!**

**-more sessions to follow-**

# WFIMC 2021 General Assembly

Hosted by the Premio Paolo Borciani  
International String Quartet Competition

Sunday 13th June, 2021  
Teatro Municipale Valli

Welcome reception  
*Finale Borciani Competition*  
Light Dinner

Monday 14th June, 2021  
Teatro Municipale Valli

General Assembly  
*(optional) visit San Pietro Cloister*  
*President's Farewell Dinner*

13–16 June 2021  
Reggio Emilia, Italy

Registration starts 25 May  
sessions also available on livestream

Tuesday 15th June, 2021  
Teatro Municipale Valli

General Assembly  
*optional visit Collezione Maramotti*  
*New President's Welcome Dinner* (

Wednesday 16th June, 2021  
Excursion Day



# AGENDA

## WFIMC Competitions June-August 2021

**27 May- 5 June**

**ZURICH SWITZERLAND**

Geza Anda International Piano Competition

**31 May**

**ONLINE**

WFIMC LOUNGE Japan (in Japanese)

**3-13 June**

**ZWICKAU GERMANY**

International Robert Schumann Competition

***Competition cancelled and replaced by Video Competition***

**5-13 June**

**REGGIO EMILIA ITALY**

Premio Paolo Borciani International String Quartet Competition

**13 June-16 June**

**REGGIO EMILIA ITALY & ONLINE**

**WFIMC GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

***Registration starts 25 June  
more info on [wfimc.org](http://wfimc.org) (member area)***

**6- 12 June**

**YEREVAN ARMENIA**

Aram Khachaturian International Conducting Competition

**23 June- 2 July**

**VALENCIA SPAIN**

International Piano Competition "Iturbi Prize"

**1-18 July**

**SYDNEY AUSTRALIA**

Sydney International Online Piano Competition

**3-15 July**

**BARCELONA SPAIN**

Maria Canals International Piano Competition

**8 July- 11 August**

**CLEVELAND, OHIO USA**

Cleveland International Piano Competition

**9-13 August**

**JEJU SOUTH KOREA**

Jeju International Brass Competition  
1st and 2nd Rounds online  
Finals postponed to December

**10-15 August**

**SAINT MAURICE SWITZERLAND**

International Organ Competition of Saint Maurice d' Agaune

## AGENDA

### JUNE- AUGUST 2021 (continued)

**14-21 August**

#### **SAINT PETERSBURG RUSSIA**

Elena Obraztsova International Competition of Opera Singers

**18-21 August**

#### **SHANGHAI CHINA**

Shanghai Isaac Stern International Violin Competition

*Quarterfinals and Semifinals online  
Finals postponed to 2022*

**25 August- 4 September**

#### **BOLZANO ITALY**

Ferruccio Busoni International Piano Competition

**26 August- 5 September**

#### **KOBE JAPAN**

Kobe International Flute Competition

1st and 2nd Rounds online/ Finals postponed to 2022

**28 August- 4 September**

#### **SION SWITZERLAND**

Tibor Varga International Violin Competition

**29 August- 5 September**

#### **BUDAPEST HUNGARY**

International Eva Marton Singing Competition

**30 August- 17 September**

#### **MUNICH GERMANY**

ARD International Music Competition (Voice, Violin, Piano Duo, Horn)



**WORLD FEDERATION  
OF INTERNATIONAL  
MUSIC COMPETITIONS**

