

AUTUMN/WINTER 2015 ISSUE 9

TEMPO

TEN COMPETITIONS AND STILL ...



...

END OF AN ERA
ANN FULLER

**BILL WHELAN
ON THE IRISH
COMPOSITIONS**

**BRENDA WILKES
SHAPING STARS**
THE FOLEY & FINLAY PROGRAMMES

**FINGHIN COLLINS
GROWING UP
WITH THE DIPIC!**

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WELCOME

THIS edition of TEMPO is about celebration: celebrating a new winner, the 10th winner and the first female winner; celebrating the end of an era, with the retirement of DIPC co-founder and Chief Executive, Ann Fuller; celebrating the young Irish pianists that the DIPC has invested in over the last three years; celebrating Irish composers and the role the DIPC has had in nurturing contemporary Irish piano music...and celebrating, with some anticipation however, the future – looking towards the 11th Dublin International Piano Competition

We have invited some very old 'friends' of the DIPC to contribute, with a little trip down memory lane from both the perspective of volunteers backstage (Enid Chaloner, Adrienne Carolan, Finghin Collins), performers on stage (Nathalia Milstein, the Foley and Finlay participants, Finghin Collins (again!)), the promoter of the Shaping Stars initiative (Brenda Wilkes), an important Irish composer (Bill Whelan) as well as words about the past, with an eye to the future, from John O'Connor, Margaret Downes and Laurie Cearr.

We hope this issue makes for an interesting read and we hope, too, that you, our Friends, will continue to help us ensure the continuation of Dublin's premier classical music event, and one of the most admired piano competitions in the world!

David

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TEMPO Autumn 2015

Message from our Chairman

SINCE its inception almost thirty years ago, the Dublin International Piano Competition has been regarded with admiration and respect. Its winners have progressed to successful careers at the highest level, and it has launched, promoted and help sustain the careers of many a successful Irish pianist. We were delighted earlier in this year when the 10th DIPC was won for the first time by a young woman of immense talent: 20 year old Nathalia Milstein from France.

It goes without saying that an event of such world class status could not succeed without the myriad of people who selflessly give of their time to ensure the smooth running of the event. So, a huge thank you to the host families, drivers, escorts administration and background support without whom the Competition would not be such a success.

While the difficult economic times of the recent past seem to be behind us, artistic endeavours continue to struggle and, like many other events, we are heading into uncharted waters in terms of funding. In order for this very special Competition, a beacon in the cultural life of Dublin, and a vital launch-pad for the career of young pianists' - Irish and international – to continue in 2018 and beyond, we still need to secure additional sponsorship. Current plans are that the Competition continues as a competitive event, but

with a greater focus on our existing and yet-to-be presented education initiatives, as well as on the presentation of more performance-related activities. With a refreshed focus on these vital elements for professional pianists, we hope to find funding in the very near future. Indeed, given the changed world of arts sponsorship, we are currently looking into engaging a professional fundraiser for the first time, in order to ensure that we can continue to bring this event to Dublin every three years, to continue investing in the education of young Irish pianists and to our commitment to launching the careers of our main prize winners.

As Chairman I would also like to thank my fellow Board Members for their time and expertise and on their behalf I pay tribute to the Executive Committee and the dedicated administration staff. I would also like to express our gratitude for the continuing loyalty demonstrated by a number of sponsors and supporters who, time after time, provide vital funds, prizes, trophies, refreshments and hospitality. This unstinting, ongoing assistance is greatly appreciated.

While the 10th Competition saw the first female winner, it also marks the end of an era: Ann Fuller, co-founder and Administrator since the very beginning in 1987 will step down on the 31st December 2015. Ann's strength of

character and theatrical expertise have certainly been pivotal in ensuring that the DIPC was launched, that it grew so quickly and that it was soon considered by the World Federation of International Music Competitions to be among the top six piano competitions in the world. I have had the professional pleasure and personal enjoyment of working with Ann over nearly twenty years. I wish Ann every success and happiness in her retirement. Her loss to the DIPC will be enormous.

I am pleased to welcome Brenda Wilkes on board as Ann's successor. Brenda has been involved with the DIPC for many years and will take over from Ann in January 2016. I look forward to working with her to ensure that this exceptional competition continues to punch above its weight.

Margaret Downes

Taking STOCK



John O'Connor

WE are still basking in the success of our wonderful 2015 Dublin International Piano Competition. The standard of playing throughout the Competition was magnificent and there was not one weak performer among the 63 who came to dazzle us with their virtuosity, wow us with their technical expertise, delight us with their musical imagination and amaze us with the variety and depth of their interpretations. The buzz and excitement of the sold-out audience on the night of the Final was exhilarating. Graced with the presence of our ever-supportive President Michael D. Higgins and his lovely wife Sabina, and accompanied by the superb RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra under the direction of their experienced and flexible Principal Conductor Alan Buribayev, the finalists gave us a feast of music and the exuberant reaction of the audience and jury was a thrill.

It was also a thrill to have our first ever female First Prize Winner. Nathalia Milstein from France gave wonderful performances in every round of the Competition and capped it all in the Final with a stunning performance of Prokofiev's fiendishly difficult Second



Concerto to deservedly win the vote of the jury and audience alike. It will be fascinating to watch her develop her career as we guide her through her National Concert Hall debut recital on February 17th next, her Carnegie Hall debut recital on March 21st 2016 and her Wigmore Hall debut in May 2017. Her grace and charm have already captivated those of us who have had contact with her as we plan for her future and we hope that many more people will get to know her well as she fulfils her prize engagements in Ireland over the next few years.

For me the 2015 Competition was difficult as I knew that it would be the last time that Ann Fuller and I would collaborate. I have known Ann for well over 30 years and our friendship has been a very special part of my life. We first worked together when she was trying to raise funds for An Taisce and that friendship solidified when she promoted my first ever series of the complete Beethoven Sonatas at the NCH in the 1984/85 season. After the success of that venture it seemed a natural progression for us to co-operate on our dream of a major International Piano Competition in Dublin. Ann was Administrator from the very beginning and ran the organisation like a major general - but one with huge charisma, extraordinary generosity, great flair and an enormously loyal band of friends and admirers who have been the basis of our wonderful volunteers ever since. I know how much energy and enthusiasm she has put into the Competition over the years and I think the first time that she said she was giving up was about 20 years ago. I always hoped it wouldn't happen but was forced to accept the decision that she took about two years ago that this would be her last Competition in her present role.

But we hope that she will still be with us for many years to come as we cannot do without her wisdom, experience, connections and infectious personality. I will always remain her devoted fan.

I am very happy to be able to welcome as Ann's replacement Brenda Wilkes who will be working with Ann and her invaluable assistant Sandra Price in November and December to ensure a seamless handover on January 1st. Many of you will know Brenda as she has been involved with the Competition from the beginning. She is also my first cousin and we have always got on well together! She first worked as a volunteer in the Green Room and Jury Room and more recently has been more visible as one of the announcers of the early rounds in the RDS. She has an honours degree in Music and an A.T.C.L. Teacher's Diploma in piano and was for many years Head of Music at Alexandra College in Dublin, so she has a lot of experience as an Administrator. Please join me in welcoming her to our team. She has a tough act to follow but all who know her admire her energy, dedication, charm and tact.

Now we are faced with the task of raising the funds to present the 2018 Competition at the same level and prestige it has always had. The fundraising drive has already begun and I hope that you, our loyal friends and supporters, will pitch in as early as possible with your donations - and if you can increase them at all from your contribution to the 2015 Competition I will be immensely grateful. Our plan is to ensure that this great feast of piano playing will be around for many years to come.



Bill Whelan

Photo by Jim McCann

Irish COMPOSERS

It was sometime in the late 1980s when a quietly spoken lady arrived at our door accompanied by a polite young Asian boy and his mother. They stood bowing politely in the hall, and though we offered them tea, they were keen to get to work and asked to go straight to the piano. Over the coming weeks our Steinway was to be treated to a variety of styles as several young virtuosi strutted their stuff through muscular sonatas and delicate etudes. They were the first of many visitors to our home over the next 25 years preparing for their participation in the Dublin International Piano Competition which had quickly grown to be one of the most sought-after prizes on the international circuit.

That growth was very much due to the vision of John O’Conor and to the commitment of all the Board members and supporters of the Competition since its inception in 1988. And it is particularly due to the passion, attention to detail and (there is no other word for it) love of piano music that inhabits the great soul of Ann Fuller. Words like “embrace” and “nurture” slip easily into the brain when searching for accurate descriptions of what this extraordinary woman has contributed. But one should guard against being too sentimental here - behind that exterior warmth there is a steely pragmatism that

will be quickly engaged whenever an obstacle is encountered, or an extra effort is required to find resources or eke that last droplet of blood from a resistant stone.

As a composer, I am proud to have been one of over 30 Irish composers who have written pieces especially for the Competition since Philip Martin wrote “The Rainbow Comes and Goes” back in 1988. My own piece “The Currach” was performed by the 2009 overall winner Alexej Gorlatch. It was curious how this had come about. John O’Conor was visiting my house in Connemara with Ann Fuller one evening, and suggested to me that I should write a piece for the Competition. I had written a double violin concerto for Fionnuala Hunt, Zoe Conway and the Irish Chamber Orchestra, and I played John a rough recording of the first movement of the concerto which I had recorded on keyboard. John urged me to write a version of this for solo piano - he thought it would be challenging for the competitors to play, and had a strong Irish flavour. So I set about adapting my orchestral arrangement for solo piano, and the resulting piece was chosen by many of the performers of that year. Alexej Gorlatch has performed it many times internationally, and it has been recorded by Michael McHale on his very successful album “The Irish Piano”.

The Dublin International Piano Competition has served not only as an important locus for young Irish and international pianists to display their virtuosity and skills, but also as a proving ground for the future piano stars, where the quality of adjudication is so carefully preserved, and where a winner in Ireland can be regarded seriously anywhere in the world. Added to this, the Competition has become a breeding ground for new music, and hopefully this vision for the Competition will continue to grow over the coming decades. It has certainly placed Ireland in a central position on the International Piano Circuit, and on this special year in the life of the Competition, it is with a great deal of pride we salute the incomparable contribution that Ann Fuller has made to bringing this about.

BIO Renowned composer, producer and arranger Bill Whelan has worked extensively in theatre, film and television. His grammy winning album of music for Riverdance The Show is certified Platinum in the US, Ireland and Australia. His orchestral work, The Seville Suite was specially commissioned for Expo '92. The Spirit Of Mayo, was first performed in 1993 by an 85-piece orchestra in Dublin's National Concert Hall. As a producer he has worked with U2, Van Morrison, Kate Bush, Richard Harris, The Dubliners, Planxty, Andy Irvine, Patrick Street, Stockton's Wing, Davy Spillane and Bulgarian/Irish band, East Wind. His recently completed trilogy of pieces for chamber orchestra: Inishlacken, Carna and Errisbeg are included on his latest CD, “The Connemara Suite”.

Commissioned Pieces

1988	Philip Martin	The Rainbow Comes and Goes	2000	Seoirse Bodley Marian Ingoldsby Kevin O’Connell James Wilson	Chiaroscuro (The Taking of Christ) Red Shoes Etude 2000 Tree and Moon op. 148	2009	David Byers Siobhan Cleary Jennifer Walshe Bill Whelan	A Full Moon Chaconne Becher The Currach
1991	Gerald Barry Philip Hammond Eric Sweeney	Triorchic Blues French Blue The Blackberry Blossom	2003	Frank Corcoran Michael Holohan Philip Martin Ian Wilson	Sweeney’s Total Rondo Monaincha In a Thousand Valleys Far & Wide Verschwindend	2012	Eibhlís Farrell Breffni O’Byrne Martin O’Leary	Gleann na Sidhe – The Fairy Glen Rhapsody Blue Toccata
1994	Brian Boydell John Buckley Jane O’Leary	The Maiden and the Seven Devils The Silver Apples of the Moon, The Golden Apples of the Sun From the Crest of a Green Wave	2006	Elaine Agnew Rhona Clarke John Gibson John McLachlan	Seagull Tread Softly Moladh go deo le Dia Grand Action	2015	Linda Buckley Donnacha Dennehy Gráinne Mulvey	Liquid Mercury North Wall Interference Patterns
1997	Raymond Deane Fergus Johnson John Kinsella Kevin Volans	Chorale The Oul’ Winda Rag Reflection II March						



Growing up with the Competition

I was just eleven when the first Dublin International Piano Competition, sponsored by GPA, took place. I remember it well and the huge excitement it generated. I still remember the names, faces and performances of the six finalists in particular (and just two months ago I performed in the same festival as Klára Würtz who got sixth!) Philippe Cassard, who won that competition, instantly captured all of our hearts and I was incredibly lucky that in January 1991, just months before the second competition, I made my *début* aged 13 in the National Concert Hall, performing Mozart's Triple Piano Concerto with Philippe and John O'Connor with the RTÉ Concert Orchestra and Proinnsias O'Duinn in a Gala Mozart bicentenary concert. We still have the video! I was never so

excited in all my life. And Philippe has remained a friend and colleague ever since.

The second Competition was no less appealing, and I think we all, young and old, realised quickly that Pavel Nersessian was one hell of a pianist! I was also very struck by Enrico Pace and his performance of Liszt / Mozart Don Juan (which I have just discovered is on YouTube!). During this competition and the subsequent one (1994) I volunteered as a runner for the jury and librarian, helping to sort out all the mountains of music that the jury needed for each session. This was great fun and gave me a direct insight into the workings of the Competition behind the scenes. I will never forget Davide Franceschetti's Chopin Etudes Op. 10 in the first round that year – I nearly gave up the piano altogether!

In 1997, aged 20, I took part in the competition myself. This was a VERY different experience. Never have I felt so much pressure on my shoulders! I felt everyone expected me to do well, there was enough tension in the RDS Concert Hall to provide power to a small country and I positively quaked! Poor John was not only my teacher but Chair of the Jury (as

well as founder and AD of the Competition) ... he tried his best to look relaxed, but he was just as nervous as I was! In the end, I was very pleased to get as far as the semi-finals, and then disappointed not to reach the finals, as actually, once I reached the semis and the NCH, I relaxed a bit and felt more at ease. The Brennan Prize provided an enormous boost to my career and the Brennan family deserve enormous credit for providing it each year. Indeed it has developed even further since my day, and it is a terrific asset to any young Irish pianist.

And so by the new millennium I was out the other end, and the participants started to get younger and younger. I always tried to attend as much of the Competition as I could, often finding, as many others did too, that much of the most brilliant and impressive playing happened in the first rounds. Often they didn't make it through. Such is the way with competitions. One after another, the displays of brilliance were often dazzling. One after another, the winners and prize-winners were selected, not always to everyone's approval. (Such is the way with competitions).



Photo by Colm Hogan



*... there was enough tension
in the RDS Concert Hall
to provide power to
a small country...*



Finghin Collins

Photo by Mark Stedman

The Competition is second to none in the way it supports and promotes its winners.

In 2009 I joined the Board of Directors of the Competition, affording me yet another insight into the workings of the organisation, and I swiftly became aware of the financial pressures bearing down on us. I also realised that John is not only founder, Artistic Director and Chair of the Jury, he is also principal fundraiser! Enormous credit is due to him as it is to all the sponsors of the Competition down through the years.

The importance of the Competition to young pianists growing up in this country is immense. To have first-hand live access, on our very own doorstep, to the best young pianists in the world,

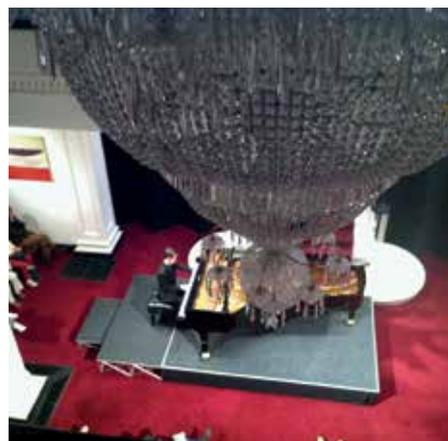
is an enormous inspiration and indeed it is a feast for anyone who loves music. The Competition is second to none in the way it supports and promotes its winners. Moreover, through all the other events and projects which the Competition runs and operates, it supports and promotes pianists from all over this country. I have been very fortunate to help to select the teenage Irish pianists who take part in the Finlay Programme. This provides invaluable training and experience to our most talented pianists who might yet break my record and make it to the finals. We wish them all well.

As we look forward to the 2018 Competition, there is one more role that might just be on the cards for me. Can anyone guess what that might be? As I will by then be over 40, I should hopefully have the requisite maturity, gravitas and, ahem, judgement to fulfil that new duty to the very best of my ability.



Photo by Conor McCabe

BIO Finghin Collins was born in Dublin in 1977 and studied with John O'Connor at the Royal Irish Academy of Music and with Dominique Merlet at the Geneva Conservatoire. He established his international reputation by winning the 1999 Clara Haskil International Piano Competition. In 2013 he completed his three-year tenure as Associate Artist of the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra, in which he performed the complete Mozart and Beethoven piano concertos. His double CD recording for the RTÉ lyric fm label of four Mozart piano concertos directed from the keyboard with the RTÉ NSO was also released in May 2013. Finghin Collins has been Artistic Director of the New Ross Piano Festival since its inception in 2006, and has also been Artistic Director of Music for Galway since 2013. See www.finghincollins.com



Shaping STARS



Brenda Wilkes

HAVING been involved in Music Education for many years as Head of Music in Alexandra College I was invited to the Dublin International Piano Competition Development Committee meeting in August 2014 to discuss the feasibility of Schools recitals for the six Irish contestants and also down the line for the talented up and coming pianists. I then met with Yvonne Mays to discuss how we could set this up and how it could work. After various ideas were tossed around it really boiled down to which schools were interested and to what extent. A letter was sent around to several schools to which we received no replies! We then decided the direct approach by email and phone would be best and indeed it so proved to be.

These recitals were very much dependent on schools being free at the same time as one of the six Irish contestants. They all have such a busy lifestyle and many of them were studying away, and schools also have very busy timetables with Mocks, Practical for the Leaving and Junior Cert, Work experience etc. etc.

However we managed to accommodate all the competitors with two recitals each, taking place between 2nd March right up to the 11th May just before the Competition started. Some of these concerts were for Junior School Children and some for Leaving Cert Students. In some schools the audience was for the whole school. In all cases the competitors were expected to introduce their programme and answer questions after they had played. The one question that kept coming up was 'How long do you practise!' There were some more serious questions too!

I was lucky enough to have been free to attend four of the twelve recitals and the pianists were extremely well received and their audience was captivated. I really felt it was a very worthwhile venture. The teachers in these schools really enjoyed these recitals and felt that it had a very good influence on their students. As for the performers the feedback I got was that it was wonderful to try out their programme ahead of the Competition.

Unfortunately some of the schools did not have a grand piano which was a shame. Pianists of this calibre don't benefit from

playing a recital on an upright nor can they adequately express themselves due to the limitations of the instrument.

That said the audiences did enjoy the recitals! But our job in the DIPC is to encourage excellence! We are very grateful to the participating schools The High School, Alexandra College, St. Conleth's, Gonzaga, Teresians, Sandford Park School, Kildare Place School and Belvedere College.

We are extremely proud of the six Irish competitors and wish them every success in their future careers. We are of course thrilled that two of them got through the first round and congratulations to Sean Morgan Rooney on his achievement – The Brennan Prize.

BIO Brenda Wilkes is former Head of Music at Alexandra College in Dublin from 1993 – 2004. Prior to that, Brenda was a piano teacher in both the Dublin Conservatory for Music and Drama and the Kildare Place National School. She was appointed examiner for the Royal Irish Academy of Music in 1989. Brenda has been involved with the Dublin International Piano Competition from the beginning, always as a Green Room and Jury Room volunteer. She has since become well-known as one of the announcers at the first and second rounds of the DIPC in the RDS. This year, she was involved in setting up the 'Shaping Stars' Programme – enabling the Irish competitors to give recitals in schools. Brenda took early retirement from Alexandra College in 2004 and since then has enjoyed travel, sailing, painting and flying small aircraft.

FOLEY6



GARY BEECHER (21, Cork)

"The DIPC was a wonderfully enriching experience for me. The practice preparation, the preparatory school concerts organised as part of the wonderful Foley Programme, and of course the Competition itself all helped me to really grow as a person and as a musician. I would like to mention one particular aspect of my experience of the DIPC which is vivid in my memory: the people! Ann Fuller and Sandra Price were, as always, so organised, helpful and welcoming! I was particularly grateful to have met Adrienne Carolan, who is such a kind-hearted, caring person. Adrienne, as with so many of all the volunteers, has such a pleasant, jovial way about her which made me feel completely at ease. To be surrounded by such kind, helpful, hard-working and enthusiastic people was an absolute pleasure and joy."



ADAM MCDONAGH (21, Dublin)

"I am very grateful to Brenda for organising the school recitals which greatly helped me prepare for the International Competition. It was a refreshing challenge to present classical piano music in a way that would engage a very different kind of audience. Overall, I really enjoyed the new and extraordinary experience of the Competition: performing for a large high-profile jury, up against many of the top pianists in the world, and at the same time representing Ireland. It really motivated me to work hard and give my best performance."



JONATHAN MORRIS (22, Wexford)

"The DIPC 2015 was an unforgettable experience. I met so many great musicians and people interested in supporting young artists. It was inspiring to feel the palpable excitement for classical music. I can't wait to take part again in a few years' time!"



FINLAY4

TO develop young pianists to the standard required for the Dublin International Piano Competition and, indeed, other international competitions, requires the right teaching. They must cover every aspect from elementary stages, when potential talent can first be spotted and nurtured, through to rigorous and inspired training at the highest level.

The William Finlay Programme for Gifted Young Artists

This programme, which commenced in 2010, targets young pianists between the ages of 13 and 17 every three years. The pianists are given intensive coaching in a variety of areas related to the piano, including education in the wider arts, performance psychology, mentoring, marketing and presentation skills.

Ireland's outstanding young pianists are a source of great excitement and potential, displaying the talent, motivation and ability to enter a high level career in music. However, standards rise quickly and the DIPC aims to offer our most gifted pianists and their teachers a supportive programme that maximises their abilities and their potential.

A gifted young pianist's programme will offer systematic support to a small number of our most outstanding 13-17 year old students in a series of intensive workshops and masterclasses.

FINLAY4



EIOIN FLEMING

"The Finlay Programme was an extremely insightful and enjoyable experience. It boosted my confidence in performing, as with the Beethoven Bootcamp, a concert in the NCH and a Masterclass with Pavel Nersessian, to mention just a few! I benefited greatly from the mock interview we did with Eoghan McDermott, as later in the year I was a competitor in the inaugural Van Cliburn Junior International Competition, Texas, where I had many interviews. Perhaps the best advice was from Nadene Fiorentini: many pianists believe you just need to be mentally fit, overlooking physical fitness. When you are physically fit, exercising regularly, you think more clearly, are more productive and alert. Practising for 8 hours a day is great but you need to get out and breathe in some fresh air, move around, or you'll drive yourself mad!! Now I go for a short walk every day! Overall, The Finlay Programme was a fantastic opportunity and experience."



EMILY CROWLEY

"To be chosen to take part in the William Finlay Programme was an honour and has given me great encouragement. I always enjoyed meeting and interacting with the other participants, Eoin, Ella and Kevin. We received interesting talks on performance from which I learnt a lot and the masterclass with John O'Connor during the 'Beethoven Project' was really memorable. The highlights of the programme for me were the two public performance opportunities which were in the John Field Room of NCH in October 2014 and the Curtis Auditorium at the CIT Cork School of Music in March 2015. To perform in these venues was inspirational."



KEVIN JANSSON

"It was a huge honour in itself to be one of the four young people selected from such a talented group of applicants. Being able to share our common experiences of trying to combine our very busy musical and school lives created a bond between us almost immediately. What meant a lot for me personally was the opportunity to play for teachers of the highest calibre including John O'Connor of course, but also Pavel Nersessian, former winner of DIPC, and German pianist Joseph Moog who has just been named Gramophone Young Artist of the Year. I also had some great performing opportunities at the John Field Room in the National Concert Hall, at the Beethoven Bootcamp at the RIAM in Dublin, at CIT Cork School of Music and at the New Ross Piano Festival. Thank you to everybody who made it possible!"



ELLA NAGY

"From the moment that I heard about the Finlay Programme I knew it would be a life changing experience and that I just had to apply for it! Having been chosen aboard thrilled me, however the experience that I received is even greater. I have gone from 'enjoying' piano to passionately loving it. Taking part in masterclasses was so inspiring, preparing and playing for the National Concert Hall Lunchtime Recital was exhilarating, the list could go on and on."

I have been the Jury Secretary for the 2015 Dublin International Piano Competition in which I received such great insight and knowledge. Completing this programme inspired me, motivated me and shaped me."



BILLY O'BRIEN
(22, Waterford)

"The DIPC was a milestone for me and my piano playing...after performing in the DIPC I felt like I could perform anywhere! It helped me enormously in raising the standard of my playing, and the Maurice Foley programme was crucial for my preparation. Working with Pavel Nersessian as part of the Foley programme was a particularly memorable experience; his masterclass was so artistic and inspiring."



PETER REGAN
(19, Roscommon)

"My experience of the Piano Competition was wonderful; I heard inspiring performances of beautiful music, and meeting the other competitors was both fascinating and fun! Preparing for the Competition really raised the level of my playing, and I learned a lot about myself in the process. Being part of the Foley programme encouraged me to grow and gave me the knowledge to encourage my own growth in future."



SEÁN MORGAN ROONEY
(21, Newry)

"Being a part of the Foley Programme made the experience of competing in the Dublin International Piano Competition a particularly happy one. For me, this came down to the continued support of the DIPC team in the run - up to the competition, the invaluable performance opportunities we received beforehand and the convivial company of five other Irish pianists going through it all with you."

9

PAST WINNERS

TESTIMONIALS FOR ANN FULLER



Philippe Cassard (1988)

Ann has won the Super Grand Prize (with all Winners agreement) for her absolute, entire, fanatical devotion to the Competition since 1985. She also gets the Special Prize of the heart, of the marvelous, unforgettable care and love she has provided to each of us. Definitely my second mother for ever!



Romain Descharmes (2006)

Ann Fuller is always full of life, generosity and simplicity. I loved our great moments of fun, the sharpness of her music sense and her support during and after the competition. A big thank you Ann!



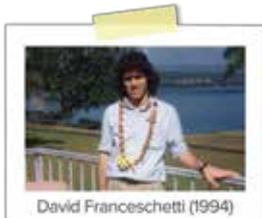
Pavel Nersessian (1991)

Honest and clever, passionate and tactful, supporting and helping, she deserves the first prize for her smile. She is a holiday, she brings festive mood with her, and it's a life pleasure both to work and to leisure with Ann.



Alexej Gorlatch (2009)

Ann Fuller is an extraordinary person – her honesty, warmth, and enthusiasm can be felt immediately: on meeting her, the comfort of an old friend and confidante exudes. She beams motivation and respect, in all she does there is fire and dedication. I believe this is the reason for her success in making the DIPIC stand out from all the others, with its very own special identity.



David Franceschetti (1994)

Ann was like a second mother to me but also a wonderful companion of adventures, unforgettable our tour in Hawaii in 1996!



Nikolay Khozainov (2012)

I remember the time spent with Ann with warmth and tenderness in my heart. I always felt her support both during the competition and after it. Ann is a remarkably delicate, wise, honest, clever, passionate and tactful woman – she deserves the first prize for her smile.



Max Levinson (1997)

Simply put, Ann Fuller is one of my favorite people – in fact, getting to know Ann has been one of the best parts of my competition prize! I know no one else more dedicated, more tireless, more devoted, more thoughtful, or frankly more entertaining, and I love her dearly!



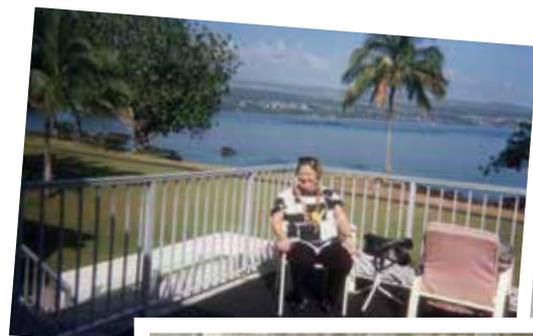
Alexei Nabioulin (2000)

I am very happy and thank my lucky stars that my young years, from 21 to 25, were spent under the wing of our dear Ann. Apart from her professional support and care, Ann always shed her warmth and kindness on those around her. I can say that much of what I have learned in life has been thanks to our great Ann. Thank you from all of us!



Antti Sirala (2003)

From the very first day in Dublin it was clear that Ann was the heart and soul of the Competition. I had the pleasure of traveling the world with her and experiencing the care and dedication she invests into young pianists. The competition would certainly look very different without her and I'm very happy to have been a part of Ann's pianistic family!





ANN FULLER

An Appreciation



Eugene Downes

WHEN I think of Ann, the first thing that comes to mind is actually a sound – a peal of mischievous, spirit-enhancing laughter. Her inexhaustible sense of fun – not just good humour, but a deeper feeling that life is to be lived to the full – permeates everything Ann does. And it’s a gift that is shared with everyone who comes to know her.

Allied to this is an astonishing sensitivity and care for other people. So many times she has said something intensely perceptive about an important issue in one’s life, or a big choice to be made. She never glosses over difficult truths or hard questions, but faces them with an honesty leavened by an incredibly fierce loyalty to her friends as well as that delightful laugh – another essential part of her gift for friendship, as is of course her peerless hospitality.

Others are much better placed to write first-hand of her extraordinary achievement in co-founding and building the great artistic, social and cultural institution that is the Dublin International Piano Competition. But it’s not accidental, I think, that most great institutions are created by great personalities – by forces of nature, in one way or another. And Ann is entirely that.

Many of us who work in the arts, and not just in Ireland, constantly talk about “world-class” performances – the epithet tends to be thrown around like confetti these days, often with dubious justification. But Ann is one of the few people with a genuine, demanding and unsentimental sense of international artistic standards, which fuels her determination to achieve the best. Not only in music, incidentally – her connoisseurship of theatre and acting is second to none, going back to her period in London working for the Society of West End Theatre.

Beyond the Piano Competition, several other national institutions have been lucky to benefit from Ann’s guidance as a board member, including for many years the Royal Irish Academy of Music and the National Concert Hall. Her advice and judgment were often pivotal, not least when deployed behind the scenes; she was consulted and trusted by Government ministers of various political stripes. As a veteran of international cultural diplomacy, having worked for the Italian and US Governments, she understood the unactivated potential in the Irish system, and deftly used her Chairmanship of the State’s Cultural Relations Committee to advance an ambitious, proactive new

vision for international arts promotion (which led in time to the creation of Culture Ireland). So all of us as citizens can be grateful to Ann for her immense contribution to Irish public and cultural life. But those lucky enough to be able to call her friend will probably think first of the private Ann - perhaps sitting on the porch of her wonderful house in Connemara in the setting sun, rack of lamb in the oven, glass of white wine in hand, gazing out on the Atlantic inlet as Rudy the dog chases a bird in the front field. Ad multos annos!

Eugene Downes is Director of Kilkenny Arts Festival, and was previously CEO of Culture Ireland, cultural adviser to the Irish Government, a broadcaster and diplomat.

BIO Eugene Downes is the Director of Kilkenny Arts Festival, and from 2007-12 served as founding CEO of Culture Ireland, the national body for the promotion of Irish arts worldwide. From 2000-07, Eugene acted as an international arts consultant to the Irish Government, curating and producing events across Europe, Asia and South America for more than twenty State Visits. Previous experience included the Irish Foreign Service, a spell as Cultural Attaché in Russia and as a music and opera broadcaster on RTÉ Lyric fm. He is a board member of the International Society for the Performing Arts, Druid, the American-Irish Historical Society in New York, the Irish Cultural Centre in Paris, Theatre Forum and the Irish Landmark Trust.

dublin
international
piano
competition



And the winner is

Nathalia Milstein

THE first ever female winner of the Dublin International Piano Competition, Nathalia Milstein, is a young talent – only 20 years of age – to watch out for.

Born in 1995 to a musical family, Nathalia started playing the piano at the age of four with her father Sergei Milstein. She entered the Geneva Conservatory of Music in 2009, where she obtained her diploma with honours in 2012. Nathalia is a prizewinner of numerous competitions: in 2008 and 2009 she received the First Prize at the 'Flame' Youth Competition. In 2013 she was awarded the Second Prize in the Grand Concours International de Piano in Corbelin (France) and in May 2014, the First Prize in the category 'Young Pianists' of the Adilia Aliva Piano Competition in Gaillard, France and, of course, her win in Dublin in May 2015.

Nathalia gives concerts in France and across Europe in many fine halls in Paris, Amsterdam, Brussels, Lyon and Geneva. She has also performed for French television and Dutch radio. For several years, she has been playing with her violinist sister, Maria Milstein, as a duo.

As part of her first prize in the DIPC, Nathalia will give her Dublin debut recital in the NCH on 17th February 2016. Her New York debut in the Carnegie Hall follows on 21st March and her London debut in the Wigmore Hall is confirmed for 30th May 2017. She will also participate in the prestigious 'Steinway Series' in concert halls across Europe in the coming year.

The 'Impromptu' five-minute interview with Nathalia Milstein

Where did you grow up?

In Lyon, France.

What age did you start playing the piano at?

I started playing piano at 4 years old.

Who has been the most important musical influence in your life?

Probably the most fair would be to say it is my father, who has taught me everything since I began, from piano playing basics to making me understanding music and its interpretation, as he is a concert pianist himself.

Who has been the most important influence in your life?

Difficult to say as I already mentioned my father, but all my family members, all of them musicians, are concerned. I was home-schooled and my only teacher until I was 18 was my father, so basically my family is at the same time my home, my friends, my mentor and my support.

What are your goals now?

Learn as much music as possible, play it, and perform!

Coffee or tea?

Coffee, except just before a performance.

What is your favourite colour?

No favourite.

Do you have any pre-performance rituals?

Not really yet!

What do you love to do in your free time?

Nothing, but this includes reading, listening to music, wasting time on internet...

Favourite place in the world?

Any with a beautiful view (in any place of the world).

Favourite Book?

Among others, any of Chekhov's novels.

Favourite Film?

Among other favourites the French comedy "La Grande vadrouille".

Best performance (any musical genre) you have ever seen?

I couldn't tell which was the "best", as I have had the chance to hear several very different but great performances live, among which are piano recitals of Grigory Sokolov, Elisabeth Leonskaja or Maria Gambarian (a Russian-Armenian pianist), Tchaikovsky 5th Symphony conducted by Charles Dutoit, recital of the mezzo Joyce DiDonato...

Your own favourite performance to date?

It hasn't happened yet!

www.nathaliamilstein.com



 dublin
international
piano
competition

in association with the Friends
of the National Concert Hall

presents

Nathalia Milstein

Winner of the 10th
Dublin International
Piano Competition

Dublin Debut Recital

National Concert Hall,
Wednesday 17 February 2016, 8:00 pm

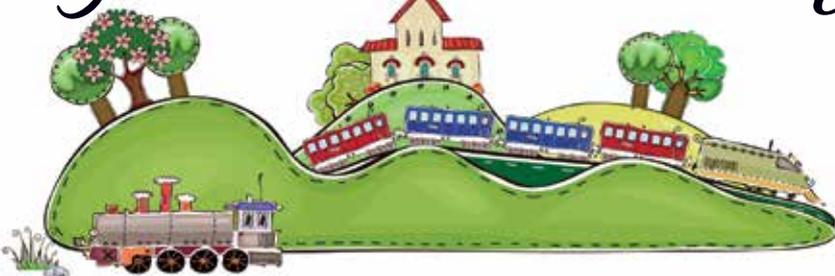
Seat prices €40, €30, €15

PROGRAMME

Schumann – Arabeske in C Op 18
Fantasie in C Op 17
Interval
Prokofiev – Marche, Gavotte, Légende, Allemande,
Scherzo (from the Ten Pieces for piano op.12)
Sonata No. 6 in A Op 82

DIPC IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE NCH AND RTÉ LYRIC FM
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A trip down memory lane



and a salute to some people who helped make it possible.



Laurie Cearr

WHEN John O’Conor, Ann Fuller, Ida Delamer and myself set about establishing an International Piano Competition for Dublin, we were truly starting from scratch. We had no money, no helpers, no sponsor. Zilch, nada, nothing. What we did have, however, was a belief it could be done, lots of enthusiasm and commitment, plenty of energy – possibly most importantly, our little black books.

Transport loomed large. First there was a trip to Geneva to obtain the official endorsement of the World Federation of International Music Competitions. John, Ann and I flew to Switzerland courtesy of Aer Lingus, whose Head of Public Relations, Bill Maxwell, was an early supporter. From there we headed on by train to Bolzano, home of one of the oldest piano competitions in the world to see how the experts do it. Ida Delamer stayed at home having already started a series of fund-raising endeavours.

I recall that John, the only man we knew who actually possessed the proverbial American yellow legal pad, was busy filling page after page with endless lists of our “sure fire” potential sponsors and supporters. We were so engrossed we were almost oblivious to the spectacular scenery as the train wound its way through the high passes of the Dolomites.

But those lists had to be made, because from the beginning we knew how important it was to build and sustain a broad constituency of support sponsors. Each of our address books contained a treasure trove of contacts at a wide variety of levels, and none of us was afraid to approach them. The enthusiasm and passion emanating from that first train journey must have been infectious, because we found many of those we contacted were

willing to step up to the mark and commit to the Dublin Competition. What is really amazing and affirmative is that much of that original support continues to this very day. At home, Iarnrod Eireann provided some entertaining rail journeys for the International Jury. We still break up at the memory of a particular Wexford trip. En route we were treated to a truly splendid meal accompanied by copious fine wines on what railway enthusiasts like former British politician turned broadcaster Michael Portillo laud as one of the ‘great railway journeys of the world’. But we didn’t see a thing - the beautiful scenery was totally obliterated by a dense grey mist. Nothing for it but to cross the bridge at Enniscorthy Station, board the train back to Dublin and resume the viewless feasting.

Another memorable rugged mountainous backdrop was in the West of Ireland. The weather was kinder this time and the judges enjoyed the magnificent beauty of Connemara at the Andrews holiday home. We walked across the fields and clambered over stone walls to Tigh Johnny Sheáin for a bit of a séisiún. Somehow John managed to persuade the eminent and dignified members of the Jury to step it out in Irish dance routines such as “The Walls of Limerick” and “The Siege of Ennis”. Thankfully, this did not deter many of them from returning to serve on the Jury on other occasions.

Day to day transport is, in fact, vital to the Competition and Pat Dooley of Dooley Car Rentals has provided courtesy cars for every Jury since 1988, and our reputation as “Ireland of the Welcomes” was underpinned from the start by Michael Governey, General Manager of the Conrad Hotel, who hosted the Jury for a number of years. His baton was then taken up by Dick Bourke, who welcomed them to

Jurys Towers in Ballsbridge for several returns. Waterford Crystal was followed by Tipperary Crystal in providing the magnificent trophies for the winners.

We have been extremely fortunate that many civic and State organisations, numerous corporate angels, title sponsors GPA, Guardian and AXA Insurance as well as many private donors have, as they say, put their money where their mouth is and generously supported the Competition over the years. In addition, the DIPC owes a large part of its survival and success to that small army of supporters and volunteers who have given of their time, their homes and even money. It would be impossible to list the many support sponsors and contributors, but it would be remiss not to acknowledge Tipperary Water for the countless gallons of refreshing water they provided since we began.

I started this piece with a colourful journey, but in fact the real journey, it has to be said, is the Dublin International Piano Competition and the hosts of supporters who have stayed the pace making it the shining light of Irish culture that it is today. Let’s hope they will continue that path and pass the baton to a new generation.

BIO Laurie Cearr is a co-founder of the Dublin International Piano Competition. Starting her career in the RTÉ Public Affairs Department, Laurie was seconded to the National Concert Hall to assist in organising the State Opening, remaining for five years. Back at RTÉ, Laurie became Marketing and PR Executive for RTÉ’s Performing Groups, including the RTÉ Concert Orchestra, Choral Groups, Vanbrugh Quartet and the National Symphony Orchestra. In 1999 she joined the Irish Government’s National Millennium Committee as Marketing and Projects manager. A member of the first board of Music Network, she served three terms as a director of Opera Theatre Company, is currently a member of the Board of Governors of the Royal Irish Academy of Music, and, since 2001, the General Manager of the international chamber music event, Great Music in Irish Houses Festival. Laurie was also a board member of the State Body, Citizen’s Information Board.

The following companies have supported the DIPC over the years, a mix of large, small, Irish and international private enterprises that have responded generously to the DIPC calls for practical support in successfully staging each event: Ariel House; The Merrion Hotel; Tipperary Crystal; Waterford Crystal; Tipperary Water; Irish Distillers; Aer Lingus; Korean Air; Dan Dooley Car Rentals; LIDL; Superquinn

From Green Room to jury service



Standing at the back: Joe O'Dubhghail.
Seated from L to R: Betty Clarke
(the first announcer), Enid Chaloner,
Carmel Doolin

I have a musical family background and am a former member of the Piano Faculty of the Royal Irish Academy of Music where I taught for many years. My lengthy association with Feis Ceoil gave me an abundance of experience in dealing with nervous competitors. My interest in the Dublin International Piano Competition grew naturally from this background and I have been an avid and enthusiastic follower since the first competition was held in 1988. What a wonderful opportunity these competitions have given us to learn what is going on in the wider world of piano performance among young people.

In 1994 I was flattered to be invited by the late Carmel Doolin to join what is known as the Green Room team. The basic job description is to look after the Jury members and keep them (and Ann Fuller) happy at all times. We also tend to the backstage needs of the competitors who are delivered to us by their escorts ten minutes or so before their performances. This requires sensitive and delicate handling. Some want to be left alone, some want a hug, some

need their hands warmed, ties straightened, dresses fixed etc, etc! Most of the latter duties fall to the announcer, who also has to check the order of their programme. Most importantly – pronunciation of their names has to be verified and frequently written down phonetically. Now that there are more competitors from Asia, it is a little more difficult! A quick peep to get John O'Connor's nod for the next one to proceed and they were on. TLC is also provided to those coming off after their performances. In short, we are "Mammies" to the competitors.

Prior to backstage renovations in the RDS life for the Green Room team was not as easy as it is now – but it was fun! The Green Room (painted pale cream) served as the Jury Room, refreshment room, kitchen, and the recording room. With 15 jury members, not an easy fit. Preparation was the name of the game as there were no facilities backstage. Meetings to make lists was the secret route to success. Lists of schedules, lists of food, lists of things to provide like electric kettles, trays, washing up materials etc. etc. Setting up before the Competition, and clearing up after the Competition was like moving house.

Apart from providing food for Jury snacks and ensuring that John O'Connor always got his hard boiled egg sandwiches, we had the unenviable task of doing the washing up in a small washhand basin backstage. I wish we had a video of us creeping around in stockings feet, carefully navigating mentally mapped creaking floorboards and desperately trying to avoid rattling china and cutlery. At all times we have wonderful assistance from the RDS staff, who do all they can to be helpful. Sometimes problems arose unexpectedly, like the time we found ourselves with no cups, saucers or plates. A quick dash to Dunnes Stores solved the problem. One always needs to be able to think on ones' feet.

Since the recent backstage renovations in the RDS life has become much easier for the Green Room team. The Jury now meets in one of the RDS Conference rooms and is looked after in much greater comfort, still by the Green Room team. Forget about tired feet – it was all mighty fun and a wonderful experience.

BIO Enid is a member of the RDS, a former Council member of same, a current member of the Arts Committee (about to go up for re-election) and current chair of the Music Working Group. Previously she had a close involvement with Feis Ceoil of which she is Past President, the Dublin Festival of Century Music and the Music Association of Ireland. Her hobbies include travel (Salzburg Festival), going to concerts and enjoying the company of family and friends.



Waves of music at the DIPC



Adrienne Carolan

THE Dublin International Piano Competition 'Convoy' has been to the RDS for the first two rounds of the Competition, it has moved to the National Concert Hall, for the semi finals, and the Competition has now reached the Final night. This night is the ultimate goal for all who competed, and a place in the Final has been achieved by four richly talented and enormously engaging young pianists.

The spring that was in everyone's step at the start of the Competition has a higher bounce to it, the days have lengthened further, and the 'air' in the National Concert Hall is heady with excitement and anticipation.

Over three days the four finalists have rehearsed with The National Symphony Orchestra, under the guiding baton of conductor Alan Buribayev, who has sensitively eased each finalist through the mammoth task ahead. The finalists have practised during all the other waking hours of the three days.

This graceful 'Swan' that is the Dublin International Piano Competition, glides gracefully, but it is feverishly paddling below the water to ensure that this night is memorable for everyone in the Hall. And this 'Swan' has lots of "Cygnet" who are

also paddling with gusto – Host Families who nurture their finalist, Piano Houses who give 'access all hours' for practice, and drivers with 'feet every ready like the battery' at the pedal.

The Final night is sold out but the Competition office phone hops with requests. Facebook activity and Twitter feed is as frantic as birdsong on an early spring morning.

The Jury made their penultimate decision at the semi finals over the previous weekend, and they, along with everyone at the Hall, has an appetite for a musical feast. The Final night is the 'golden pot of sound' at the end of the musical rainbow that was promised at the start of the Competition. The audience and the jury will be on the crest of a 'symphonic tsunami'.

And where is the missing 'magic' ingredient... 'has Mrs. Doyle run out of tea?' No way! Of course the 'kettle has been on' in the NCH – the kettle always has free travel. Copious amounts of tea have been made and poured by Bernie in the Artists Bar. – Bernie does 'tea and encouragement and praise' as distinct from 'tea and sympathy', often laced with colourful stories of Competitions past.

Great tales from the Competition – and some that will even tickle your funny bone, will be shared for a long time to come, over our favourite pastime – a cup of tea.

Final night never disappoints – and after four breathtaking performances over the ebony and ivory keys, Nathalia Milstein wins the 10th Dublin International Piano Competition.

This wondrous night comes to an end, congratulations and good wishes abound, goodbyes are said, re-unions are planned and promises to keep in touch are made. Friendships made over the two weeks will endure for a lifetime. In the words of Oliver Twist to Mr. Bumble – 'Please Sir, I want some more'

BIO Adrienne Carolan worked in Independent Newspapers, as Editorial Administrator, responsible for the timetabling and rostering of all Newsroom personnel. For a time, Adrienne was PA to the Editor of the Irish Independent. Adrienne volunteered as a driver for the 1991 Competition and during the 1994 Competition helped with the co-ordination of the drivers, taking on the chief organising role in 1997. To assist the drivers, host houses, and the Competitors, she compiles the A to Z Directory of the Competition. Adrienne's role in the Competition gives her a unique insight into all the Competitors. In between the competitions, Adrienne looks after the day to day needs of the prizewinner for recital engagements in Ireland, London and New York, as well as acting as Secretary to the Board

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MOST INTERESTING FACTS AND FIGURES ABOUT THE DUBLIN INTERNATIONAL PIANO COMPETITION

Number of international jurors who have come to Dublin since 1988

79

from 23 countries

Number of applicants for the ten competitions

1,624

Number of national & international competitors who have come to Dublin to compete

533

from 49 countries

Number of pianos supplied for practice & performance

542

Number of pianos used over the ten competitions

586

Number of concerts given by the 1st Prize Winner under the auspices of the Competition, nationally & internationally

163

Number of major concerts in the National Concert Hall, separate to the 1st Prize Winners engagements, presented by the DIPC

87

and 129 in various venues across the country.

Number of pieces of music played

2,259

of which 33 have been pieces specially commissioned by Irish composers.

Number of television and radio broadcasts

193

(including repeats)

Number of volunteers involved in all aspects of the Competition since 1988

168

Friends' Room helpers

299

RDS volunteers

254

drivers

448

host families

Number of recordings made by Prizewinners since 1988

112





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As the makers of the world's finest pianos since 1853, our name has become synonymous with unsurpassed quality, craftsmanship & attention to detail. This dedication to our craft ensures that each piano we produce offers a superior sound & touch which is recognised & appreciated by the greatest pianists of our age.

An instrument without equal, a Steinway and Sons piano brings joy to music lovers everywhere, from renowned professionals playing in celebrated venues, to those who simply want the best.

Pianos are the biggest logistical exercise of the DIPC. There are over 80 pianos involved for both practice and performance. Most of the practice pianos are in private homes and are in great demand as generous home owners frequently supply lunch and other delicious refreshments for the practising competitor. The pianos are placed in the RDS and in other private houses for the duration of the competition. In addition to these practice pianos, Steinway provides concert grands

for the competition performances. These pianos are accompanied by specialist technicians.

“After many years of association with Steinway, in 2012 we were fortunate enough to become an exclusive all Steinway competition and we are grateful to them and their agents in Ireland (Pianos Plus) for providing their legendary instruments for performance and practice and an expert band of technicians under Ulrich Gerhartz to keep them at the top of their form.”

John O’Conor



DIPC Final Night: All the drama and celebration

26th May 2015, National Concert Hall



Help us to keep the dream alive



For almost 30 years Dublin has been hosting one of the world's most respected piano competitions.

The Dublin International Piano Competition has historically received its funding from corporate sponsors, private benefactors and the generous donations of our supporters. With all this vital backing, May 2015 saw the very successful completion of the 10th DIPC.



Unfortunately, it is becoming more and more difficult to reach our fundraising goals. We are now beginning a fundraising exercise to ensure the long-term future of the Competition, and in particular the 11th event in May 2018. We aim to engage the services of a professional fundraiser to help us ensure this rich cultural and musical event continues in 2018 and beyond. For this:



We need your help!

Any donation you can give at this time is greatly appreciated. With your help we intend to continue supporting, mentoring and promoting classical music and young musicians in Ireland. We hope that you will become a friend of the Competition soon; we are looking forward to welcoming you!



Please contact us using the details below or go directly to our 'Donate' tab on the website:

Dublin International Piano Competition P.O. Box No. 71 - Bray, Co. Wicklow, Ireland Tel: (01) 272 1523 | donate@dipc.ie



Images top to bottom:

Finlay 4 · Philippe Cassard (1988) · Pavel Nersessian (1991) · Romain Descharmes (2006) · Alexej Gorlatch (2009)