

## IBLA. Fourteen Young Musicians at the Carnegie Hall

Marina Melchionda (May 11, 2009)



The talented winners of the IBLA Grand Prize 2008 exhibited on April 27 at the Carnegie Hall in New York. "Our main aim is to interest contemporary youth in classical music and help them pursue excellence" said Salvatore Moltisanti, president of the foundation

The [Carnegie Hall](#) [2] is vibrant. Pianos, violins, violas, the instruments are ready. Fourteen young, very young musicians are waiting on the other side of the stage, where nobody can see them and their excited faces. Of course, it is not their first concert, but that theatre is one of a kind. It is the dream of every musician, and they got there at this early age.

Winners of the IBLA Grand Prize, these artists exhibited last summer in Ragusa, Sicily, in occasion of the IBLA World Competition for Pianists, singers, composers and instrumentalists. On that occasion, they were not judged one against the others, but only according to an universal standard of excellence. Soon after their performance in Ragusa, they were offered to play in some of the most important international theatres, among which the [Lincoln Center](#) [3], the Carnegie Hall, the [Tokyo](#)



[Opera City Hall](#) [4] and the Tchaikovsky Bolshoi Hall in Mosca.

This spring concert in New York is thus part of a tour that is promoting them throughout the world, thanks to IBLA, a foundation that has been widely recognized for its prestige and attention towards the youngest promises of the music panorama.

The story of IBLA itself is one that inspires a feeling of rebirth, a novelty that rises from the ruins of the past. Founded at the very beginning of the 1990s, the Foundation became a symbol of reaction in a Sicily where organized crime and discouragement had taken over. Paolo Borsellino and Giovanni Falcone, two Italian anti-Mafia magistrates, had just been killed in a bombing and there was a great need to give to younger generations new hope for the future. Baronessa Mariuccia Zerilli Marimò, Chairwoman of IBLA-New York, Lady Dewi Soekarno, Chairwoman of IBLA Japan-Indonesia; Lilia Vernon & Paolo Martino, IBLA New York Vice-Chairs, have sustained this initiative right from the beginning, and were all there at the Carnegie Hall a few days ago, on April 27, to pay tribute to the professionalism and commitment of the young artists performing.

Master of ceremonies Dr. Salvatore Moltisanti, President of IBLA since 1992, whose international reputation of great pianist is at least equivalent to his merits for having given the foundation the prestige it enjoys nowadays. He welcomed all those attending and introduced to the public each one of the musicians, praising their talent and listing for each one of them a considering number of recognitions and awards they earned throughout their still short career.

The first exhibiting were two brothers, Thomas and Austin Huntington. The former, a violinist, played a piece by Ravel, while the latter performed Cassado with his Cello. Later on they were followed by another duo of brothers, Kevin e Bryan Matheson, with their violin and viola who performed music by William Ryden.

Musicians from every corner of the world alternated on the stage: cellist Hee-Young Lim from South Korea played for us a sonata in A major by Cesar Frank, while Scholtes Lestari and Gwylim Janssen from Holland played a four-hand piece by Rachmaninov.

A remarkable performance by the English flautist Jill Kemp enchanted the public during the second half of the concert. Her "magic flute", as Mr. Moltisanti defined it, was immediately followed by the performance of the only Italian selected, pianist Adalberto Riva, who delighted us with a sonata by Schubert.

A talented musician, he is grateful to IBLA for giving him the chance to play at the Carnegie Hall: "In Italy I do not have many possibilities to perform before a

large public. The classical music environment is very hard to access, and often the success you have is not proportional to your real talent. That is why today I play mainly abroad, as many of my colleagues in the past used to do themselves."

Elin Kolev was the youngest musician of the group. Of German origins, at the age of 12 he can already play an engaging piece such as the "24esimo capriccio" by Paganini with natural ease, as if he had been practicing the violin for decades. He is tiny and shy; his suit can not hide or alter his childish features. He also seems embarrassed when we asked him when he first discovered this passion: "At seven, five years ago. And it was already a little late".

A few years older than Elin, the Serbian pianist Julija Bal proposed her personal arrangement of "Asturias" by I. Albeniz. She was also one of the two only composers in the group. Her colleague, the English pianist George King, played a selection of pieces from his collection "Etudes".

We asked Julija what is that inspires her in composing music. She answered spontaneously: "I just can not avoid doing it. I get the inspiration and start, and sometimes I like what comes up from this enlighten moments. Will I always compose? I do not know, but I will be surely opened to all the sensations and feelings that will eventually come up. I do hope I will, since I believe that, music is



the greatest way to communicate”:

Her words were echoed by Mr. Moltisanti's, who spent a few moments with us at the end of the concert, after the “encores” by Jill Kemp, Julija Bal ed Elin Kolev. “Our mission is to promote excellence and attract more and more young talented people in this field, and award them for their commitment in a constant improvement. They know how to mix different styles and rhythms, giving classical music a sound it has never had before. It becomes a way to communicate with their friends and coetaneous, helping to keep classical music alive”.

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