

## IBLA Foundation Celebrates its Twentieth Anniversary in New York

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IBLA Foundation held its annual contest in Ragusa Ibla, Sicily to award winning titles to the top young musicians from around the world. To share their talents this year, on their twentieth anniversary, the winners of the IBLA contest performed at Casa Italiana Zerilli Marimò and Carnegie Hall to perform for their New York audience.

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[ITALIAN VERSION](#)

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The [IBLA](#) [3] Foundation is a non-profit organization which organizes a contest each year for pianists, singers, musicians, and composers in Ragusa Ibla, Sicilia. This year, as IBLA celebrates its twentieth



anniversary, they will be performing around the world in Europe, Russia, Canada, and USA. In New York, IBLA organized a rehearsal on Monday at the [Casa Italiana Zerilli Marimò](#) [4] to prepare for Tuesday's main event at the prestigious institution, [Carnegie Hall](#) [5].

It should not be surprising that among the talented musicians there are very young boys and girls, such as pianist Kai Han, 12, or Cristoph Croise, 17. It should also not be surprising that the finalists originate from every part of the world. Music knows no place or time. This is the miracle of a universal language; it allows the same emotions and expressions to be felt by all.

In this way, IBLA performed on Monday and Tuesday night—first for the intimate performance at Casa Zerilli Marimò, and then at Carnegie Hall. Artists from China, Russia, Poland, Switzerland, Japan, to only name a few, played a few pieces by composers such as Schumann, Chopin, Paradisi, Verdi, Bach, Berio, Listz, Popper.

The framework for the concert was created by the National anthems of Japan, Italy, and the United States of America. The National Anthem of Japan was played at the beginning by the cellist, Christoph Croisè (Monday) and pianist Umi Garrett (Tuesday), to commemorate the victims of the recent Tsunami. Then, an innovative version of the Italian National Anthem was played on the piano by composer, David Cieri. In conclusion, the United States National Anthem was first whistled by Michael Barimo and then performed in a dynamic compilation by pianist, Alan Storeygard, percussionist, Dave Rogers, and bassist, Brian Wolverton.

[Salvatore Moltisanti](#) [6], the director and president of IBLA Foundation, announced the organization's twentieth anniversary with great pride and gratitude. He thanked the Casa Italiana, as it is a "contemporary" of IBLA, the Baroness Mariuccia Zerilli Marimò, Dewi Sukarno, and Joan Zumwalt, the chairwomen and sponsors of IBLA around the world. Twenty years ago, these women acted with keen intuition when they agreed to support IBLA. With their help, the organization has been able to cultivate the immense talent among their musicians.

"You are really going to have trouble writing about these musicians," added Dr. Moltisanti when speaking to i-Italy Tuesday night. "Every piece is truly incredible."

Although they are an international community of musicians, their organization was born in Italy. As Moltisanti says, "We can be a reference for music worldwide because even though they are not all Italians, they are all ambassadors of Italian music. Each one of them has an Italian soul, and they are happy to represent Italy in this way."

The concert at Carnegie Hall opened with a piano duet by two Italian women, Sabrina De Carlo and Michela Chiara Borghese. They played with seamless transitions and crisp execution of each phrase. Then, in an evocative reproduction of Schumann's "Kreisleriana," Ana Karina Alamo D'Alessandro, from Venezuela, dominated the stage.

Then, a cellist from Switzerland, Christoph Croise, was introduced as tired and jetlagged, but his performance displayed neither. With only one day to practice with his accompanist, Alexander Panfilov, Croise not only reached every note with precision, he added a sprightly personality to "Hungarian Rhapsodie op. 68" and "Dance of the Elves op. 39" by David Popper.

Arriving at Poland's Rafal Luc on the accordion, the audience was presented with a whole new beast of classical music. He offered a dynamic performance, dancing in his seat with each chord change and extension of his arms.

The other performances were given by violinist, Sarkis Nazarov, soprano, Luz del Alba, percussionist Dave Rogers, whistler, Michael Barimo, bassist, Brian Wolverton, and from the list of pianists, Maciej Granat, Maria Mannikko, Ivan Lin, David Cieri, Zuzana Simurdova, Umi Garret, Alexander Panfilov. Each musician left the audience stunned.

As the concert came to a close, it was clear that Moltisanti had not exaggerated earlier in the night when he spoke of the immense talent of this group. No one would argue, either, with his salutation to



the audience: "If you came with any doubts for future generations, you can now leave optimistic."

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### **Links**

- [1] <http://newsite.iitaly.org/files/img05511302207849jpg>
- [2] <http://www.i-italy.org/node/17051>
- [3] <http://www.ibla.org/>
- [4] <http://www.casaitaliananyu.org/>
- [5] <http://www.carnegiehall.org/>
- [6] <http://www.ibla.org/drhome1.php4>