



The International Piano -e-Competition offers a special opportunity for young pianists worldwide to participate in a competition of the highest artistic quality and integrity. Our artistic vision is to bring young artists, with the promise of lasting and important careers, to the public's attention.

Alexander Braginsky, Co-Founder and Artistic Director

Jeffrey Wirth, Co-Founder and CEO

Dr. Stella Sisk, Managing Director

# E-Piano NEWS

## Greetings from the Artistic Director

When Jeff Wirth and I finalized our plans for the International Piano-e-Competition, we knew we were about to start something different. The marriage of technology and art is not new, but the use of the Internet and the Disklavier piano to carry the musical events around the world, to allow the competition to be judged from different locations and for screening auditions to take place in the "virtual" format - that was ground-breaking! Another departure from tradition was my decision to eliminate even the perception of a conflict of interest in judging by banning students and relatives of the jurors from participating.

Optimists as we are, we still did not anticipate how quickly the e-Competition would become an international success. It earned the Five Star rating by Gustav

Alink in his survey "International Piano Competitions Worldwide" -- one of only six competitions in North America to be so rated! Some of our success had to do with having a stellar jury. Contestants were also attracted by the program, by generous prizes and performing opportunities. A lot of credit goes to our pioneering use of the Internet. The viewership spread quickly, reaching well over a hundred thousand visits in the months surrounding the competition, then settling down to about 3,500 hits per month .

Now the Third International Piano-e-Competition is nearing. Six thousand applications and posters have been mailed worldwide. The deadline for the applications is November 1<sup>st</sup>, but the phone in our managing director's office is already ringing with inquiries. The 2006 competition promises to be

an even more exciting event. Our cooperation with the Minnesota Orchestra continues to develop. In fact, we changed our dates to coincide with the opening week of the Minnesota Orchestra's Summerfest.

The International Piano-e-Competition has become a major player in the world arena. Our goal now is to reach out to the home audience. Although attendance doubled in 2004, it still fell short of our goals. It is good to be popular abroad, but the International Piano-e-Competition has to become a sold-out event at home to be considered a true success.

This newsletter was initiated to keep you abreast of all new developments. We are looking forward with anticipation to the next competition in July 2006 and hope you will join us for all of its exciting events.

*Alexander Braginsky*



Jie Chen at the Gala Concert, June 5, 2004

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## Ruth Laredo dies at 67.

**"Ms Laredo possessed great versatility being equally comfortable playing with orchestras as well as performing solo recitals, chamber music and accompanying."**

The staff of the International Piano-e-Competition saddened by the untimely passing of a great American pianist and 2004 International Piano-e-Competition judge Ruth Laredo. Ms Laredo had cancer and died in her sleep in her Manhattan apartment on Wednesday, May 25. She was particularly known for her landmark recordings of Scriabin Sonatas and the complete piano works of Rachmaninoff. She also recorded works of Chopin, Ravel, Brahms and Beethoven among others, and was nominated for a Grammy award three times. She possessed great versatility being equally comfortable playing with orchestras as well as performing solo recitals, chamber music and accom-

panying. She was a frequent performer at the concert series in New



York called "Concerts with Commentary" where she played and spoke about music. The series was so popular that she started to hold them around the country.

Ms Laredo was born in Detroit and attended the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, studying with Rudolph Serkin. She graduated in 1960. When she was first on the rise in 1970s Ms Laredo was a relative rarity as a female piano soloist, especially in the technically demanding and muscular works of Rachmaninoff. "Every time we did interviews in those days, she was asked what does it feel to be a woman pianist," James Muthra, Ruth Laredo's manager said. "She wanted to be a pianist, period."

We were fortunate to have had the opportunity to work with Ms Laredo, albeit for a short time. Her contribution to the competition was significant and she will be missed.

## Menahem Pressler receives French cultural honor



Menahem Pressler, an Indiana University professor and one of the world's most revered chamber musicians has received one of France's highest cultural honors. He was named a commander in France's Order of Arts and

Letters. The prestigious honor was established in 1957 to recognize those who have contributed to furthering the arts in the country and throughout the world.

Mr. Pressler began his international concert performances in 1946, when he won first prize at the Debussy Piano Competition in San Francisco. In 1955 Mr. Pressler co-founded one of the world's most enduring and widely acclaimed chamber music ensembles, the Beaus Arts Trio, which has won many coveted awards and prizes. In addition to four Grammy nominations and numerous awards and titles, Pressler has received a Lifetime Achievement Award from London's Gramophone Magazine and the

"Ehrenurkunde" award from the German critics, which honors Pressler's 40-plus years of setting standards of excellence in chamber music performance.

Mr. Pressler, 81, who served as a chair of the International Jury in the 2004 International Piano-e-Competition, performs extensively throughout the world. He continues to teach at the Indiana University, Bloomington, where he holds the rank of the Distinguished Professor of music, and serves as a judge of the competitions. His most recent assignment was judging the Van Cliburn competition in Houston, TX.

## Mei-Ting's Whitekeys.com Project

By **Mei-Ting Sun.**



I have recently been traveling around the globe, partially as a musician, but mostly as a wanderer, gathering information and experiencing the world for myself. I have gotten very interesting and similar comments from music presenters and impresarios all over the world: the audiences are getting older, every season there is more gray-hair or no-hair, and young people simply do not show up for classical concerts. I studied the problem, discussed it with many friends and associates and reached a conclusion, that something must be done to change

this present situation.

What needs to be done so that young people will come of their own volition? They need to be exposed to classical music, sure, but is that alone enough to ensure an interest? The answer, unfortunately, is no. Exposure does not mean enjoyment, and people have never done things that they do not enjoy, if they have a choice. Enjoyment of classical music comes from understanding it, and the deeper the understanding the more one enjoys this incredible resource.

Here is where Whitekeys.com comes in. It is a website that provides free, good classical piano recordings to the general public, in addition to the goal of educating people on the full range of expressions within classical music. It uses a variety of methods for exposure, attempting to attract attention of both those who already have interest in classical music and those who do not, and it will try to educate them as well.

Whitekeys.com is also garnering publicity for the pianists presented on the website, helping to promote the new generation of worthy musicians by featuring them alongside established and well-known artists of the present and past. The collection of piano works featured on the website is also a valuable resource for aspiring pianists. They can use the recordings to learn different styles and to develop and formulate their own musical opinions and interpretations.

Since its inception on March 1st, 2005, Whitekeys.com has been covered by several major newspapers and welcomed over 1,100 members. Continued success requires more than publicity, however. It will require dedication of its members, cooperation of the artists, and a will to preserve and share the joy that is classical music with everyone.

Enjoy music and keep listening.

[www.meiting.com](http://www.meiting.com)  
[www.whitekeys.com](http://www.whitekeys.com)

**'Enjoyment of classical music comes from understanding it, and the deeper the understanding the more one enjoys this incredible resource.'**

## E-Competition website

With the next competition still a year away, our website, [www.piano-e-competition.com](http://www.piano-e-competition.com) ([www.ecompetition.org](http://www.ecompetition.org)) enjoys a steady flow of visitors. A significant number of them come to watch and listen to the performances from the

2004 Competition. All of the performances, with the exception of the Concerto Round and the Gala Concert, are available on the website.

In preparations for the next competition our website will undergo a few changes to make it more attractive

and easier to navigate. All of the recordings, both video and MIDI will remain available to view and download without interruptions. Please come and enjoy!

[www.piano-e-competition.com](http://www.piano-e-competition.com)  
[www.ecompetition.org](http://www.ecompetition.org)

**Shanghai, China has been added to the Disklavier/Video Recording sites!**



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## Mei-Ting Sun and Jie Chen Return to Minnesota



### Mei-Ting Sun

The winner of the First International Piano-e-Competition Mei-Ting Sun has charmed audiences everywhere with his brilliant personality on and off stage. Since the Competition Mr. Sun

has been working on writing his dissertation to complete the Doctor of Musical Arts degree at the Juilliard. He now has a European Management and has performed extensively in United States and abroad. Mr. Sun, 24, is a recent winner of the Seventh National Chopin Competition in Miami and will represent the U. S. at the 15th International Chopin Competition in Warsaw in September.

Mei-Ting Sun will perform in a special pre-season recital for the Frederic Chopin Society on Sunday, August 28, at 3:00PM at Macalester College. He will perform works by Chopin, Debussy, Bartok and Scriabin. Reception will follow the performance. For tickets and information please go to [www.chopinsocietymn.org](http://www.chopinsocietymn.org) or call (612) 822-0123.

### Jie Chen

The first prize winner of the Second International Piano-e-Competition Jie Chen has also enjoyed a very productive time since last summer. She has finished her studies at the Curtis Institute of Music and was a featured soloist of the International Touring Artist Program. Ms. Chen won the Washington International Piano Competition in Washington, D.C. in March and

placed 4th in the prestigious Rubinstein Piano Master Competition in Israel in April.

Ms. Chen will perform Rachmaninoff's Second Concerto with the

Minnesota Orchestra under direction of Osmo Vanska on Thursday, September 22 at 7:30PM and Friday, September 23 at 8:00 PM at Orchestra Hall. Other works presented in the program are Mussorgsky's *A Night on Bald Mountain* and Stravinsky's *Petroushka* (1947 revision). For tickets and information please go to [www.minnesotaorchestra.org](http://www.minnesotaorchestra.org) or call (612) 671-5656.

