

BERNSTEIN *National Piano Competition*

On Sunday, October 10, Bernies Music Land held the most anticipated event of my calendar year: The *National Final of the Bernstein Piano Competition*. This competition is Australia's longest running, brand-sponsored, piano competition. It took place in conjunction with the celebration of the 33rd birthday of Bernies Music Land. This year was the 23rd consecutive year of the competition, sponsored by Bernstein Australia. We were delighted to host the finals of the competition, and to have competitors from all around Australia attend, including Melbourne Metro, Regional Victoria, Brisbane and Perth.

Six Bernstein Masterclasses were held in Melbourne throughout the year, as well as several in Perth, Brisbane, Shepparton and Sydney. From these activities, students were selected by the conducting teacher and invited to participate in the *National Bernstein Piano Competition*.

The Junior Final (12 years & under) kicked off at 11am, and the Senior Final (13 – 16 years) at 2pm. Each section had 13 competitors.

The competition was adjudicated by two members from the Team of Pianists, Robert Chamberlain and Rohan Murray.

With the Bernies Music Land auditorium full for both sessions, the competition commenced. The standard of playing was tremendous and a number of participants had also received major prizes in recent eisteddfods. The tension in the room was intense as each performer prepared to give their all for a chance to win.

The junior division trophy was deservedly won by Vivian Chen, age 12, who impressed the judges with, *Au bord d'une source* by F. Liszt, and *Scherzino* by A. Benjamin. Second place was awarded to Oscar Jiang and the Syldon encouragement award was given to Jenny Chen.

The senior section (students under age 16), was an extraordinary display of musical maturity and technique. The crowd was treated to a feast of highly-challenging pieces, such as *Etude* by Scriabin, Debussy's *Garden in the Rain*, and Mendelssohn's *Scherzo in E Minor*. On a day where there could be multiple deserving winners, the major prize was awarded to 13 year old David Wang, who performed Haydn's *Sonata in C* - famously performed by Chinese pianist, Lang Lang, and Chopin's *Etude Op.10, No.4*. The judges were impressed by his touch control and excellent attention to detail and phrasing. David's father was especially pleased and relieved to see a winning performance from his son after many nerves. This was David's first time to participate in the Bernstein Competition. David's father commented on how well the competition was organised and thanked the Bernies Music Land staff for all their help and encouragement. Second place was awarded to Rachael Shipard. Rachael was the regional Perth finalist and is a past winner in the junior division of the Bernstein Competition. The Syldon encouragement award went to Angela Huang. The teachers of both first place winners were also awarded a trophy in recognition of their efforts.

The Encouragement Awards were generously provided by Syldon Music Group, who hold musical events at their homes throughout the year and donate money to be used for the trophies and prizes for the third place

position. We are absolutely delighted to have this generous contribution, coordinated by Don and Sylvia Curtis Morris. Sincere thanks for their support of this wonderful event and their encouragement to young pianists.

It was a fantastic day all round! As another very successful year of competition concluded, I am already preparing for next year, where I hope it we will see more impressive performances from all the young competitors.

Lester C.

Junior Division Winners & Adjudicators



Senior Division Winners with Bernie & Adjudicators



Senior Division Finalists with Bernie & Adjudicators