

and Nikita Koshkin. A couple of oddities slipped into this section: Weiss, a contemporary of Bach; and Albéniz, whose *Granada* (from *Suite Española*) is a work of 19th century Spanish Nationalism. These anachronisms were accepted in the spirit in which they were offered; it was, after all, the free-choice part of the programme, and if a couple of competitors decided to interpret the rules liberally, the adjudicators showed that they could be liberal too.

The first prize was awarded to Carl Herring, for all-round ability in which the peak was an intensely poetic interpretation of the Berkeley work. The Mairants movement was perhaps a little on the cheerful side for a slow blues, but was nevertheless highly accomplished.

Close behind Herring came a talented young Bulgarian, Stanislav Hvratchikov, only 19 and, like Herring (who graduated in summer 2003), a student at the Royal Academy of Music. He is an intuitive musician, able to be consistently interesting whatever he plays, lacking only the experience to do total justice to a complex work such as Rodrigo's *Invocación y Danza*. He is young enough to enter a lot more competitions, and well equipped enough, both technically and musically, to win a good number of them.

In third place was Matti Saarinen, from Finland, 25 years old and having had the exciting experience of studying with Jukka Savijoki (Finland) and Alvaro Pierri (Uruguay), than whom it is difficult to imagine two more widely contrasting influences. One felt that the player's innate strength of

character will succeed in integrating both influences in the forming of a musician of unusual interest.

Three such strong contenders unfortunately meant the exclusion of other high achievements, and the adjudicators made special mention of Sam Chapman, Bastien Burlot and Thomas Lavigne, who all impressed in various ways, as did Rebecca Baulch with her good sound and calm fingers working so efficiently.

The adjudicators were Liveryman Michael Lewin (President), Richard Hand, Eleftheria Kotzia, Tim Panting, Assistant Maurice Summerfield, and this writer. The event, held this time in Coopers' Hall, was as usual stage-managed by Margaret Alford, Deputy Clerk of The Worshipful Company of Musicians. Past Master Adrian Davis was present as an auditor.

Additional financial support was received from the D'Addario Foundation for the Performing Arts, the Ivor Mairants Musicentre, Chanterelle, Manuel Rodriguez and Sons, Mel Bay Inc. and *Classical Guitar* magazine.

The wishes of Ivor are being carried out with style and purpose by The Worshipful Company of Musicians, and I am sure he would have enjoyed this biggest and best edition of the competition that bears his name.

the six finalists reflected this. The winner was British Keziah Thomas who had studied at the Royal College of Music, with second and third places going to Celine Saout from France and Simon Kullikov from Russia, respectively.

Prizes were presented by one of the three judges, Nigel Tully, in his capacity as Master of the Company, whilst the other two judges were myself, to my knowledge the Company's only professional harpist member, and Kate Fearnley from Making Music. I believe that I can speak for all the judges in saying that we had a thoroughly enjoyable afternoon. We believe that the

players also learnt a lot in preparing for this competition – so very different from any other international harp competition which has gone before. Thank you, Clive!

MAISIE LEWIS YOUNG ARTISTS' CONCERT

Adrian Davis muses

For those of you who might need reminding, it was the first in the 35th season of Maisie Lewis Young Artists' Concerts which took place at the Wigmore Hall on the 8 March. The hard working Public Relations committee – energetically encouraged by Paddy Dunn and Malcolm Farrer Brown – must have been gratified that their earlier sustained efforts to develop larger audiences were suitably rewarded by the fact that the trend in attracting larger numbers continued. The audience should also have been delighted by the performances given.

Continuing to reflect on the past, your observer remembered that the first concert was given exclusively by the Chilingirian String Quartet, in contrast with two duos this evening. This caused him to ponder on the now-established practice of a shared platform, and perhaps the availability of a sufficiently differing and contrasting repertoire both for violin and 'cello, which would enable the soloists to give full rein to their musicianship, while providing an attractive programme for the listener.

On this occasion, Katherine Jenkinson ('cello) opened the proceedings with a restrained rendering of Sammartini's *Sonata in G Major*, followed by two lesser-known Tchaikovsky compositions. Feeling comfortable and settled – or some of us – we were then rudely disturbed by the violently rhythmic and, at times, discordant demands of Bartok's *Sonata for Piano and Violin* performed by Michiko Kobayashi. One never ceases to wonder at the ability of such musicians to bridge oriental and European culture. It seemed the audience was riveted.

Released, and refreshed by the interval, historically we were transported back to a late 20th century work by an arguably little-known contemporary Estonian composer, Arvo Pärt, whose music clearly reflects the influence of the Orthodox Church. *Fratres* proved to be a characteristically disciplined and a challenging test of the artist's technical abilities. Katherine concluded her recital with a spirited rendering of the Martinu *Variations on a Theme by Rossini*, for which she earned generous applause.

In conclusion, the concert programme returned us to the romantic 19th century with Wieniawski's Opus 15. Whilst Michiko needs to develop more feeling and passion in her playing for this style, she nevertheless provided us with a spontaneous and highly-polished technical performance, the memory of which must have sent the majority of the audience home singing – if only they had been able to!

The efforts of the artists' accompanists, respectively Olivia Canolle and Alison Farr, deserve their own commendation. Thoughts of their contribution should not have evaporated in the cold night air.

Winner
Keziah Thomas

