



Wayne Weng
First Place



Josu De Solaun
Second Place



Julia Siciliano
Third Place



Shen Lu
Fourth Place



Jee In Hwang
Fifth Place



Emily Chiang
Sixth Place

Canada's Weng superb as he wins piano title

Sioux City (IA) – March 9, 2013
Bruce R. Miller, Sioux City Journal

In the battle of the Beethovens, Wayne Weng emerged victorious Saturday night with a piano performance that was full of flourishes, emotion and technical strength.

Weng won the seventh Iowa Piano Competition with a vibrant performance of Piano Concerto No. 5 in E-flat major.

Josu De Solaun came in second with Piano Concerto No. 3 in C minor and Julia Siciliano placed third with Piano Concerto No 4 in G major.

All things, however, were not equal. While DeSolaun had a piece that took some time before he entered, Siciliano and Weng started right in. That synchronicity certainly helped them gauge how to best integrate with the Sioux City Symphony Orchestra.

Of the two, Weng was more forceful. His ability to modulate the piano's sound was superior, too, providing plenty of definition to each of his notes.

Siciliano, though, was more emotional, able to squeeze every bit of passion out of notes that often came and went quickly. Of the three, Siciliano had the piece with the most variety. She added her own spin and offered enough visual drama to make you want to hear it again.

DeSolaun, meanwhile, was the most introspective of the three. He probably would be a great jazz musician – able to find new meaning in old notes. That long wait before entering his piece might have made others nervous, but he handled it with great aplomb. He didn't just play the notes, he pulled the music out of them. At times, you could almost catch a honky-tonk.

Weng, though, was superior on all counts. His technical skill coupled with his great ear easily gave him an edge. He kept a keen eye, too, on conductor Ryan Haskins and knew just when to complement the orchestra.

While it probably would be best to have contestants play the same piece (a rather "Groundhog Day" experience for the audience), the three concertos chosen for the Orpheum Theatre performance were fairly similar in demands.

In taped interviews shown before their appearances, all three finalists said they had family inspiration for their choice of careers.

DeSolaun, who hails from Spain, composes music and would also like to conduct. Siciliano, who lives in Cincinnati with her husband, a conductor, sees the educational value of performance. And Weng, a Canadian by way of Taiwan, also is interested in a teaching career.

To herald the start of the competition, the orchestra offered a crisp Coriolan Overture Op. 62. Based on Shakespeare's "Coriolanus," it was an ideal choice for warriors going into battle. The musicians set the scene nicely and made way for the final face-off.

Representing eight countries, the musicians in this year's competition were a sturdy bunch, able to command the stage under what must have been tremendous pressure.

Before Executive Director David Krogh announced the winners, the orchestra offered up a fitting Egmont Overture, full of expectation and anticipation.

The panel of judges which oversaw all three days of the competition included:

- Arthur Greene**
University of Michigan
- Marian Hahn**
Peabody Conservatory
- Douglas Humpherys**
Eastman School of Music

The Iowa Piano Competition is an intensive three-day competition hosted by the [Sioux City Symphony Orchestra](#) in Sioux City, Iowa. For more information visit the Symphony website or call 712.277.2111.