

New dance champions crowned

More than a dance competition: Finalists contribute to the preservation of ancient Chinese culture

By **CHRISTINE LIN**
Epoch Times Staff

NEW YORK—The remaining 31 contestants in the final round of the third annual International Classical Chinese Dance Competition performed their dance entries one last time before judges and audiences on Sunday, June 21.

The contestants understand that their participation in the competition means much more than a medal or prestige—it means that they have contributed to the preservation of a grand and profound culture.

Though contest regulations did not stipulate the theme of dance entries, all the contestants chose to portray figures in ancient Chinese history. They range from famous generals, legendary Taoists, lady warriors and scholars, to a notorious emperor. To make sure their dances accurately represent the characters, the contestants did hours of research on their subjects.

For her solo, contestant Alina Wang took on the identity of Song Dynasty poetess Li Qingzhao, whose husband goes away to war. Throughout the course of the piece, Wang portrays Li searching for and finding inspiration as she writes.

“I had to do a lot of research and learn about her inner feelings and what she went through,” Wang said.

Rocky Liao, first place winner of the junior male competition, portrayed a military general at the end of a war in his dance piece, titled “Surrounded on All Sides.”

“He’s surrounded by tens of thousands of [enemy] soldiers and he only has about 800 people left,” Liao explained. “Before he crosses the river to return to his homeland, he realizes that all the people he led to attack have all died.”

Deciding that he can’t face the parents and friends of his soldiers, the general commits suicide. “It’s a tragic story,” Liao said.

First place winner Tony Xue, and second place winner Alison Chen, both of the junior division, depicted noted warriors in their youth.

“It takes imagination,” said Chen, whose dance is titled “Little Mulan.”

“Most people know about her going to war, but few know her as a child. So I decided to portray her as a child who knows martial arts.”

Xue performed “Junior Han Xin,” which captures the life of General Han Xin in his youth. Xue begins the dance reading from a bamboo scroll and later displays swordsmanship.

“In ancient times men were both well-versed in literature and martial arts, and Han Xin embodied that,” Xue said.

Chen and Xue both study at the Feitian Academy of the Arts, where they learn Chinese culture and history to complement their study and practice of dance.

“In class we learn about a lot of historical figures, legends, and traditional values,” said Chen. “The teachers teach us these things in the hopes that we can incorporate them into our dances to reflect positive things.”

Yi Cao, one of the judges and a



GRACE: Angelia Wang received first place in the Junior Female division of NTDV's International Classical Chinese Dance Competition. EDWARD DAI/ THE EPOCH TIMES

classical Chinese dance specialist, summarized the purpose of the dance competition.

“Recently, I saw a classical Chinese dance competition in mainland China. The technical skills of the contestants were good, but the content of their pieces had no classical character. In seeking new stuff, they tend toward modern dance styles. Classical Chinese dance is rooted in Chinese traditional arts’ aesthetic. If this trend continues, will classical Chinese dance disappear? This is what many artists don’t want to see.”

Cao has been on the judge panel since the competition began in 2007. In the years since, she has seen the improvement in the global understanding of classical Chinese dance.

“I would say that 95 percent of contestants understand what classical Chinese dance is,” she said. “In three years, we have let the professional art world and audiences gain a clear understanding, and revive true Chinese culture. The competition has been a driving force of that.”

WINNERS OF THE 3RD ANNUAL

NTDTV INTERNATIONAL CLASSICAL CHINESE DANCE COMPETITION

ADULT MALE

1st Place: Golden Li (Shenyun Performing Arts)

2nd Place: Steve Wang (Shenyun Performing Arts)
Seongho Cha (Shenyun Performing Arts)
Leon Chao (Shenyun Performing Arts)

3rd Place Brian Nieh (Washington DC, USA)
Ming Liu (Los Angeles, USA)

Honourable Mention:
Kokuei Chen (Maryland, USA)
Amlex Chun (Shenyun Performing Arts)
Jerry Zhang (Shenyun Performing Arts)

ADULT FEMALE

1st Place: Jennifer Su (Shenyun Performing Arts)
Cindy Liu (Shenyun Performing Arts)



POWER: Golden Li was the first place winner of the Adult Male division of NTDV's International Classical Chinese Dance Competition. EDWARD DAI/ THE EPOCH TIMES

2nd Place: Madeleine Lobjois (Shenyun Performing Arts)
Chelsea Cai (Shenyun Performing Arts)

3rd Place Anna Li (Shenyun Performing Arts)
Ting-jie Huang (Taipei, Taiwan)
Rachael Bastick (Shenyun Performing Arts)

JUNIOR MALE

1st Place: Rocky Liao (Feitian Academy of the Arts)
Tony Xue (Feitian Academy of the Arts)

2nd Place: William Li (Feitian Academy of the Arts)

3rd Place Rick Li (Feitian Academy of the Arts)
Chad Chen (Feitian Academy of the Arts)

Honourable Mention:
Alvin Song (New Jersey, USA)
Fengnian Liang (Edmonton, Canada)
Ben Chen (London, UK)

JUNIOR FEMALE

1st Place: Angelia Wang (Feitian Academy of the Arts)

2nd Place: Miranda Zhou-Galati (Feitian Academy of the Arts)
Alison Chen (Feitian Academy of the Arts)

3rd Place Alina Wang (Feitian Academy of the Arts)
Chialing Chen (Feitian Academy of the Arts)

Honourable Mention:
Yong Cheng (Feitian Academy of the Arts)
Faustina Quach (Feitian Academy of the Arts)

Cello duo revives compositions of Holocaust victims

By **KREMENA KRUMOVA**
Epoch Times Staff

Inspired by the idea that music can prevent genocide, unite people, and bring joy, two young cellists—brother and sister—share their “Duo Brikcius—2 Cellos Tour” in a series of concerts in the Czech Republic.

After performing at the 54th Dvorak festival in Frydant earlier this month, Anna Brikciusová and František Brikcius were featured at a concert in the Jewish Museum in Prague on June 18.

The highlights of the program were Fantasie IV (2008) by Czech composer and organist Irena Kosíková and Duo for Violin and Cello (1939–40) by the Jewish-Terezin composer Gideon Klein, arranged for two cellos.

Organized under the auspices of the Prague City Council for Culture and Heritage and the Italian Culture Institute in Prague, the concert will also feature music by Luigi Boccherini, W. A. Mozart, Gioachino Rossini, and Paul Hindemith.

THE ‘TEREZIN’ COMPOSERS

In a special interview for The Epoch Times, František Brikcius from Duo Brikcius shared that the selection of the music for this concert was no accident.

The definition of “Terezin” composers originated from the name of the town of Terezin, situated north of Prague. During World War II, the Nazis deported many artists to Terezin, which was used as a stop on the way to concentration camps.

Irena Kosíková’s father, philosopher Karel Kosík, survived after being imprisoned in Terezin. Two Czech composers, Pavel Haas and Gideon Klein—who didn’t survive—were also held at the so-called Terezin Ghetto.

“There are several reasons why I’m dedicating part of my life to Terezin composers. First of all, music by Gideon Klein, Jaromir Weinberger, Irena Kosíková, James Simon, Erwin Schulhoff, and many others is simply wonderful and worth performing. I feel it like a mission. It is a responsibility of every musician to support music he likes by



CELEBRATING JEWISH CULTURE: Cellist František Brikcius playing at the “7 Candles” concert. COURTESY OF FRANTIŠEK BRIKCIUS

playing it. Besides, it’s very important to [remember the] horrors and victims of Shoah [Holocaust], because these situations are still happening nowadays.”

František Brikcius also has a personal reason for his commitment to this music. He says, “Very few people can imagine the situation of those people living in fear of being murdered. My grandfather [was] imprisoned in Terezin as well.”

The young cellist adds that “Duo Brikcius—2 Cellos Tour” is a follow-up of two other initiatives that are the predecessors of the tour.

One of them is the concert program “7 Candles” (2006-2007), performed by František Brikcius and the Talich Chamber Orchestra under the stick of Jan Talich in Prague and in Terezin. It was part of the Year of Jewish Culture in the Czech Republic.

The second was the “Weinberger Tour,” a cello and piano concert tour to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the death of the great Jewish composer of Czech origin Jaromir Weinberger. The repertoire included the wonderful sonata written by Holocaust victim Erwin Schulhoff and a newly discovered Lamento by the “Lost Composer” James Simon (murdered in Terezin), which

was introduced to Czech audiences for the first time.

Despite the dark stories behind the music, Brikcius is confident that through the marvel of music, resentment can be resolved and people can be brought together. “Music should be ... a bridge between different cultures and religions,” he says.

DUO BRIKCIUS BRINGS

THE JOY OF MUSIC

Siblings Anna and František Brikcius have both loved the cello for many years. Both, too, have a great deal of solo experience behind them. But in order to create a synergy and explore music written especially for two cellos, they decided to embark on the road of this extraordinary discovery, which, they believe, has huge hidden potential.

“My sister Anna Brikciusová is a cellist as well. There is a great deal about the sound and color of two cellos, the enormous cello range, wonderful repertoire—and two cellos are fun to play and travel with. Actually, as you can see from our repertoire, the two cellos combination has been known for centuries, since the very beginning of cello existence.”

The project strives not only to perform works for cello and help maintain

the tradition of known composers, but also to introduce music to the public that is rarely heard.

“As a musician, I feel responsibility to play the music I like, music that without our intervention will be forgotten, to prepare specific dramaturgy, to support the creation of new music, and to bring joy to people.”

A SOLO CAREER

Besides the duo project with his sister, František Brikcius looks forward to several brand new projects.

The cellist is currently preparing a premiere of the ballet “Makanna” based on the novel of Jewish writer Jiri Weil to mark the 50th anniversary of the writer’s death. The piece was written by Czech composer Irena Kosíková for orchestra, with a special appearance by a cellist and a singer.

Another initiative is the unique program “eSACHERÉ” for solo cello, scheduled to be performed in the autumn of 2010. A dozen composers from around the world have written 12 different compositions on notes based on the name of Swiss conductor Paul Sacher (Es, A, C, H, E, Re). The notes used are E flat (“Es” in German), A, C, B natural (“H” in German), E, D (“Re” in French). The project was commissioned by the world-famous Russian cellist Mstislav Rostropovic. Mr. Brikcius will perform the whole set, the first time it will be performed in its entirety.

In general, František Brikcius focuses on the interpretation of cello compositions written by composers from the 17th to the 21st century, with special consideration given to the compositions for solo cello.

“I’m concentrating on works by Czech authors like Antonin Dvorak, Bohuslav Martinu, Leoš Janáček, Jaromir Weinberger, the Terezins—Gideon Klein, Erwin Schulhoff, James Simon—as well as contemporary composers Conrad Beck, Luciano Berio, Pierre Boulez, Benjamin Britten, Luboš Fišer, Alberto Ginastera, Irena Kosíková, Jiri Matys, Witold Lutoslawski, and others.

For more information about Brikcius, please visit: www.brikcius.com

Canadian male model of the year crowned

By **HELENA ZHU**
Epoch Times Staff

VANCOUVER—On June 21, twelve contestants arrived in Surrey, B.C., hoping to become the Canadian representative in the thirteenth annual Manhunt International, the world’s first and largest “Male Model of the Year” pageant.

Contestants were judged as they walked the runway in evening wear, swimwear, business wear and casual wear. After interviewing each contestant the five judges had chosen the man who possessed the most attractive looks, personality, modeling skills and physique.

Brett Price from the Epoch Times was on the panel of judges. She said that it is very important for the models to be able to represent the style that they’ve been chosen to represent.

“We also judge these models today in an interview as well. So we judge them a little bit based on their character and how they feel about Canada, how they see themselves—things like that. They are also judged in a photogenic competition, so not only on the runway, but on camera,” said Price.

“This event gives men an opportunity to practice the art of modeling and to be involved in the fashion world without a lot of hype and without a lot of obstacles. It’s very open to people participating. Modeling and fashion aren’t completely about money and superficiality. I hope to encourage those people who are in it for the right reasons to see their experience as an art and form of self-exploration.”

The winner, Dax Gramuglia, a bartender from North Vancouver will arrive in Seoul, South Korea in July to represent Canada in

the competition that involves contestants from over fifty other nations.

Gramuglia explained the key to his success. “I think you just gotta represent whatever fashion and idea that you are being a model for, you know, and not think of yourself selfishly, but kind of take yourself out of yourself and into the element of fashion. That’s the best way to approach anything.”



Dax Gramuglia, the winner of the competition, walks the runway. COURTESY OF STAN LAU