



Trumpet Talents Tallinn 2016

Celebrating its 27th year, the "Trumpet Talents Tallinn 2016" festival wrapped up its final competition last month at the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre. While dozens of other music festivals keep Tallinn's bustling cultural scene busy throughout the year, this unique festival draws young aspiring trumpet players from across Europe and Asia giving them the opportunity to perform for an international jury of adjudicators.

This year's panel included Venezuela's Pacho Flores who began playing in the El Sistema Youth Orchestra program and is a recent winner of the renowned Maurice André International competition, Professor Adomas Kontauta from Lithuania, Professor Boris Taburetkin from Russia's St. Petersburg Conservatory and Professor Massimo Spiga from Spain's Conservatorio di Musica.

The creator of the festival is devoted trumpet professor and conductor Aavo Ots who each year organizes a variety of master-classes and recitals for the participants. Many may remember Professor Ots as one of the conductors at the 2013 West Coast Estonian Festival in San Francisco. Also, he was a conductor at the XXIV and XXV Song Festivals in Tallinn and was named the Orchestra Conductor of the year by the Estonian Choral Association in 2004, 2006 and 2009. Ots has taught at the Academy in Tallinn since 1985 and was appointed Associate Professor of the brass and woodwind department in 1989. His thoughtful synthesis of the best known trumpet practices has created one of the finest schools of brass pedagogy in northern Europe, resulting in graduating many successful professionals. Ots' vision and commitment to developing excellence in future players was clearly demonstrated in the events planned for the International Trumpet Days.

The festival included a variety of concerts beginning with the Tallinn Winds Fest

which featured performances by a variety of trumpet soloists as well as the Tallinn Music High School Symphonic Wind Orchestra and the Estonian Youth Wind Ensemble. However, a major highlight of the entire festival was a special Trumpet Gala celebrating Professor Ots' 65th birthday at the Estonia Concert Hall. Performances by Miroslav Petkov of the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Ots' top trumpet students, the Estonian Youth Brass, ensemble Brassical, Brass Academy, as well as Ots' Estonian Youth Wind Ensemble and the Tallinn Music High School Symphonic Wind Orchestra honoured the esteemed professor's dedication to his life's work.

In preparation for the actual competition, an evening recital of Professor Ots' trumpet students gave each player the opportunity to get more experience with public performance. Players of all ages were included, not only the most advanced students at the Academy, but also students as young as eight years of age. Performances included demanding works of Telemann, Hummel, Tamberg and Arutunian as well as arrangements of other quality music. More importantly, not only is an atmosphere of mentorship nurtured in Ots' studio, all players demonstrated an ethic of commitment and discipline in their polished performances.

Two brilliant solo recitals also preceded the competition. The first was performed by Neeme Ots (the second youngest of Aavo Ots' five children, all of whom are gifted professional musicians) at Tallinn's Jaani kirik in Freedom Square. Neeme has performed as a soloist with the Tallinn Chamber Orchestra as well as the Polish Chamber Philharmonic Orchestra and has won several national and international competitions. His artistic performance of baroque trumpet repertoire included soprano Maria Melaha and organist Tiia Tenno. Neeme's florid ornamentation, sweet tone and expressive phrasing in his demanding program made for an exciting concert.

The second recital was performed by Pacho Flores who has been a featured trumpet soloist with various orchestras all over the world. His beautiful tone colour and mastery of a wide range of musical styles was captivating. As a featured Stomvi artist (maker of fine brass instruments), the audience was treated to hearing a vast array of trumpets including the

performed on a rarely heard corno da Caccia which captured the unique quality of sound for this piece. His expressive singing style and playful musical nature was also a highlight in his own arrangements of Latin American music.

Without question, Professor Ots is a master of organizing a trumpet festival of international quality which gives his students the privilege of hearing top performing artists and motivating them toward the upcoming competition. Sixty-four players competed in the three day event in six different classes organized by age group. Nine players in the professional class played obligatory solo repertoire as well as music of their own selection and each played two 15 minute rounds of performance. Younger players in the under nine years of age class performed obligatory repertoire lasting four minutes while the

17-20 year old category played repertoire up to twelve minutes. Two grand prize winners, Mihkel Kallip of Estonia and Kristijonas Sakalauskas of Lithuania were presented with €3000 Stomvi trumpets. Two winners in the professional class received Tallinn Prizes of €600 and €400 and other winners received generous awards of €350 to €200 from the Estonian Cultural Endowment Scholarship.

Professor Ots' endless dedication to his students is shared by his talented wife, Meeli, who provides impeccable piano accompaniment for the very demanding solos the students play. In a country renowned for singing being at the centre of its national identity, Ots' dedication to building exemplary brass performance standards undoubtedly puts Estonia on the international map.

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