

HONENS QUESTIONNAIRE

HAN CHEN

2018 HONENS INTERNATIONAL PIANO COMPETITION

We asked Han to share some information about himself, here is what he came back with...

Have you ever been to Canada? To Calgary?

Yes

No

Where did you go to University?

I did my accelerated Bachelor and Master of Music from 2010 to 2015 at The Juilliard School.

With whom did you study?

I studied with Prof. Veda Kaplinsky during my college years, with whom I will keep studying with in my upcoming doctoral degree.

When did you start playing the piano?

I had my first piano lesson on my fourth birthday as my birthday gift.

How old were you when you first played in public?

I started taking local competitions a year or two years after I started playing the piano, so I guess when I was six years old?

How old were you when you made your orchestral debut?

When I was fourteen years old, I played the Coronation Concerto by Mozart with the China Symphony Orchestra in Beijing.

Tell us about something that happened in your childhood that made a significant impact on your life.

When I was young, I was always excited to go on stage. I loved the crowd, and I loved playing in front of people. I had a friend who was easily nervous on stage, so I was made to give her a big smile from the audience when she walked on stage. As I grew up, I also became nervous and self-conscious. But when I think of my friend, I always remember to give myself a big smile, so that I can run on stage and play music fearlessly like when I was young.

If you hadn't become a pianist, what would you be doing right now?

It is hard for me to imagine myself not being a pianist, since I have been playing the piano for my lifetime. However, I would love to become a gallery owner. So, if I am not a pianist, I may go into art-related majors such as art history or art management.

Default drink / cocktail of choice?

Mimosa without the alcohol part, and a former host mom of mine named it Hanmosa.

The historical personalities, both good and bad, that fascinate you the most?

John Cage is someone when I read about or listen to the music of that I feel totally fascinated. He had such an unusual life and created so many different things those influenced other musicians and artists and thinkers. Sometimes I feel musicians don't get as excited about him as visual artists, and I wonder why. I played his prepared piano concerto and totally loved it.

If you could board a plane today, where would it be taking you?

I would love to go to Spain, where I have always wanted to visit but have never been.

What is your favourite book?

The Stranger by Albert Camus.

Other than playing the piano, what other talents do you possess?

I also love to compose, although I am very slow when it comes to composition.

What do you like best about being a pianist?

The best thing of being a pianist for me is that it brings you to so many different places, where you meet different people, have different experiences and taste different cuisines.

What is the one talent that you wished you possessed?

I wish I could draw. I took a couple of drawing lessons when I was young, but the only thing I could feel was my sore arm, and probably the lack of talent.

What musical instrument do you secretly wish you could play?

I used to play the violin, but not anymore. I wish I can still play it, so that I can play in a quartet. I love the sound of a string quartet.

What are the top three pieces (or songs) that you could listen to over and over again?

"Frühlingstraum" from the Winterreise, the Piano Quintet by Thomas Adès, and the Lyric Suite by Alban Berg.