



## **2019 HONG KONG ST. CECILIA INTERNATIONAL MUSIC COMPETITION**

### **ADJUDICATORS' GENERAL OBSERVATIONS**

The two adjudicators were very impressed with the overall high standard of performances during the recent Hong Kong St. Cecilia International Music Competition.

The First Round gave competitors the opportunity of performing to the Chief Adjudicator and receiving valuable advice to further improve their performance skills. This advice ranged from developing an overall performance philosophy to appropriate performance dress, stage etiquette, technical improvement and musical awareness.

The majority of the performers in the First Round took full advantage of demonstrating their ability and treating the experience with full respect and dignity. Some performers were unaware that the services of an accompanist were required in the First Round as was the importance of dressing for the occasion.

All performers in the First Round received a report form which gave a brief overview of their performance. This overview addressed technique, musicianship and presentation. Performers, teachers and parents were encouraged to use this information in order to further improve and enhance the student's development. The resulting percentage mark reflected the performance at that particular moment and did not necessarily guarantee additional success in the Final Round.

The Final Competition provided the chance for competitors to demonstrate their skills in order to achieve recognition by being awarded certificates, medals and trophies. The Chief Adjudicator was particularly pleased to notice that the advice given in the First Round had been heeded. All performances reflected outstanding improvement.

The criteria used by both adjudicators to make final decisions included the performer's awareness of posture and technique; their ability to control the performance accurately and securely; maintaining even rhythm; playing correct notes; observance of all the directions on the score and the ability to project the composer's message to the audience.

Some students were very clearly able to use their previous performing experiences to full advantage, demonstrating their theatrical skills perfectly. This was particularly noticeable with the Singing competitors who successfully used facial expression and animation to colour their performances.

Musicians who presented themselves in the harp and orchestral strings sections were all very impressive. Harpists had very clear and confident tone and their strong technique supported their performances well. Most of the orchestral string players were able to project a full sound by using confident and accurate bowing as well as vibrato.

The brass and woodwind performers showed their music skills well and, in the majority of cases, had excellent tone production and dexterity. This was also evident with the pianists and ensemble performers.

New to the Competition were classes allowing for various grades of ukulele playing. All performers in these classes confidently entertained the audience and clearly had developed a mature awareness of the instrument's capabilities.

A very interesting repertoire was chosen by most performers. In the competitive environment, pieces which have a broad audience appeal and which have examples of technical flamboyance and musical depth are best chosen. Unaccompanied works should be chosen with care.

The standard of teaching and performing in Hong Kong is exceptionally high. It is clear that students and their parents treat their musical pursuits seriously, whilst also ensuring that the final aim is focussed on developing enjoyment, personal satisfaction and educational gain.

**Matthews Tyson**

*Chief Adjudicator, St. Cecilia Intl.*