

The 15th Crescendo Summer Institute has started in Tokaj

The event started on the 1st of August with a celebration. The more than 300 participants from 33 countries were greeted by the leadership of Crescendo Summer Institute and by representatives from the city of Tokaj. Bethany Brooks (USA) pianist, David Danel (CZE) violin artist and Julian Poore (GBR) trumpeter welcomed the participants with otherwise underrepresented musical pieces. The joint work started on the 2nd of August with the help of the nearly 60 member faculty. The symphonic orchestra rehearsals began aiming to learn Symphony No. 3 “Eroica” by Beethoven under the leadership of conductor Delta David Gier (USA). The participants heard a lecture about the life and works of Beethoven from musicologist Marcel S. Zwitser (NED) and also got to know the importance of the Eroica from a music historical point of view. Students were able to attend solo and chamber music lessons, opera scene rehearsals, the Lectio Divina - a popular activity hosted by dancer Tina Bailey (USA) -, workshops on improvisation, jazz sessions and many other possibilities to play music together. The participants of the Summer Institute introduced themselves between August 3 and 5 on the Main Square of Tokaj during the Crescendo-on-the-Streets open-air concerts. Popular melodies, string, brass and woodwind character pieces, dances, opera and operetta arias made the summer afternoon heat a little more bearable.

Strengthening the message of the Bible, faculty and students performed at the Catholic Holy Mass and at the Reformed Church Service on the weekend. On the 4th of August 2018, many of our excellent faculty played a concert in the Synagogue. Among the performers were Bethany Brooks (USA) - piano, Dominik Brühwiler (GER) - piano, Erika Dallos (HUN) - piano, David Danel (CZE) - violin, Dag Anders Eriksen (NOR) - violin, Jean-Jacques Goumaz (SUI) - oboe, Julie Gross (USA) - French horn, Steven Gross (USA) - French horn, Zsolt Kalló (HUN) - violin, Ágnes Kállay (HUN) - cello, Gergely Kaposi (HUN) - piano, Róbert Lugosi (HUN) - trombone, Vera Lugosiné Várhalmi (HUN) - piano, Svetlana Meerman-Muret (RUS/FRA) - piano, Uwe Schenker-Primus (GER) - baritone, Dinu Serfezi (ROU), Tünde Szabóki (HUN) - soprano, Sámuel CSaba Tóth (HUN) - piano, Gábor Varga (HUN) - clarinet. They have presented pieces from Antonín Dvořák, Johann Sebastian Bach, Johannes Brahms, Axel Jorgensen, Ludwig August Lebrun, Márton Illés, Nikolai Medtner, Giuseppe Verdi and Richard Wagner.

Mornings at the Crescendo Summer Institute always start with Tune In sessions. There were many encouraging lectures on the topic of “Happiness”. Beat Rink (SUI), founder and general director of the Crescendo Movement, held a lecture with the title “Happiness from the stars”. John McNeill, a Danish lecturer from Irish origin and member of Agape Europe, had some useful tips to the audience with the title Measuring Happiness. Dr. Andrzej Turkanik, Polish viola artist and theologian, held a lecture with the title “Depressed or thankful”. His title presented the audience with a real question, a key when it comes to

finding happiness. These questions were debated and processed during the small group sessions. With help from some of our faculty there was a chance to recite personal credos in the form of panel discussions and also a chance to discuss questions from the audience. On the 3rd of August our theologians who have been lecturers of the morning Tune In sessions, were presented with similar question at the “Coffee with theologians” interview.

The Creative Church took place on Sunday, on the 5th of August. It was a closing chord to the first week as well as an overture to the second week. Creative Church is an initiative of Crescendo International, and over the years it has been held in more than 40 cities, mainly in Europe. It is an ecumenical service saturated by music and art and includes a sermon, communion, and a creative prayer walk. This year’s Creative Church circled around the endless topic of “Happiness” as well. Beat Rink preached a sermon with the title “To love and to be loved” giving us all inspiration to enrich our lives. Faculty and students of the Summer Institute participated in the service playing special musical pieces of Leonard Bernstein, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Edward Grieg and Arvo Pärt. Participants of the improvisation course helped with their performance for churchgoers to deepen new thoughts that may have emerged during the service.

The second week of the Crescendo Summer Institute

Special programmes followed the eventful first week. The professional training continued with solo lessons, smaller chamber group practices and various ensemble practices. Every day was marked by music history lectures or concerts: Dr. Marcel S. Zwitter (NED) gave the participants provisions for the journey on the road to understanding French music. He gave a lecture on 6 August with the title “Debussy, Ravel and the beginnings of modern music”. Pianist Polina Kulikova (RUS) contributed to the lecture. Ms Kulikova was a competition winner at a previous Summer Institute, and this year she had her Carnegie Hall (NY) debut. On 7 August horn artist Steven Gross (USA) and the American Double, that is, Philip Ficsor (violin) and Constantine Finehouse (piano) performed otherwise underrepresented American music pieces, i.e. chamber music written especially for the trio by composer William Bolcolm.

On 8 August the piano department remembered the 100th anniversary of Debussy’s death with a concert entitled “Poetic Piano Music”. Apart from Debussy’s music, the concert consisted of various piano pieces from different eras and nations representing the poetry of piano music. Since French music was an emphasised element at the Summer Institute, on 9 August concertgoers had the opportunity to listen to numerous pieces by French composers. Music by Lili Boulanger, Frédéric Chopin, Claude Debussy, François Devienne, Gabriel Fauré, Jaques Ibert, Francis Poulenc, Paul De Wailly was played from various periods, by string, woodwind, piano and vocal students and faculty.

Baroque and jazz seem to belong together and on an exceptionally calm evening, this was demonstrated at the Crescendo Summer Institute's concert: "Only a Few Steps Away: Baroque and Jazz". The solo and chamber lessons were concluded with sectional concerts from 10 to 12 August: participants of brass, strings, flute, woodwind, piano, violin, conductor and youth sections performed their knowledge gained at the Summer Institute. We heard a colourful programme with music pieces composed by the most famous European composers at the closing concert of Balázs Fülel's piano course. The concert was held in the Reformed Church of Tokaj where Balázs Fülel himself played the piano, too, which was a credo of his art and an expression of his career's goal.

On 11 August at the "Saturday Night Crescendo Concert" excellent soloists performed alongside the youth section, and voice students presented opera scenes, directed by Shawn Mlynek and Krisztina Tarjányi. On Sunday morning, on 12 August the Hungarian and foreign participants attended musical church services at various denominations. The service at the Reformed Church was broadcast by the Europa Radio. At the Gala Concert, representatives – chosen by the faculty – from every department and age group had a chance to introduce themselves. As a closing chord Symphony No. 3 "Eroica" by Beethoven was performed, conducted by Delta David Gier (USA).

Town Tokaj's representative buildings have provided inspiring places to the courses and to the Festival itself. The Hungarian hospitality was wonderfully represented by the warm welcome and the pleasant atmosphere of the town. Cosy premises provided a space for hosting corporate programmes. Both the Hungarian guests and guests from far away had a joyous time, and the community building programmes helped tremendously to create a friendly – even family-like – atmosphere.

This year a banquet was held for the first time, where the faculty did everything in their power to provide their students with a festive atmosphere. While enjoying a 300 slice cake, they reminisced about the many nice and happy moments in the past 15 years of the Crescendo Summer Institute. The small group discussions, that began on the morning Tune Ins, continued during the event. The lecturers: Tom Chevis (GBR), Krisztina Tarjányi (HUN), Delta David Gier (USA), Hermann Rohde (GER) and Beat Rink (SUI) discussed the topic of "Happiness" from various points of view: "Don't worry, be happy!", "An orphaned musician – homecoming", "Intimacy: a home for happiness", "Success and happiness".

Thanks to the eventful series of programmes the participants of the almost two week long Crescendo Summer Institute have become richer in friendships and new international experiences. They have returned home with the hope that they will see each other again from 24 July to 5 August in 2019 at the 16th Crescendo Summer Institute.