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James (Zijian) Wei Wins the 2024 Cleveland International Piano Competition

CLEVELAND, OH – The Cleveland International Piano Competition (CIPC) has announced Zijian Wei (China) as the 2024 Mixon First Prize medalist. Evren Ozel (USA) took Second Prize, Maxim Lando (USA) took Third Prize, and Giuseppe Guarrera (Italy) won Fourth Prize. The medals were awarded at the conclusion of the Final Concerto Round, two nights of back-to-back performances where the pianists played with The Cleveland Orchestra at Mandel Concert Hall, Severance Music Center conducted by Ruth Reinhardt.

“Competing as a Finalist in the CIPC is an extraordinary feat,” says Yaron Kohlberg, president of Piano Cleveland, the CIPC host organization. “Sharing the stage with The Cleveland Orchestra is a career-maker for many pianists.” Kohlberg knows first-hand the value of being a Finalist for the CIPC, winning Second Prize in 2007. Other past medalists include world-renowned pianists Sergei Babayan and Angela Hewitt.

In addition to its Final Concerto Round with The Cleveland Orchestra, the CIPC has remained one of the most prestigious competitions in the world thanks to its generous \$75,000 Mixon First Prize that also includes a recording contract with Steinway & Sons, professional management services provided in partnership with Arabella Arts, and concert commitments around the world. The concert commitments, Kohlberg explains, are key. “The CIPC Finals can put someone on the map,” he says, “but the Mixon First Prize takes you all over the world.” As the First Prize Winner, Zijian will have debut recitals at Carnegie Hall and Tonhalle Zürich. In total Piano Cleveland, as the host organization for the CIPC, has secured over 50 commitments for its medalists in 20 countries.

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In addition to the First, Second, Third, and Fourth place prizes, the CIPC awards a Special Prizes totaling over \$15,000 for various programming choices and performances. For a complete listing of special prizes and their recipients, as well as biographies for each of the medalists, visit pianocleveland.org/.

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About Piano Cleveland

Piano Cleveland promotes Cleveland as a premier piano destination by presenting world-class programming, community engagement, and education initiatives. The organization's four major programs and events include the Cleveland International Piano Competition, the CIPC for Young Artists, a mixed-genre piano festival, and year-round education and community engagement programming.

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