



*Andrey Ponochevny, Belarus,
Second Prize Winner, 2007 LIPC*



*Dizhou Zhao, China,
First Prize Winner, 2007 LIPC*



*Ching-Yun Hu, Taiwan,
Third Prize Winner, 2007 LIPC*

Yamaha is Official Piano of Louisiana International Piano Competition

Last October, the 2nd Biennial Louisiana International Piano Competition (LIPC) was held in Alexandria in partnership with the Rapides Symphony Orchestra. Yamaha was once again the official piano, providing pianos for the competition at the Coughlin-Saunders Performing Arts Center as well as events at other venues.

LIPC operates under the umbrella of the Rapides Symphony Orchestra, which is conducted by Maestro **Joshua Zona**. "We're entering our 41st consecutive season," says board member **Raymond Goodrich**, "and it is rare to have such an accomplished and longstanding symphony in a city the size of Alexandria, Louisiana. It's exciting to see the symphony continue to grow." The Rapides Symphony Orchestra accompanied all three pianists who competed in the final round of the competition. "What a fantastic program it was for the audience: they performed Rachmaninov No. 2, Chopin No. 1, and Rachmaninov's *Rhapsody*," says LIPC founder **Nikita Fitenko**, DMA, and Coordinator of the Keyboard Program at the School of Creative and Performing Arts, Northwestern State University of Louisiana in Natchitoches.

The 2007 LIPC once again attracted the world's most promising young concert artists. "This year, we had competitors from 14 nations and a total of 103 applicants on the Artist Level, an increase from 2005 when 70 applied," explains Fitenko. "Twenty-eight Artist Level

pianists and 31 Junior Level pianists were selected to compete."

Chinese pianist **Dizhou Zhao** won the competition and **Andrey Ponochevny** (Belarus) and Yamaha artist **Ching-Yun Hu** (Taiwan) were 2nd and 3rd prizewinners, respectively. All three will perform at Carnegie Hall/Weill Recital Hall during the 2007-2008 concert season, a new addition to existing prizes of performances in Louisiana and with the St. Petersburg Symphony in Russia. Artist Level winnings also include \$8,500 in cash awards and the recording of a solo CD for Classical Records in Moscow. Cash awards for the three Junior Level prizewinners, **Song Yang** (China), **Yon-Joon Yoon** (Korea) and **Margarita Loukachkina** (Russia), totaled \$1,500 with \$15,000 in scholarships to attend Northwestern State University in Natchitoches, Louisiana.

The illustrious 2007 Competition judges were **Nelita True** and **Kevin Robert Orr** (USA), **Hugues Leclère** (France), **Yuko Matsumoto** (Japan), **Ivo Kaltchev** (Bulgaria/USA), **Alexander Tutunov** (Belarus) and **Alexander Zolotarev** (Germany).

"We are grateful to Rapides Symphony Orchestra for their local support, to **James Steeber** and Yamaha Artist Services, Inc. for their support from New York, and we are especially thankful to piano tuner, **Tom Kaplan**, who did a wonderful job for us this year," says Fitenko. "He kept all the Yamaha pianos in top form."

For more info, visit www.lacompetition.com.

