

‘Musica Sacra Nova’ Composition Competition 2020

A window on the new repertoire for liturgy and not only

By Richard Mailänder, Professor and Choir Conductor

In September 2019 a new contract for the composer’s competition “Musical Sacra Nova” was signed between the Archbishopric of Cologne, the Freundeskreis der Abtei Brauweiler, the Musica Sacra Association Warsaw, the Polish Chamber Choir, the University for Church Music of Regensburg, the Associazione Musicale MusicaFicta and the Papal Institute for Church Music.

The competition now has two categories:

A: A cappella works with a Latin Christian text for up to 16 voices

B: Works with a Latin liturgical text for 4 to 6 voices and organ ad lib.

The competition has been greatly developed with new partners and a new orientation. This year 78 compositions were presented in the competition, almost twice as many as in 2019, by participants from 18 countries, also more than twice as many as in 2019. They came from Indonesia, the Philippines, Russia, Brazil, USA, Canada and many European countries.

The jury (the photograph in this article shows the jury members before the opening of the envelopes at the Papal Institute for Church Music, from left to right: Msgr. Vincenzo de Gregorio (Rome), Prof. Vaclovas Augustinas (Vilnius), Prof. Dr. Enjott Schneider (Munich), Dr. Andrea Angelini (Rimini), Eriks Esenvalds (Riga), Stephen Layton (Cambridge) and Prof. Dr. Paweł Lukaszewski (Warsaw)) voted for the following works:

Category A:

1st Prize: Aleksander Jan Szopa (Poland) for *Ubi caritas*

2nd Prize: Paolo Orlandi (Italy) for *Ave Regina caelorum*

3rd Prize: Steven Heelein (Germany) for *Lux et origo*



Aleksander Jan Szopa (Poland), First Prize winner for category A

Category B:

1st Prize: Fé Yuen (Hong Kong) for *Ave maris stella*

2nd Prize: Joanna Widera (Poland) for *Agnus Dei*

3rd Prize: Johannes X. Schachtner (Germany) for *Missa brevissima*



Fé Yuen (Hong Kong), First Prize winner for category B

One very special topic has to be mentioned: The winner of the first prize in category B is just 9 years old – nobody would have guessed. As can be seen from her curriculum vitae, it was not the first prize she received for her compositions.

The prize winner's concert for category A will take place at Brauweiler Abbey (Germany) on 16 May at 8pm. The works of category B will be performed at Gdansk on 30 May. The concert in Brauweiler will be recorded and later broadcast by Deutschlandfunk.

Schott will publish all prize-winning works in the specially created series entitled "Ausgezeichnete Chorwerke".



Richard Mailänder studied church music, musicology and history at Cologne Music College and at the University of Cologne. He started work as a church musician at St Margareta's in Neunkirchen, and from 1980 to 1987 he was Cantor at St Pantaleon in Cologne. On 1 October 1987 Richard Mailänder started working at diocesan level within the Archbishopric of Cologne. In 2006 he took full charge of music in the Archbishopric. After a spell teaching at the Robert Schumann College in Düsseldorf, in 2000 he started teaching at the College of Music and Dance in Cologne, where he performed numerous works of Pärt, some of them first performances in Germany. Furthermore he has published numerous articles and books for the teaching of church music and is (co-)editor of many anthologies of choral music. E-mail: richard.mailaender@erzbistum-koeln.de