

Judges Biographies 2006

Elira Avni Since making his debut with the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra under Zubin Mehta, Eilran Avni has performed throughout Europe, South America and the United States. He has made numerous recordings for several broadcasting systems in Europe and has appeared as a special guest on Israeli Television with The Israel Philharmonic. His numerous awards include the first prizes in both the Clarimont and Rachmaninoff Competitions and the annual scholarship from the Israel-America Foundation since 1989. A champion of chamber music, Eliran has been the featured artist on the Hindemith and Brahms Festivals in Germany. Born in Israel, Eliran began his musical training at the Tel Aviv Academy of Music. He received both his BM and MM degrees from The Juilliard School, while studying with Yoheved Kaplinsky, where he is currently completing his DMA dissertation, *The Musician's Challenge: Emotion and Structure in Music*. He has studied under Isaac Stern, Yo Yo Ma and Maria Curcio who describes Eliran's technique as formidable and brilliant.

Stefan Young Stefan Young is Professor of Composition and Music Theory at Westminster Choir College of Rider University. At Westminster he also teaches in the Piano Department and directs student composition recitals for both graduate and undergraduate students. In addition, he has a private studio at home, teaching both piano and composition students. During the summers he directs a High School Composers Week at Westminster which culminates in a recital of the young composers' compositions. Stefan Young received a BM degree from Rollins College in Florida and a MM degree from the Juilliard School and the PhD degree from Rutgers University.

Paul Zeigler Paul Zeigler's multifaceted career as a pianist, composer and teacher has taken him on performances throughout the United States, Canada and Europe. Critics have been unanimous in their praise: "absolutely thrilling, technically perfect, emotionally exciting, mind expanding - a virtuoso performer." In April 2002, Mr. Zeigler won the Kathryn G. Obenshain award for second place at The 22nd Bartok-Kabalevsky-Prokofiev International Piano Competition and Festival, Radford University, VA. As composer-performer, Mr. Zeigler's works have been featured on radio, television and in major concert Halls. His March 2004 concert of all original works in New York City was reviewed by John Hammel for WNTI Radio and described as "remarkable American compositions. It is refreshing to encounter music that is so utterly accessible and imbued with a compelling joie de vivre at its core. All of Mr. Zeigler's compositions offered a full emotional and coloristic palette. Zeigler's piano playing was masterful." Recently released CDs are entitled *Beethoven: Three Sonatas, Pathetique, Moonlight and Appassionata* and *To Music and Other Original Works by Paul Zeigler with Patricia Ruggles, mezzo, Janet Vidovich, clarinet, and Mitchell Vines, piano.*