



Q&A Feng Ning

How much does it help to be surrounded and encouraged by a musical family?

Well, for what I felt and still be feeling now is that of course I was first introduced to the music world by my family, but I don't have the pressure that a child from a professional musician family might have, which is that everybody would expect them to grow up doing just as what their parents or grandparents did, and better. So I was able to live in a relaxed atmosphere to learn music and enjoy it. For each step that I have reached, they feel happy for me, and if there was something didn't work out well, they were still very supportive.

You have just won the Paganini competition. What kind of suggestion would you give to a young violinist who wants to participate in a violin competition?

First I would like to correct one idea that I have heard a lot when I was growing up and might still exist nowadays, - Paganini is NEVER just technique. Paganini's piece are of course difficult from the technique point of view, and a lot of people only concentrate on this, which is only a surface thing. They forgot about the more important thing under knees which is the romantic Italian opera MUSIC.

So we did hear a lot of computer-like Paganini in the past, and a lot of people consider Paganini isn't musical, but I think it's not right, and it's time to change it. So when it comes to the Paganini Competition where we shall play many Paganini pieces, play the music of Paganini, NOT the technique of Paganini. And one more thing - Don't think the competition as a competition, but as a performance, and enjoy the performance just as how you enjoy the music and life.

Who or what has influenced you musically?

Of course, my four teachers have impacted me the most directly: Youxin Wen, Prof. Weimin Hu, Prof. Hu Kun and Prof. Antje Weithaas.

Also, even I've never had the opportunity to listen to the live performance of many great old masters, but I was very much influenced by the recordings of two great violinists, Jasha Heifetz and David Oistrakh.

In your opinion, to what extent do the following items influence the career of a young artist? a) good management b) an interesting and broad musical repertoire c) a good stage presence d) a good violin and bow e) playing with the most important musicians and conductors f) a good contract with a record company

Well, I do believe that all things listed above would be very important for the career, but before we start all of this, the bottom line is one shall be an excellent violinist with good heart and passion for music.

You live in Europe since 1998. Which are the cultural differences, not only musical, between East and West? For this, there isn't a way to explain everything with only few lines, but the cultural differences is of course everywhere, from the language to the habits and customs, and I was and still am learning from it every single day.

What is your next project?

I think I only have one project related to my music, which is to enjoy it and pass on the joy to every one.

What is your secret dream?

Hehe... I wish that one day I can own a nice Guarneri del Gesù violin.