

Monk Competition Announces Semifinalists

By NATE CHINEN

Twelve semifinalists have been selected for the 25th Annual [Thelonious Monk International Jazz Competition](#), to be held on Sept. 22 and 23 in Washington. Presented by the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz, the competition is widely regarded as the most prestigious of its kind, with the winner receiving a \$25,000 music scholarship and a recording contract with the Concord Music Group.

The Monk competition spotlights a different instrument each year, and this year the focus is turning to the drums. Five of the semifinalists come from outside the United States: Dor Herskovits and Noam Israeli, from Israel; Kristijan Krajncan, from Slovenia; and Martin Krümmeling and Julian Külpmann, from Germany. Their American counterparts, representing six states, are Justin Brown, Dustin Kaufman, Abe Lagrimas Jr., Kyle Poole, Jamison Ross, Colin Stranahan and Oscar Suchanek.

According to competition guidelines, all of the semifinalists are under 30. They will be judged by a multigenerational cross-section of jazz-drumming excellence: Roy Haynes, Ben Riley, Peter Erskine, Carl Allen, Terri Lyne Carrington and Brian Blade.

The competition finals, featuring three competitors, will coincide with a gala bearing the theme “Women, Music and Diplomacy,” in honor of former United States Secretary of State Madeleine Albright. The concert will feature performances by the singers Patti Austin and Nnenna Freelon, the pianists Herbie Hancock and Geri Allen, and the saxophonists Wayne Shorter, Jimmy Heath and Jane Ira Bloom, among others. Aretha Franklin and Chris Botti will be among the other special guests.

Tickets for the semifinals, at the National Museum of Natural History on Sept. 22, will be free, and distributed on a first-come, first-served basis. Tickets for the concert and gala, at the Kennedy Center on Sept. 23, are \$50 and \$75 and can be purchased at kennedy-center.org. The gala will be broadcast by BET, and the semifinals will be streamed online at the Web sites of the Smithsonian Institution and the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz.

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