

Fundación Occident Champions Young Talent alongside the Winner of the 71st Maria Canals Competition

Pianist Zhu Wang Awarded the Fundación Occident Prize, featuring €25,000 and Four Orchestral Engagements

Zhu Wang, a 28-year-old pianist from China, was crowned the winner of the 71st Maria Canals International Piano Competition in Barcelona during an awards ceremony held this Thursday at Barcelona City Hall's Saló de Cent.

The competition's top honour, the Fundación Occident Award, consists of a €25,000 cash prize and four paid performances with established national orchestras during their regular seasons.

This year's event featured 60 pianists from 25 countries, further cementing its status as a premier international platform for emerging performers.

During the event, Laura Halpern, President of Fundación Occident, underscored that "supporting young talent and fostering genuine opportunities for artistic growth are core to the Foundation's mission". She added that "this partnership with the Maria Canals Competition enables us to bring music to the heart of society and mentor new generations of pianists as they launch their professional careers".

The competition's final stage took place on Wednesday, March 25, at the Palau de la Música Catalana. The three finalists each performed a piano concerto, accompanied by the Joven Orquesta Nacional de Catalunya (JONC) and conducted by Manel Valdivieso.

The collaboration between Fundación Occident and the Maria Canals Competition is driven by initiatives designed to expand cultural access and nurture musical excellence. Key programs include: Educational Support: An initiative for children in vulnerable situations, which has provided nearly 1,000 piano scholarships since its inception. Public Outreach: The "Your City Fills with Pianos" project, which brings the joy of live music directly into public spaces.

Through this partnership, both institutions strengthen their dedication to sharing music – specifically piano performance – while championing rising talent and enriching the community's cultural landscape.

About Fundación Occident

Fundación Occident, formerly Fundación Jesús Serra, is a private non-profit entity, created in memory of Jesús Serra Santamans, a renowned businessman and patron, who was the founder of GCO (Grupo Catalana Occidente). Its activity consists of developing and supporting initiatives in the fields of research, business and teaching, social action, sport, and promotion of the arts, with a common objective: responsible commitment to society.