

Pianist Silvia Franzi among the finalists at the Royal Albert Hall in London

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On Tuesday 4 April, the finalists in the **Grand Prize Virtuoso** competition at the **Royal Albert Hall, in London**, will also include **Silvia Franzi**, a student at the **Alessandro Manzoni Music Lyceum**, in Varese. The young pianist has been selected for the final stage of the competition, together with other talents from all over the world. “This is the result of great commitment on the part of Silvia,” explained **Livia Rigano**, a piano teacher at the Manzoni Lyceum. “It’s thanks to her talent and her passion, combined with her in-depth and continuous study, that she’s come so far.”

Silvia Franzi is going to play a **Scarlatti** sonata, and although she is accustomed to performing at various levels, she will certainly be nervous when she plays in such a holy place for culture, particularly for music, like **London’s Royal Albert Hall**. “These events are stimulating and instructive,” Ms Rigano continued, “because they give you an opportunity to compete with musical talent from several countries. In the preparation, there’s such attention to detail that you’re never satisfied, but, in the end, the nerves are there and you have to learn to handle them. From personal experience, I can say that it’s a thrill that galvanises, and when you play, it’s like being in a sort of bubble that isolates you, without taking away your perception of what’s happening in the audience.”

HER SCHOOLMATES ARE ROOTING FOR HER

At the **Manzoni Lyceum**, there is a lot of studying. The subjects include those typical of a lyceum, to which about thirty percent of music subjects are added, some taught in groups, such as history of music, theory, analysis and composition, music technologies, ensemble; others individually, namely the study of a first and a second instrument (piano, violin, guitar, clarinet, horn, flute, oboe, violoncello, trumpet, double bass, saxophone and singing).

To be **admitted**, applicants must take an aptitude test, usually in February of the last year of middle school, and a practical test to assess their basic musical knowledge. In **2016**, the Manzoni Lyceum churned out its first high-school graduates, with a certain success, because everyone that wanted to continue studying music was admitted to a music academy. And there were no problems for those who wanted to enrol at **other university faculties. So, it is a young school that can already boast about its excellence.**

“This lyceum is an **excellent opportunity**,” Livia Rigano concludes, “because it was once necessary to follow two separate paths to be able to go to university, so, two schools, and it was a great sacrifice. Some of our children have won prizes in national and international competitions, both individually and in ensembles. In our opinion, Silvia certainly represents excellence, and her classmates are very proud of her success.”

di Translated by Prof. Rolf Cook