NUMBER OF FINALISTS INCREASED

Cliburn Changes Contest Schedule

By Don McDowell

Important changes were announced Thursday in the schedule of the Van Cliburn International Music Competition, and it was learned that the changes came as a result of a request by Cliburn himself.

Cliburn has instigated two major changes in the contest since it began, both affecting the number of contestants advancing to higher levels of competition.

The Kilgore keyboard artist's latest move came late Wednesday after contest judges had named six finalists in the contest.

Cliburn, with contest judges and officials at the home of Jorge Saiz, chairman of the jury, learned that the changes came as a result of a request by Cliburn himself.

When the meeting ended after midnight, the judges' decision had been amended. There are now nine finalists, and those persons running the contest have promised pause.

Saxe said that Jorge Varella-Cid of London, Arthur Charles Finzi-Montier of Beverly, Pa., and Takashi Hirasaka of Tokyo, were advanced to the finals because he and the rest felt that "whatever can be done to give the fairest chance to contestants" was in order, even though "human destinies are at stake.”

"Human destinies" were at stake last week, too, when the judges' decision as to who should advance to the semifinal round was amended.

Saxe Thursday said Cliburn had advocated both changes.

"He came to me first last night," Saxe stated.

Mrs. Grace Ward Lankford, corresponding secretary for the competition, Thursday called the latest change and the problems it created "regrettable."

"I want the newspapers to know that we aren't responsible," she said, claiming that the situation was the result of action by "someone else.

She would not define "someone else," but she did rule out any interference on the part of TCU, where the competition is being held.

Changes in plans came at a fast, confusing rate early Thursday and the problems were partially solved.

Three more finalists mean another day of competition.

The first of the extra finalists will begin playing at 8 p.m. Saturday in Ed Landreth Auditorium at TCU.

Tickets for the third phase of competition will be made available "as soon as they are printed."

Early word had the tickets on sale now at Washer Bros. but was amended when someone realized that the tickets had yet to be printed and would have to be reordered.

The Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra had to be engaged for another day, along with Seattle Symphony Conductor Julius Katsavos, as a result of the change.

Some concern existed early Thursday over the amount of prize money that would be paid for an extra performance and funds may not exist since as many practice sessions as originally planned.

One important question remains unresolved. Will all nine finalists be eligible for prize money?

By reaching the finals, the original contestants were all assured of cash prizes. The winner was to get $10,000. Other prizes were $5,000 for second, $2,000 for third, $1,000 for fourth, $500 for fifth and $250 for sixth.

Saxe said the "first prize will definitely not be reduced."

Neither he nor other officials could say if nine cash prizes will now be paid. Reducing the amount of second through sixth from seven to nine places or if seventh, eighth and ninth place winners will go unrewarded.

As the contest now stands, three finalists will perform Thursday night. They are Marilyn Neeley of Glendale, Cal., Hiroko Nakamura of Japan and Ralph Votapek of Milwaukee.

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They made it... Fennimore, Varella-Cid and Hironaka, from left...