



*My Young Friends (and already outstanding musicians)!*

*You are facing a serious challenge. You are to compete in a cello competition of high level of difficulty. When making a decision about participating in the competition you must have been asking yourself if you should do it right now, is your decision right, is your professional level sufficient. Should you wait a year*

*or two more and take part in the competition when prepared for it better? You made this decision, perhaps with some doubts. I want to assure you, that no matter where you end up you made the right decision. When competing against your colleagues, from the results you'll get a quite objective measure of the level of your current professional skills as an artist-musician.*

*Despite unavoidable stress, competitions have a number of unquestionable positives. Preparations to a competition require an intensive work which usually is very beneficial for further professional progress. Competitions themselves require a high dose of concentration and allow you to test how you are able to deal with the stress and stage-fright, and how are you able to perform your art nevertheless. That gives you an opportunity to test yourself and find out at which point of your career you are right now. A competition allows you also to estimate how well are you fit for the profession and to make sure that your choice was right, that the path that you have chosen is correct.*

*Allow me for a side remark. A competition, as the name itself indicates, is to select the best ones from you. And that's what usually happens. However, you are competing in a discipline that is not a science; in addition to professional skills, more objective in nature, you are competing also with your personalities, which cannot be measured (the jurors can be influenced by your flair, artistic temperament, your skills in creating the mood of the music, etc.). When I was young, I had a problem with judging two great pianists who, I think, set up their own personal competition on the performance of four sonatas by Beethoven. It was in Leningrad (now Petersburg) during my music studies, and these two artists were Emil Gilels and Sviatoslav Richter. If I were in the jury in this competition I wouldn't be able to select the winner. They played totally differently from others, and magnificently. They competed not in playing the notes but in understanding the genius of Beethoven. And with that I am concluding my introductory remarks wishing you, my dear musicians, good luck and achieving the best results in comprehending the music of the composers that you are playing. Please remember that you conduct your activities in a sophisticated and beautiful profession where the most important deed is serving the music and extending its depth and beauty to others.*

*Kazimierz Kord  
Jury Chairman*

Warsaw, February 2009