

Cleveland International Piano Competition: Round 2, Sessions 5 & 6 (July 29)

by Mike Telin



The last ten of the thirty-one pianists in the 2016 draw played their second round recitals at the Cleveland International Piano Competition on Saturday, July 30 at the Cleveland Museum of Art's Gartner Auditorium.

First up was Alexander Ullman of the United Kingdom, who performed a single work: Schumann's *Fantasy in C*, Op. 17. Throughout the performance Ullman captured the essence of the

large-scale Romantic work, bringing out every emotion the composer throws at the performer. Playing with a rich, full-bodied tone no matter what dynamic level, Ullman brought a grandeur to the rhapsodic first movement. The middle movement's march was majestic, and the pianist relished the melodic lines during the meditative finale.

Jinhyung Park of South Korea followed with a completely enjoyable performance of the brief *Sonata No. 24 in F-sharp*, Op. 78 of Beethoven. A classy player, Park's relaxed yet musically astute playing during the opening movement was beautiful, as he made easy work of its technical passages. The "Allegro vivace" was peppy and full of life. The pianist's interpretation of Chopin's *Sonata No. 3 in b*, Op. 58 was full of emotion, yet void of any unnecessary fussiness. The "Allegro" had a beautiful expansiveness, while the flourishes of notes in the "Scherzo" had a nimble charm. He followed his introspective take on the "Largo," with a finale that was dashed off with purpose, and with great balance between the right and left hands.

Daria Kameneva of Russia began her set with two sonatas by Scarlatti. K. 8 in g was full of nuance while K.1 in d was highlighted by nimble ornamentation, clear tone, and secure technique. Kameneva has the capacity to produce a huge array of dynamics from the softest to the most full, and she has technical capabilities to boot. These qualities

served her well during her dramatic and well constructed performance of Brahms's *Sonata No. 2 in f-sharp*, Op. 2.

Italian pianist Maddalena Giacomuzzi also possesses abundant technique and the ability to produce a lot of sound, which she brought to a performance that began with Beethoven's *Sonata No. 23 in f*, Op. 57 ("Appassionata"). The opening "Allegro assai" was dramatic. She began the "Andante con moto" with well balanced chords, although the variations had a sameness of character. Giacomuzzi made easy work of the virtuosic passages during the concluding "Allegro ma non troppo." Performing at break-neck speed, she shared a kindred spirit with Chopin during his *Scherzo No. 1 in b*, Op. 20.

Japan's Tomoki Sakata brought more than technique to his program: he also had a lot of wonderful musical things to say. The opening "Allegro" of Beethoven's *Sonata No. 15 in D*, Op. 28 ("Pastoral"), was defined by well-shaped musical lines, and Sakata's well-articulated bass-line, and the impish middle section of the "Andante," was wonderful. He brought out the humorous side of the composer during the "Scherzo," while the concluding "Allegro" was full of personality. Sakata's performance of Chopin's *Etude in g-sharp*, Op. 25, No. 6, was electrifying, while Rachmaninoff's *Moments musicaux*, Op. 16, Nos. 2,3, and 4 were hauntingly beautiful.

An elegant player, Karim Said of United Kingdom/Jordan, began the afternoon session with a captivating program. His rich, deep tone, superb sense of line, and clean articulations were ever present in the day's second performance of Beethoven's *Sonata No. 15 in D*, Op. 28 ("Pastoral"). Said brought musical panache to the opening "Allegro," while a range of color and character distinguished the "Andante." His humorous take on the "Scherzo" was delightful and the ending "Rondo" was stately. Following his effortless account of Chopin's *Etude in c*, Op. 25, No. 12 ("Ocean"), Said brought out the mystical qualities of Takemitsu's *Rain Tree Sketch II* that vividly captured the composer's musical world.

As she did during her first round, Oxana Shevchenko of Kazakhstan delivered a mesmerizing performance that displayed her musical command and technical prowess, the combination of which simply makes you want to sit back and listen. Her program, Brahms's *Sonata No. 3 in f*, Op. 5, began with an emotionally enthralling first movement "Allegro." The "Andante" had the tenderness of a lullaby, and the following "Scherzo" was grand. The "Intermezzo" was engrossing, and the "Finale" pulled at your heartstrings.

Once again Tomer Gewirtzman of Israel presented a five-star performance that began with John Corigliano's captivating *Fantasia on an Ostinato*. A single repeated notes lays the groundwork as musical flourishes are placed on top. The work gradually evolves into

a kaleidoscope of colors that give way to a statement of the slow movement of Beethoven's 7th symphony, until the single note theme returns. Gewirtzman played magnificently throughout the engaging work. He quickly switched musical gears, offering up a sensitive and technically secure *Toccata in e*, BWV 914 of Bach. He ended his set with an outstanding display of musicianship and technical wizardry during Scriabin's *Etudes*, Op. 8, Nos. 9-12.

Emanuel Rimoldi of Italy began his mini-recital by showing off his impressive Mozart chops with the *Sonata No. 5 in G*, K. 283. The opening "Allegro" featured crisp and light articulations. His "Andante" was impressively delicate, and he captured the composer's sense of humor during the final "Presto." The pianist's muscular side served him well in Yusupov's *Subconscious Labyrinths*. Like a labyrinth, the work musically wanders, and Rimoldi did a great job of negotiating the complicated pathway before finding the center. He concluded his program with wonderful accounts of two works by Chopin, the *Etude in b*, Op. 25, No. 10 ("Octaves"), and the *Polonaise-fantaisie* in A-flat, Op. 61.

American Reed Tetzloff was again impressive. During Frederic Rzewski's "Winnsboro Cotton Mill Blues" from *North American Ballads*, the pianist brilliantly delivered a well-paced, captivating performance. Following a neat and tidy Chopin *Etude in F*, Op. 10, No. 8 Tetzloff capped off his set with a remarkable delivery of Beethoven's *Sonata No. 31 in A-flat*, Op. 110. Throughout the work, the pianist captured the wonderment of the composer's later compositions.

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