

Virtu(al)oso Piano Competition: Round One ends on August 4

by Daniel Hathaway



Tonight around 8:45 pm, when U.K. pianist Martin James Bartlett, playing virtually from the Steinway Gallery in London, lifts his hands from the keyboard after the last notes of Shostakovich's *Polka for W.R.*, 30 contestants will have completed their 20-minute First Round performances in Piano Cleveland's 2020 all-online Virtu(al)oso Competition.

We've been following the performances since last Thursday, and will share some thoughts and impressions on Wednesday afternoon,

August 5. On Wednesday evening at 7 pm EDT, the jury will name the six players who will go on to the Final Round, playing 30- to 35-minute mini-recitals on Thursday and Friday.

It's a bit surreal experiencing a competition online when you know that all the performances have already been frozen for weeks in the form of video recordings made in Cleveland, New York, London, Hamburg, and Beijing — but strange times demand clever solutions.

Check the website tomorrow to find out how well we thought the 30 candidates were able to put their individual musical personalities across on the screen, in spite of buffering, latency, and all the other technical vagaries of the Internet.

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