

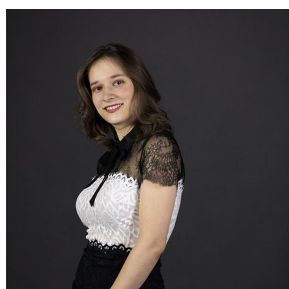
CIPC Round 1, Session 3, Saturday, July 10

by Jarrett Hoffman



Precision, clarity, and character stood in the opening selection from **Vitaly Starikov** (25, Russia) — Bach’s *Fantasia and Fugue in a*, BWV 904. He brought the different voices of the opening into a discussion of their own, and pointed up certain phrases in the Fugue with an attractive, manic energy.

Two works by Chopin followed. The tempestuous opening of the *Etude in b*, Op. 25, No. 10 (“Octave”) was engagingly phrased, and the conclusion was emphatic. The Op. 23 *Ballade No. 1 in g* was a bit consistently intense in tone, but Starikov’s technique shone in several delightful scampers around the keyboard.



Anastasiya Magamedova (23, United States/Tajikistan) also chose Bach and an extra helping of Chopin. The *Toccata in c*, BWV 911 brought out enjoyable echoes and rousing crescendos from the pianist — the rustic energy might have inspired some listeners to get up and dance.

An intriguing combination of dreaminess and unease filled the *Nocturne in E-flat*, Op. 55, No. 2, and though the *Etude in a*, Op. 25, No. 11 (“Winter Wind”) was treated somewhat heavily, the early move from stoicism to madness was deeply vivid.



Debussy’s “La terrasse des audiences du clair de lune” from the Preludes, Book II showcased the gentle touch and sensitive musicality of **Ziyu Liu** (22, China). Every moment of his playing felt both spontaneous and expertly weighed.

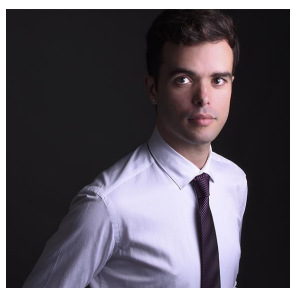
Next came a tour-de-force performance of Ravel’s *La valse* — atmospheric, thrilling, and marked by a judicious use of power —

followed by the second performance this session of Chopin's "Octave" Etude.



Both of the next two contestants began with Haydn — first, the *Sonata in C*, Hob. XVI: 48 from **Daria Parkhomenko** (29, Russia). Its opening movement put the spotlight on her light touch and gestural phrasing, and the rondo was charming through and through, both delicate and armed with a sense of surprise.

The third appearance of Chopin's "Octave" was brilliant, as Parkhomenko calibrated her volume to let the stormy emotions shine out. And despite a few missed notes, Liszt's *Grandes études de Paganini*, S. 141, No. 6 felt effortless in her hands, and humorous.



Rafael Skorka (32, Israel) began with Haydn's *Sonata in F*, Hob. XVI: 23, treating its first movement with equal parts verve and sensitivity. Deeply expressive in the second movement, he ended the third with supreme, understated wit.

He continued with two minor-key Scarlatti sonatas — K. 30 and K. 56 in g and c — the latter one standing out for Skorka's sharp contrasts of dynamics and touch. And with brilliant technique, lightly traversing the keyboard, he concluded the session with his choice of Chopin Etudes: Op. 10, No. 8 in F.

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