

CIPC Round 2, Session 3 July 22

by Cait Winston



The July 22 installment of the Second Round of the /Cleveland International Piano Competition began with **Ziyu Liu's** (22, China) performance of Chopin's *Nocturne in c*, Op. 48, No. 1. Liu's pace was measured and unhurried, bringing out the piano's rich tones and highlighting rhythmic intricacies. This stately tempo lent itself to carefully curated phrases in which each note was considered before it was played, giving the piece intention and polish.

Liu's playing never lost its composure through the highly dramatic material of Beethoven's *Sonata No. 32 in c* — he maintained a consistent tempo through the swift passages, playing them with excitement and grace. Liu demonstrated impressive virtuosity during the extended trills, creating a light, delicate sound — a tremendous technical feat.



Daria Parkhomenko (29, Russia) followed with a series of preludes by Rachmaninoff. The *Prelude in f-sharp* was dark and elaborate, and Parkhomenko expertly shifted the pace and intensity of her playing with the growing tensions of the piece. She played the *Prelude in B* with flexible phrasing, mastering uneven rhythms with control and precision. In the *Prelude in c*, Parkhomenko played wildly complex material with remarkable clarity, and finished with poised, thoughtful, and quietly triumphant performance of the

Prelude in b.

The pianist followed with Carl Vine's *Sonata No. 1*, a contemporary piece featuring a variety of highly virtuosic passages in a number of diverse textures. Parkhomenko characterized each distinct texture with both dramatic nuance and technical finesse.

Rafael Skorka (32, Israel) played Handel's *Suite in d* with a gracefulness and poise that was fitting for the dance material. He demonstrated his technical skill by maintaining these qualities as the material became more complex, effortlessly ornamenting the musical lines and bringing a beautiful delicacy to the dark, somber material. During Rachmaninoff's *Étude-tableaux* Nos. 8 and 9, Skorka brought out deep colors, swells of drama, and a sense of unsettled motion.



Skorka finished his set with Ravel's *La Valse*, a haunting, deconstructed waltz that he characterized with technical flourishes and an intense sense of foreboding. Skorka's excellent sense of rhythm allowed him to bring out the disjointed nature of the piece, creating an unfamiliar, ominous sonic landscape.



The evening concluded with **Bowen Li** (24, China). In Beethoven's *Sonata No. 28 in A*, the melodic material was sweet and genuine, and Li's phrasing was concise and dramatically impactful. Li demonstrated an array of compelling emotions in the melodic material, playing repeated passages with nuanced dynamics and dramatic emphases.

His set finished with Ravel's "Une barque sur l'océan" and "Alborada del gracioso" from *Miroirs*, where he created dreamy, flowing passages that moved fluidly through the piano's registers. Li's sound was gossamer and ethereal, filled with rich colors but never weighed down with density, although textures were often complex and intricate.

Published on ClevelandClassical.com July 24, 2021.

Click here for a printable copy of this article

[Return to the Front Page.](#)