

## CIPC Round 2, Session 1, Saturday, July 17, 2021

by Stephanie Manning

During the second round, the pianists are given thirty minutes to present their recitals. This is the last chance for the 26 contestants to make an impression before the group will be whittled down to just eight for the semi-finals.



**Lin Ye** (28, China) introduced the second round with one of Beethoven's most famous works: *Sonata No. 21 in C Major, Op. 53, "Waldstein."* The pianist combined a beautiful light touch with sensitive phrasing to keep the piece in constant motion, preventing the repetitive chordal figures from sounding stagnant. Ye took his time in the slow and expressive opening of the second movement, fully focused on listening and responding to the music.

The pianist's approach to the flowing passages of the Beethoven also served him well in the following piece, Debussy's *L'Isle Joyeuse*. Ye deftly expressed both the mysterious aura created by the composer's use of whole tone scales as well as the sparkling leaps that embodied the piece's title, "The Happy Isle."



**Stefano Andreatta** (29, Italy) began with the only work by Schubert in the competition: *Klavierstück No. 1 in E-flat Minor, D. 946*. An expressive player in both his music and facial expressions, Andreatta is a master of tasteful ritardandos. He transitioned smoothly from the tumultuous mood of the first section into the lyrical second section, which highlighted his graceful ornamentation, before making a triumphant return to the opening material.

Rachmaninoff's dramatic and thrilling *Sonata No. 2 in B-flat Minor, Op. 36* (1931 version) made a great contrast, allowing Andreatta to show his more aggressive side. His striking, powerful chords made for an engaging listen, even if some were a bit heavy-handed. His standout moment of the performance came

during the second movement, a gentle interlude that sounded like the calm in the eye of the storm.



In her introduction, **Ying Li** (23, China) described how playing piano during the pandemic brought her comfort — and it's easy to imagine that her opener, Mozart's *Fantasia in D Minor*, K. 397, may have been one of those pieces she turned to in her time of need. Li took her time with the tranquil arpeggios of the introduction before leading into the *Fantasia* itself, where her playing was playful and emotional in equal measure.

The pianist followed that up with an expressive performance of Debussy's *Images, Book 1*. In the first movement, "Reflets dans l'eau," she delicately expressed the rippling motions of water, before balancing the emotional turmoil of the second movement with the whirling energy of the third.

In her final piece, Liszt's *Paraphrase de concert sur Rigoletto*, S. 434, Li accentuated the drama of the original Verdi opera, bringing the melodies to the forefront while taking care to emphasize Liszt's numerous ornamental touches.



**Honggi Kim** (29, South Korea) seems like a pianist eager to showcase his technical ability, if his pieces for the second round are any indication — and if that's the case, he certainly succeeded. Ravel's *Gaspard de la nuit* is an ambitiously difficult work, but Kim performed each highly technical passage with ease. In the haunting second movement, Kim dug into the moments of tension without losing sight of the plaintive B-flat ostinato, which repeats in the pattern of a tolling bell.

Kim's second piece was Arcadi Volodos' transcription of Liszt's *Hungarian Rhapsody No. 13 in A Minor*, S. 244/13. Volodos is known for making already-difficult works even more challenging — but again, Kim barely batted an eye. Without getting hung up on the piece's physical demands, the pianist was able to focus on bigger-picture musical ideas.



**Lucas Thomazinho** (25, Brazil) started off his second round with a spirited performance of Beethoven's *Sonata No. 7 in D Major, Op. 10, No. 3*. In the animated opening movement, he played up contrasts in dynamics and tempo, while in the following three, he deftly navigated the changes in mood from sorrowful, to lively, to majestic.

Thomazinho ended the session with an interesting pairing of two highly technical works: Chopin's *Etude in C-sharp Minor, Op. 10, No. 4* and Guarnieri's *Toccata*. The pianist performed both pieces with a fiery passion, particularly the *Toccata*, which is heavily influenced by both European and Brazilian music.

*Published on ClevelandClassical.com July 18, 2021.*

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