

# FOR THE RECORD

## Tchaikovsky win for pianist Alexandre Kantorow

**T**he 22-year-old French pianist, Alexandre Kantorow, has won the Grand Prix at the 16th International Tchaikovsky Competition. He'd already clinched the Gold Medal in the piano category, but Valery Gergiev made this extra award (worth \$100,000), one in his gift, to the pianist following the laureate's gala in St Petersburg; this additional prize has only been made three times in the competition's history, including in 2011 to the pianist Daniil Trifonov.



Alexandre Kantorow: the winning pianist at the 16th Tchaikovsky Competition

Kantorow had been the only entrant to opt to play Tchaikovsky's Second Piano Concerto (rather than the First) – Vasily Petrenko conducted the State Academic SO, 'Evgeni Svetlanov', magnificently in all 14 concertante works in the finals – which he supplemented with Brahms's Second (a tour de force of stamina, as well as superior musicianship, as he played non-stop for nearly an hour and a half).

The Tchaikovsky Competition has long been seen as one of the most prestigious in classical music, and Kantorow's triumph at this year's event gives further recognition to a pianist who has already been attracting attention for his virtuosity and musicality. His recordings for the BIS label have earned critical praise in our pages. Following his Liszt concertos in 2015 – 'His virile sense of drama ... [is] electrifying,' wrote Jeremy Nicholas – his

most recent release was of Saint-Saëns's Piano Concertos Nos 3-5. 'He is the real deal', wrote JN in June, 'a fire-breathing virtuoso with a poetic charm and innate stylistic mastery'.

The piano was just one of several categories in the competition, which took place in Moscow and St Petersburg across nearly two weeks and featured more than 40 finalists. The violin category was won by Sergey Dogadin, 30, from Russia – the first time in three competitions that a Gold Medal had been given in this

category – while Zlatomir Fung, 20, from the USA, took the Gold Medal in the cello category. The male vocal Gold medal went to Georgios Alexandros Stavrakakis, 30, from Greece, while the female vocal Gold went to Maria Barakova, 21, from Russia.

This edition of the competition saw two new categories added – woodwind (the Gold Medal going to Russian flautist Demin Matvey, 25, Co-Principal Flautist in Zurich's Tonhalle Orchestra), and brass (Gold jointly awarded to Russian trombonist Alexey Lobikov, 32, and Chinese horn player Yun Zeng, 19).

This year's Tchaikovsky Competition was streamed in its entirety by Medici TV, and attracted 18.5 million video views from 2.6 million individual users, from nearly 200 countries. The coverage is available at [tch16.medici.tv](http://tch16.medici.tv) – free of charge.

## Horowitz: The Great Comeback

**S**ony Classical is releasing a fascinating set celebrating Horowitz's return to the concert hall after an absence of 12 years. On May 9, 1965, the great pianist stepped out onto the stage of Carnegie Hall in New York, having not played in public since 1953, and having suffered badly from depression in the intervening years. This was one of the most famous piano recitals of the 20th century (tickets went on sale at 10am on April 26, but by 7am that morning there was already a queue of 1500 people), and Columbia Masterworks was on hand to record it. 'Horowitz at Carnegie Hall: An Historic Return' won three Grammy Awards, including Classical Album of the Year.

The new set contains this recital, remastered, but the real interest lies in material that has never been issued before. In the months running up to this concert,

Horowitz went to Carnegie Hall four times to play for his wife and close friends – as *Gramophone's* Jed Distler puts it, he had the rare benefit of playing in 'an ideal concert venue without the onus of a paying public and critics'. Columbia Masterworks also recorded these private, intimate recitals. As producer Robert Russ says, 'The present edition invites the listener to enter the circle of the few Horowitz confidants who attended these events in the darkened, almost deserted hall: we hear Horowitz enjoying the freedom of improvisation in previously unheard, sparkling performances, his complete recordings in the brilliant sound of the concert hall and many witty conversations recorded in an intimate working atmosphere.'



Also included are the rehearsal and recital from the same hall in 1966, two previously unissued recording sessions from Columbia's 30th Street Studio from January 1965 and May 1966, and an extensive interview with Horowitz's friend, the pianist Abram Chasins, from June 1965.

This enticing and lavishly presented 15-disc set is available on August 23, and will be reviewed in a forthcoming issue of *Gramophone*.