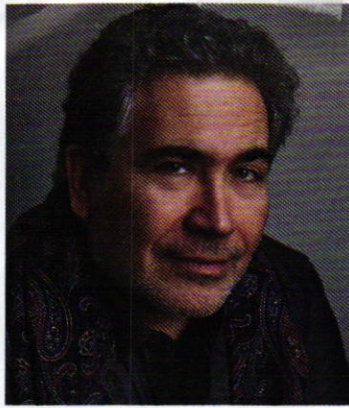


Rizzi to replace Elder at Opera Rara

Opera Rara, the record label devoted to unearthing and taking into the studio rare and neglected works from the *bel canto* era, has appointed a new Artistic Director. After seven years in the post, Sir Mark Elder is stepping down in September, to be replaced by Carlo Rizzi. The Italian conductor first worked with Opera Rara two years ago, conducting two discs of *bel canto* arias with soprano Joyce El-Khoury and tenor Michael Spyres, both shortlisted for last year's *Gramophone* Awards. Rizzi, whose career has included two spells as Music Director of Welsh National Opera, will lead the organisation into its 50th anniversary next year. 'Opera is my passion and I strongly believe in its future. Just as it is important to present known



masterpieces afresh and to commission new works, I believe that finding and bringing back to life the hidden jewels of this endlessly enriching art form is equally vital to excite modern audiences,' he said. New recordings will include Donizetti's *Il furioso all'isola di San Domingo* (being recorded next year for

release in 2021), followed by Offenbach's *La princesse de Trébizonde*.

Reflecting on his time at Opera Rara, Elder said: 'Bringing so many unknown operas to life has been challenging, but there is certainly an appetite for discovery among artists as much as the public.' Among Elder's achievements with the label was a superb recording of Rossini's *Semiramide*, our Recording of the Month in last year's Awards issue.

ONE TO WATCH

Johan Dalene Violinist

Robert von Bahr, the chief executive of BIS Records, is rightly proud of his credentials when it comes to spotting young talent. Alexandre Kantorow's recent success at the 16th International Tchaikovsky Competition, having already made three recordings for BIS (including the Liszt concertos when he was only 17) well illustrates this; so, too, does the story of 18-year-old violinist Johan Dalene. When Dalene won the prestigious Nielsen Competition earlier this year (as we reported in the May issue), and then became one of the latest intake of BBC New Generations Artists (as we reported in the July issue), he had already made his first recording for BIS. In January, he recorded the violin concertos by Tchaikovsky and Barber - he played the former as part of his winning performance in Copenhagen - with the Norrköping Symphony Orchestra under



Daniel Blendlulf, and the disc is due out later this year. BIS is committed to making further recordings with him. Indeed, it's easy to imagine this gifted young violinist being widely sought after.

Dalene is a prodigious talent. He made his debut with the Norrköping Symphony Orchestra at the age of seven, and had success in various competitions in his teens, culminating in his triumph at the Nielsen

Competition. He is someone who, like many prodigies, developed so rapidly when he was young that his instrument seems almost to be an extension of his body, so natural and relaxed is he when he plays; a performance of Sarasate's *Zigeunerweisen* given when Dalene was 10 years old, available on YouTube, exemplifies the insouciance of a young performer entirely at one with his instrument. Do look out for him!

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With Apple Music we've created playlists for each ensemble as well as one overarching playlist featuring all 10 of them. Visit gramophone.co.uk/awards where you can find out who has been nominated, listen to them, and then vote. Voting closes on September 7; the winner will be announced at the *Gramophone* Awards in October.

The Gramophone Podcast

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FOR THE RECORD

Tchaikovsky win for pianist Alexandre Kantorow

The 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 – free of charge.

Horowitz: The Great Comeback

Sony 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*.