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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Piano Cleveland Launches a Global Piano Competition for Artist Relief *Virtu(al)oso to Innovate Piano Competition Landscape This Summer*

CLEVELAND, OH – May 1, 2020 Piano Cleveland, the presenting organization of the Cleveland International Piano Competition, announces *Virtu(al)oso*, a virtual piano competition that provides relief for musicians around the world. *Virtu(al)oso* innovates the musical landscape by adapting to the current health situation and is thoughtfully orchestrated to offer financial aid and career benefits to all participants. Applications open May 1, 2020 and the two-round competition will be broadcast online from July 30 – August 9, 2020.

With the support of the organization's artistic partner, Steinway & Sons, the virtual competition will be recorded at five Steinway galleries including Cleveland, New York, London, Hamburg and Beijing. The 30 contestants selected to compete will record their performances at the nearest participating Steinway location while adhering to all regional health and safety guidelines.

Unlike typical competitions that tend to isolate funds to the top finalists, *Virtu(al)oso* is structured to equalize prize money across participants. In efforts to provide a greater financial impact to more artists, all pianists competing will receive a minimum of \$1,000 USD. Audiences can provide further support by donating to their contestants of choice throughout the competition. Additional non-monetary prizes—crafted with the future of piano music in mind—will offer career and management support to the top three finalists.

"These are trying times for our musicians and we are passionate about doing everything possible to offer support on a global scale," said Yaron Kohlberg, President of Piano Cleveland. "We are adapting to the new normal, creating a virtual platform for pianists to benefit financially and for the betterment of their future careers."

Contestants will be chosen by a screening jury of top international pianists, and the competition will be judged by leaders in the piano world. The screening jury members are: Ursula Oppens, Distinguished Professor of Music at Brooklyn College and the Graduate Center, City University of New York, four-time Grammy nominee, and 2016 juror at the Cleveland International Piano Competition (CIPC); Konstantin Soukhovetski, Pianofest in the Hamptons Artist-in-Residence, 2019 Innovation Award Winner from Music Academy of the West and 2003 CIPC medalist; Álvaro Teixeira Lopes, Assistant Professor in the Department of Communication and Art at Aveiro University, Artistic Director of Santa Cecilia International Competition and Director of Curso de Música Silva Monteiro; and Yaron Kohlberg, Steinway Artist, President of Piano Cleveland and 2007 CIPC medalist. The screening jury will be artistically advised by Paul Schenly, Artistic Director of Piano Cleveland.

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Competition performances will be broadcast on Piano Cleveland's website and social pages, as well as the YouTube channel of Steinway & Sons. Applications are open to any pianist (ages 18-32) located near the five Steinway locations. Information on how to apply and application requirements can be found at pianocleveland.org.

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About Piano Cleveland

Established in 1974, Piano Cleveland promotes Cleveland as a premier piano destination by presenting world-class programming and community engagement and education initiatives. The organization's four major programs and events include the quadrennial Cleveland International Piano Competition, CIPC for Young Artists, Concert Series, and year-round education and community outreach programming. For more information, visit pianocleveland.org.