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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Contestants Announced for Piano Cleveland's First Virtual Competition**

*Tune in this summer for a full schedule of events surrounding Virtu(al)oso*

**CLEVELAND, OH – July 1, 2020** Piano Cleveland announces 30 contestants selected to compete in *Virtu(al)oso*, a global piano competition that provides support for artist relief. The brilliant virtuoso pianists were thoughtfully chosen from a talented pool of 158 applicants from 33 different countries and range from 18-32 years of age. Like the organization's signature event, the Cleveland International Piano Competition, these musicians will garner global artistic recognition and exposure through their participation. As part of the first virtual competition for the organization, they will also benefit from an innovative structure that equalizes prize money to support all artists and provides a way for audiences to contribute directly to the prizes of each contestant. *Virtu(al)oso* will stream from July 30 – August 9, 2020, and performances will be presented nightly at 7pm EDT on [pianocleveland.org](http://pianocleveland.org).

The four-member screening jury, who collaborated via web conferences over the past two weeks to review video applications, have made the final selections for the two-round virtual competition. They have selected 30 rising artists, who are able to safely record their performances at the galleries of the organization's artist partner, Steinway & Sons, including Cleveland, New York, London, Hamburg, Beijing. The 2020 *Virtu(al)oso* Contestants are (First Name, Last Name, Age at Competition, Citizenship): Lorenzo Adamo (20, Italy), Kevin Ahfat (25, Canada), Jonas Aumiller (22, Germany), Martin Bartlett (24, United Kingdom), Sergey Belyavskiy (26, Russia), Elia Cecino (19, Italy), Han Chen (28, Taiwan), Michael Davidman (23, United States), Madoka Fukami (32, Japan), Martin Garcia Garcia (23, Spain), Francesco Granata (21, Italy), Arseny Gusev (21, Russia), Anna Han (24, United States), Andrei Iliushkin (25, Russia), Saetbyeol Kim (31, South Korea), Roman Kosyakov (27, Russia), Abuzar Manafzade (30, Azerbaijan), Lovre Marusic (27, Croatia), Arsenii Mun (21, Russia), Mariia Narodytska (32, Ukraine), Priscila Navarro (26, Peru), Josquin Otal (27, France), Chaeyoung Park (23, South Korea/United States), Tamila Salimdjanova (28, Uzbekistan), Tian Tang (27, China), Kiron Atom Tellian (18, Austria), Julian Miles Trevelyan (21, United Kingdom), Xiaoya Wan (20, China), Lin Ye (28, China), Wang Zhu (23, China).

Through the guidance of the Video Production Director, Mark Dumm, the organization will bring the top video quality experience to your home screens. Dumm, a violinist with The Cleveland Orchestra and long-time partner of the Cleveland International Piano Competition, will lead an international team of videographers and recording engineers to capture performances from around the world. To ensure both the highest quality and equity across all five Steinway galleries, each location will be appointed the same equivalent-level recording equipment and guidelines. For the safety of the organization's participants and partners, all recordings will happen under local health and safety guidelines and will follow an isolated recording schedule that permits only one contestant to enter the gallery at a time during non-business hours.

Paying homage to Piano Cleveland's signature event, the Cleveland International Piano Competition, *Virtu(al)oso* will broadcast surrounding competition events that viewers have come to know and enjoy. Audiences can count on an Opening Ceremony, scheduled to kick-off Wednesday, July 29, at 7pm EDT. The Opening Ceremony will be presented by Zsolt Bognár, pianist and host of *Living the Classical Life* and Piano Cleveland President Yaron Kohlberg, and will feature well-wishes from pianists, music leaders, and celebrities from around the world with an exceptional performance by Israeli pianist, Omri Mor. The competition will culminate in the Awards Ceremony on Sunday, August 9 at 7pm EDT, when the winners will be announced, and viewers can enjoy their encore performances. Following the conclusion of *Virtu(al)oso*, audiences can join the Jury Roundtable conversation on Saturday, August 15 at 11 am EDT and learn about the juror's experience judging a virtual competition, advice they have for developing pianists, and what the future of the performing arts looks like.

This competition will have a little something for everyone in the family to enjoy with the launch of Virtual PianoKids, a nine-video series that gives children the opportunity to travel through the cities participating in *Virtu(al)oso*. Each 15-minute video includes fun crafting components and kinesthetic activities to engage children in multiple modes of learning. All videos will be streamed on the Piano Cleveland website from July 16-28 and remain on the Virtual PianoKids page for continued viewing. The series culminates in a live performance on August 5 at 11:30am EDT, where our youth participants will be able to apply what they have learned in interactive performance.

Viewers can tune into Piano Cleveland's website, Facebook page, and Steinway & Sons social channels to watch the *Virtu(al)oso* competition. First Round Sessions will air nightly at 7pm EDT from July 30 – August 4, and the Final Round of six pianists will occur over two nights on August 7 and 8. WCLV/ideastream, the organization's media partner, will air the Final Round performances on August 8 and 9, from 2-4pm. For more information on *Virtu(al)oso*, the contestants and surrounding events, visit [pianocleveland.org](http://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](http://pianocleveland.org).