

HONENS MEDIA RELEASE

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HONENS NAMES FINALISTS FOR 2018 COMPETITION

Calgary, Canada, September 4, 2018—The three Finalists for the top prize at the 2018 Honens International Piano Competition were announced just after midnight in Calgary, following five intense days of Semifinals. Han Chen (Taiwan / age 26), Nicolas Namoradze (Georgia / age 26), and Llewellyn Sanchez-Werner (United States / age 21), will vie for the title of Honens Prize Laureate and be awarded the world’s largest prize of its kind—\$100,000 (CAD) and an Artistic Development Program valued at a half-million dollars.

“The Jury had a difficult, if not nearly impossible, task before them but one that they completed with great thoughtfulness, expertise, and consideration,” says Jon Kimura Parker, Honens’ Artistic Director. “We are beyond thrilled with this evening’s Finalist announcement and look forward to naming Honens’ next Prize Laureate.”

The members of the 2018 Honens International Piano Competition Second Jury are Alessio Bax (Italy / USA), Ingrid Fliter (Argentina / Italy), Wu Han (Taiwan / USA), Annette Josef (Germany), André Laplante (Canada), Asadour Santourian (USA), and Minsoo Sohn (Korea).

The final rounds of the 2018 Competition take place on Thursday, September 6 and Friday, September 7 and are comprised of a chamber recital with the Azahar Ensemble and a concerto performance with Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra and guest conductor Karina Canellakis. Both final rounds will stream live at honens.com/livestream beginning at 7:30 p.m. (MDT). For further details and ticketing information, please visit honens.com.

Backgrounder Attached

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BACKGROUND

HAN CHEN

Taiwan | Age 26

Hailed by the *New York Times* as a pianist with “a graceful touch ... rhythmic precision ... hypnotic charm,” (2012) and “sure, subtle touch,” (2014), Han Chen is a prize-winner at many major competitions and is highly regarded for his dedication to music of our time.

In January 2016, as part of his prize package as the First Prize winner of the 6th China International Piano Competition (Xiamen), Chen released his debut CD with Naxos Records recording Liszt’s operatic transcriptions. *International Piano Magazine* (UK) praised Chen’s performance in the competition, stating that he “displayed extraordinary strength, talent, and flair.”

"As an enthusiastic advocate for modern music, Chen actively performs both 20th century classics and works by emerging composers. His close collaboration with the Juilliard modern music ensemble AXIOM led him to the performances of works by Pierre Boulez, Toshio Hosokawa, György Kurtág, Magnus Lindberg, Steve Reich, and Charles Wuorinen. He is currently on the roster of the New York-based Ensemble Échappé.

A native of Taichung, Taiwan, Chen received his accelerated Bachelor and Master of Music degrees at The Juilliard School (New York) with Professor Yoheved Kaplinsky under the C/Kaplan Piano Scholarship, Susan W. Rose Piano Fellowship, and the Van Cliburn Alumni Scholarship. After this achievement, he obtained his Graduate Diploma with Professor Wha Kyung Byun at the New England Conservatory (Boston). He began his Doctorate of Musical Arts at the CUNY Graduate Center (New York) in August 2018, studying with Professor Kaplinsky and Professor Ursula Oppens.

NICOLAS NAMORADZE

Georgia | Age 26

The performances of pianist and composer Nicolas Namoradze have been hailed by critics as “sparkling ... sensitive and coloristic” (*New York Times*) and “simply gorgeous” (*Wall Street Journal*). He has given recitals at prestigious venues in several countries around the world and has appeared as a soloist with renowned orchestras and conductors in Europe and the United States. His performances in Hungary, Georgia, Spain, and the US have been broadcast on radio and television and his compositions have been commissioned and performed by leading artists and festivals in the US.

Highlights of his current season include appearances at the Chelsea Music Festival (New York) as a featured composer and pianist, recitals in New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut as Artist-in-Residence at The Drozdoff Society, as well as commissions for ensembles such as the Barkada and Verona Quartets and a series of concerts with violinist Rolf Schulte. Namoradze was recently awarded the Fidelio Fortissimo Prize for young composers (Budapest). During the past season he also composed and produced the soundtracks for *Walking Painting*, a film by Fabienne Verdier, and *Nuit d’opéra à Aix*, a short film made in association with the Festival d’Aix-en-Provence.

After completing his undergraduate studies in Budapest, Vienna, and Florence, Namoradze moved to New York to receive his master’s degree at The Juilliard School. He is now pursuing his Doctorate at the CUNY Graduate Center (New York), holding the Graduate Center Fellowship, studying piano with Emanuel Ax and Yoheved Kaplinsky, and composition with John Corigliano. Nicolas serves on the faculty of Queens College, CUNY (New York).

LLEWELLYN SANCHEZ-WERNER

United States | Age 21

Llewellyn Sanchez-Werner has been lauded as “poetic, electrifying,” (*Michigan Live*) with “masterful technique,” (*La Presse Montreal*) and “a gifted virtuoso,” (*San Francisco Chronicle*) for performances that have stirred the intellect and humanity of his listeners on five continents. Named a Gilmore Young Artist (2014), an honour awarded every two years to the most promising American pianists of the new generation, Sanchez-Werner also received the Atlantic Council Young Global Citizen Award recognizing his dedication to social action through music in countries including Iraq, Rwanda, France, Canada, and the US. General Petraeus commended his “courageous humanitarian contributions through the arts ... strengthening the ties that unite our nations.”

An active chamber musician, Sanchez-Werner has collaborated with leading artists such as Renée Fleming, Eric Owens, Marina Poplavskaya, and Cynthia Phelps. Since making his concerto debut at age six, he performs regularly under the batons of conductors including Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla, Michael Morgan, Boris Brott, Tito Muñoz, David Lockington, William Noll, Burns Taft, Robert Lawson, and Karim Wasfi.

Sanchez-Werner has been featured on NPR, CNN International, and WDR- Arte, in the Wall Street Journal, and was honoured to perform at the White House and Kennedy Center for President Obama’s Inauguration concerts. He received his bachelor’s and master’s from The Juilliard School (New York) where he also received the Kovner Fellowship. Principal teachers have included Yoheved Kaplinsky and Ilya Itin (piano), and Lowell Liebermann (composition). Sanchez-Werner studies with Boris Berman at the Yale School of Music (Connecticut) as the only candidate selected this year to their prestigious Artist Diploma program.

ABOUT HONENS

Honens discovers, nurtures, and presents Complete Artists—21st century pianists for 21st century audiences. The Honens International Piano Competition takes place every three years and is considered one of the world's most prestigious events of its kind. Honens prepares its Laureates for the rigours and realities of professional careers in music and creates opportunities for growth and exposure. The annual Honens Festival is one of Canada's premier classical music events, intended to share Mrs. Honens' love of world renowned music with Albertans every year. The 2018 Honens International Piano Competition & Festival takes place in Calgary from August 30 to September 8.

Esther Honens created a legacy of musical excellence to be enjoyed for generations. In 1991, Mrs. Honens gave \$5 million to endow an international piano competition in her hometown of Calgary, Canada. Her generosity, vision, and love of music continue to touch the lives of musicians and music-lovers at home and around the world. Legacy Partners follow in Esther Honens' footsteps by securing Honens' future and ensuring its continued ability to offer a broad scope of programming and community outreach projects.

THE COMPLETE ARTIST

The Competition's mission is to identify talent that is unusual, imaginative, and informed—an artist not limited to displays of virtuosity but one who is capable of thoughtful, expressive music-making, and is ready for a professional career. Honens sees the Complete Artist as a consummate communicator and collaborator, a risk-taking explorer, a dreamer. Through performance and programming choices, he / she expresses and interprets ideas from a wide cultural context with keen imagination, informed and seasoned by a fascination for life outside the practice studio. The Complete Artist inspires the heart and engages the intellect.

The Complete Artist's interpretations are founded upon the intellectual and emotional understanding of musical text and upon his / her ability to synthesize and express such understanding so as to challenge and stir both the intellect and the emotions of the listener. This creative awareness stems not only from knowledge of a particular composition itself but, equally importantly, from a wide knowledge of related music, of musical literature as a whole, and of the other arts, including, but not limited to, the visual and literary. If the resulting interpretation appears unusual and unconventional, it does so freshly and naturally. Pianists taking part in the Honens Competition must also express—through their stage deportment, program design, and interviews with arts journalists—sensitivity to contemporary culture and a willingness and ability to communicate effectively with audiences of today.

ARTIST DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Previous Artist Development Programs have offered career-defining debut recitals at Wigmore Hall, Carnegie Hall, and Konzerthaus Berlin; residencies at Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity; mentorship programs with the leading artists of our time including Emmanuel Ax, Jean-Efflam Bavouzet, Angela Hewitt, and Hélène Mercier; a recording contract on the Hyperion label, and repertoire and public relations coaching.