

HONENS UPDATE

17 March 2022

The Honens International Piano Competition unconditionally condemns the invasion of Ukraine and the human rights violations perpetrated by the Russian government, aided by Belarus. We stand with the people of Ukraine in defence of their freedom.

Last week, the Board of Directors made the difficult decision to revoke invitations to Russian competitors to the 2022 event. This decision was made following lengthy and in-depth discussions about the worsening humanitarian crisis in Ukraine.

Since that decision, we have seen and heard so much. Alongside the horrific images from across Ukraine, we've seen thousands of Russian citizens arrested for passive protests against the invasion, and a steady exodus of citizens from Russia. Accompanying these images, we have also heard from many important voices from the global music community, including those of our own past Laureates and current competitors, who strongly believe that this decision negatively impacts those who neither played a role in nor support the Russian government's actions.

As a Board, we have actively engaged in difficult conversations and individual reflection leading to a reconsideration of our decision. Ultimately, we have decided to reinstate competitors of Russian nationality.

In keeping with our initial intent, and out of solidarity with Ukraine, any competitor who expresses support for the invasion of Ukraine will not be welcome in the competition. Likewise, any Laureate of the 2022 Competition who demonstrates direct or indirect support for the invasion of Ukraine will be stripped of their Laureate status.

Honens believes that music has the ability to transcend nations and politics. May it be a source of comfort that unites rather than divides us.