

MUSIC

Scottish International Piano Competition final

Glasgow Royal Concert Hall



It's insidious to choose, of course. Three different pianists; three very different musical personalities; and three extremely different piano concertos, each with its own technical and emotional challenges. But this being the grand concerto final of the Scottish International Piano Competition, the six-strong judging panel did choose – and their final decision felt entirely fitting.

In third place came Tbilisi-born Luka Okros, who despite his fearsome focus seemed rather inward-looking, strangely reserved, struggling to project his solo part in Rachmaninov's Second Piano Concerto above the Royal Scottish National Orchestra's rich orchestral backdrop, finely detailed in conductor Thomas Son-

dergard's hands. That orchestral backdrop felt very much like an accompaniment to an intensely personal account of Beethoven's Emperor Concerto from Romanian-born Florian Mitrea, delivered almost as if it were a solo piece. The very bright sound of the Fazioli piano, chosen by all three finalists, only served to emphasise Mitrea's bright, percussive playing – brilliantly articulated, but with some wayward accents and rhythms in the closing movement.

The contest's clear and deserving winner, however, was Ankara-born Can Cakmur, who dared to be simple in Beethoven's lyrical Fourth Piano Concerto, and to let the music speak for itself, in a wonderfully luminous, graceful account that felt entirely sincere and heartfelt. His touchingly low-key post-results-announcement encore of the slow movement from Schumann's Second Piano Sonata only confirmed his disarmingly unaffected, very special talents, at once naive and highly sophisticated.

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