

## American pianist Eric Lu wins The Leeds International Piano Competition



Tonight [15 Sep], 20-year old American pianist, **Eric Lu**, has been awarded first place and the Dame Fanny Waterman Gold Medal at the prestigious Leeds International Piano Competition 2018, a triennial event which is widely regarded as among the most coveted prizes in the musical world. He also won the Terence Judd Hallé Orchestra Prize.

International star pianist **Lang Lang**, Global Ambassador of the Competition, presented the prizes following the last Concerto Final with the Hallé, conducted by Edward Gardner in Leeds Town Hall.

In addition to the £25,000 cash prize, Lu receives a ground-breaking portfolio prize designed with long-term career development in mind. It includes worldwide management with Askonas Holt – one of the world's leading arts management agencies; an international album release on Warner Classics – one of the foremost global classical music recording companies, and a range of performance and recording opportunities with BBC Radio 3. The prize also includes a host of performance engagements with high profile promoters, including with some of the world's premier venues and orchestras, such as London's Wigmore Hall and Southbank Centre, the Hallé and Oslo Philharmonic Orchestras.

On Thursday [20 Sep], Lu opens Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra's new season under the baton of Vasily Petrenko, performing Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 4 in G major, Op. 58. On Friday [21 Sep], Warner Classics releases a digital single of a highlight from his Competition performances, and, on 2 November, a full album, including Lu's live Concerto performance from the Final with the Hallé conducted by Edward Gardner, as well as a selection of recital repertoire from the earlier Rounds.

Second place, £15,000 and the Yaltah Menuhin Award for the greatest collaborative chamber performance, was awarded to 28-year old German pianist, **Mario Häring**.

**Xinyuan Wang**, 23 from China, was third and received £10,000. The Audience Award, which was, for the first time this year, opened up to a global audience through online streaming by [medici.tv](http://medici.tv), also went to Wang, who will have a concert broadcast on [medici.tv](http://medici.tv).

Both Häring and Wang will give major recitals in The Music Room, Liverpool Philharmonic Hall, on 17 and 19 September 2018 as part of their prize, and will each – like Lu – have an opportunity to give a solo recital at London's Wigmore Hall in 2019. A full list of concert engagements for the prize winners is available [here](#).

All the prize winners will have long-term mentoring from Patron Murray Perahia, Co-Artistic Director Paul Lewis – who also chaired the jury, and other members of the performer-led jury which included Sa Chen, Imogen Cooper, Adam Gatehouse, Henning Kraggerud, Thomas Larcher, Gillian Moore, Lars Vogt and Shai Wosner.

The prize presentations followed the conferment of an honorary degree on Lang Lang from the University of Leeds, the Competition's Principal Partner.

Lang Lang said:

*"The Finals of The Leeds will stay in my memory for a long time. It has been a privilege to witness so much extraordinary talent on stage and an honour to receive a Doctorate from the University of Leeds. I'm extremely proud of my association with the city of Leeds, with the piano competition – which is doing so much to unite excellence and accessibility – and with the University. It is truly is the city of the piano and I look forward to returning."*

Paul Lewis, Chair of the Jury and Co-Artistic Director of The Leeds, said:

*"All the pianists have shown extraordinary talent, passion and dedication throughout the Competition, and it goes without saying that the standard of playing has been remarkable. Many of the world's greatest pianists have started out at The Leeds and I'm certain all the 2018 Finalists have bright futures, and we look forward to supporting what we believe will be successful and fulfilling careers."*

The Leeds hugely expanded its programme for 2018, going beyond a single competition to become a city-wide celebration of the piano. With a new programme of talks, masterclasses, exhibitions, free family events, schools projects, and concerts – as well as The Leeds Piano Trail, which invited the public to play on 12 beautifully decorated public pianos in the city centre – The Leeds had the opportunity to share its passion for the piano with more people than ever before. The majority of the public pianos will remain in place for the foreseeable future, continuing the Competition's legacy for new and wider audiences.

[medici.tv](http://medici.tv)'s extensive coverage, supported by the University of Leeds, which began in August and ran throughout the Competition, reached audiences in more than 3,700 cities in 140 countries. It was particularly popular in the UK, USA, China, Japan and Germany. Millions more enjoyed the Finals on BBC Radio 3, which broadcast live from Leeds Town Hall and also covered all the Semi-Finals.

All rounds of The Leeds remain available to watch at [leedspiano2018.medici.tv](http://leedspiano2018.medici.tv) for three years, and BBC Radio 3's extensive coverage of the Semi-Finals and Finals is available via [BBC i Player Radio](http://BBC i Player Radio). The Finals are broadcast on BBC FOUR television on Sunday 23 September.

The next Competition will take place in 2021.

For more information about the Competition visit [www.leedspiano.com](http://www.leedspiano.com).

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