

## Seohyun Kim wins the Tibor Varga 2023 Competition

The youngest candidate Seohyun Kim (14 years old, South Korea) won the International Tibor Varga Violin Competition 2023, which finished in Sion on Sunday 2 September. She triumphed over her two competitors, Raphael Nussbaumer (17 years old, Switzerland) and Rennosuke Fukuda (23 years old, Japan), who were awarded the Second and Third Prizes respectively. A two-evening final - one for chamber music and the other with orchestra - decided between the three winners. A total of 24 young violinists under the age of 26 took part in the Competition, which recorded a new peak in entries (149), with a 20% increase over the 2021 edition.

Seohyun Kim also won the Youth Jury Prize, while the Audience Prize and the "Over-20s" Jury Prize was awarded to Raphael Nussbaumer. Seohyun Kim and Rennosuke Fukuda, as well as Mahiro Kurasawa (20 years old, Japan), were singled out for their best performance of the imposed work *Macerie (Wreckage)*, This piece for solo violin, commissioned by the International Tibor Varga Violin Competition to Silvia Colasanti, was performed as a world premiere by all the candidates in the 1<sup>st</sup> round.

"I am delighted with the wonderful musical discoveries we were able to make", says Augustin Dumay, President of the Jury, who has presided over several major international competitions. "Today, a very high technical level is assured in all competitions. We find a lot of violin athletes, but few real musical personalities who have a story to tell and make us dream. Here, we have unearthed some long-lasting treasures that make us want to listen to them later."

"This year's competition was of an exceptional artistic level, with a wealth of singular and engaging personalities", adds Olivier Vocat, President of the Sion Violon Musique Foundation. "The great musical maturity of the candidates, some of them very young, was a source of admiring amazement. We are also delighted that these wonderful violinists were applauded by the large audience."

In addition to President Augustin Dumay (France) and composer Silvia Colasanti (Italy), the international Jury included James Brown (England), Stella Chen (USA), Mihaela Martin (Romania), Natsumi Tamai (Japan), Ingolf Turban (Germany), and Pavel Vernikov (Ukraine - Israel). Cellist Alexander Chaushian (Armenia) and pianist Ashley Wass (England) joined the jury for the final and played in trio with the finalists in the chamber music round. For the orchestral evening, the finalists were accompanied by the Lithuanian Chamber Orchestra conducted by Sergej Krylov.

The Youth Jury was made up of students from the Conservatoire Cantonal du Valais, coached by Nadia Rigolet. The "Over 20s" Jury, open to all interested persons, benefited from the competent and caring guidance of musicologist Marie Favre.

The 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> rounds, as well as the chamber music final, were livestreamed on the internet and Facebook. The orchestral final was broadcast live on the regional television channel Canal 9.

All the rounds were livestreamed on the internet and Facebook. The orchestra final was also broadcast live on the regional television channel Canal 9 and on Espace 2 - RTS.

149 candidates (2021: 124) had registered to take part in this edition 2023 of the International Tibor Varga Violin Competition, which took place from 25 August to 2 September. The Jury selected 28 young violinists on video, 24 of whom finally took part in the Competition: 17 women and 7 men with an average age of just over 21. The youngest was 14. The candidates came from 3 continents and 11 different countries. Three young Swiss were among them.

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