

NEWS RELEASE

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KING AWARD GOLD MEDALIST WINS INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION

Just three weeks after taking home the gold medal in the Salina Symphony's King Award for Young Artists piano competition, Behzod Abduraimov captured the top prize in the prestigious London International Piano Competition.

Abduraimov, 18, was the youngest of the 24 pianists invited to the competition and is the youngest first prize winner in its history. In the final round, held April 28, Abduraimov performed with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, playing Prokofiev's "Concerto in C, op.26." His scintillating performance earned a standing ovation, a rarity at Royal Festival Hall.

The chair of the jury, Sulamita Aronovsky, described his performance as "literally breathtaking, astonishing in its vitality and tonal range."

Abduraimov's prize includes a cash award, a solo CD recording on the Naxos/Marco Polo label, and a series of concerto and solo engagements, including a concert with the London Philharmonic Orchestra and a recital at Wigmore Hall.

Born in Uzbekistan, Abduraimov performed his first solo recital at the age of 8 and has since had public appearances in the U.S., Italy, Russia and Uzbekistan. He has won numerous competitions all over the world and is currently pursuing a bachelor's degree at the International Center for Music at Park University, where he studies under Van Cliburn International Piano Competition gold medalist Stanislav Ioudenitch.

Abduraimov will return to Salina in the fall to perform with the Symphony at its 2009-2010 season opener on October 11.

Following its inaugural year, the Salina Symphony announced a new division for the King Award for Young Artists competition, which will include both piano and strings in 2010. The competition has also broadened its scope, and will be open to any student between the ages of 18 and 26 currently studying anywhere in the United States.

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