

**The tension remained in the Paulo Cello Competition
Brannon Cho secured his winnings in his final performance.**

Hannu-Ilari Lampila

The thrill remained at the end of the Paulo Cello Competition, where six finalists played with Susanna Mälkki as the solemn soloist with the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra.

When the last finalist, US BRANNON CHO, started playing Prokofiev's Sinfonia Concertante, his victory began to appear swiftly apparent.

The Sinfonia Concertante was heard in the final three times. Only Cho was able to reveal the lyrical beauty of the work and its close kinship with Prokofiev's Romeo and Juliet.

Mälkki and the orchestra became sensitized and the hall center started to belong to a ballet stage and sometimes Peter and the Wolf.

Cho's virtuosity was magical in the extremely difficult 1/16 emotional storms. In its turbulence, glowing power erupted from his melancholy cello.

The South Korean Minji Kim, who won the second prize, played Lutoslawski's Cello Concerto, where an individual tries to cherish his inner world often in the brutally responsive mass society, orchestral compression.

The performance was shabby beautiful, acrobatically dancing and, if necessary, painfully intense.

The rise of US Zlatomir Fung to second place was a slight surprise. He played Joonas Kokkonen's multi-story Cello Concerto in a cleverly playful, seriously playful and deep-seated manner, which was the right key to Kokkonen's music.

The Finnish Leonardo Chiodo was surprised by his strong, rough, beautiful Sinfonia Concertante, with a compelling, forward-looking force.

Chiodo could always navigate in the right direction of Prokofiev's work in a very varied music scene, while Canadian Bryan Cheng felt adventurous and wandering in the odd wonderland of the Sinfonia Concertante.

The cello of Greek Timotheos Petrin proceeded unavoidably with determination in the pessimistic dark world of Šostakovich's second Cello Concerto. Distracting pendulum rhythms, death dances and romantic memories wish you a strange atmosphere for Petrin and the orchestra's captivating interpretation.