

## **Queen Elisabeth Competition: Brannon Cho, ruler of Shostakovich**

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After the innocence of discovery, will Hosokawa's Sublimation stand the test of repetition? Listening to Brannon Cho, the second candidate of the evening, we say at once that the orchestration of the piece is lush at will, but that it is not easy for the soloist to get out of the crowd. highlighting his sonorities, especially in the acute register, often solicited.

Where Sihao He had played the imposed from memory - performance that deserves to be noted, even if it does not automatically make the execution more inhabited - Cho approaches it with the score under the eyes, this which will undoubtedly be the norm of most of his colleagues. His approach is that of a fight, a challenge, but where he seems to be in control, and his tempi faster than his predecessor. At the end of this second performance, we say that as prestigious as the composer is, we face a piece of competition, which aims to highlight the technique more than expressiveness. We expect to see who will actually live the passage in pizzicato.

In the semifinal, Cho gave a superb performance of Prokofiev's sonata in C major. His choice of Shostakovich's first concerto confirms his affinity with the particular cultural universe of Russian music of the twentieth century.

The Allegretto is approached in the same combative mode as the imposed Hosokawa. The young American always leads courageously, but we also find in his playing a quiet and serene strength. His Moderato is superb in intensity, with great economy of means and true poetry, supported with the ideal discretion by Denève and his troops. The great cadenza is linked without breathing, and we remain fascinated by the contrast between the inner peace that seems to irrigate the face of the candidate and the drops of perspiration flowing quietly along his ears. His technique is sovereign, and the return of the orchestra for the final Allegro is a great moment, prelude to a flamboyant finale.