

Canadian wins 18th Chopin international piano competition

WARSAW, Poland, Oct 21, (AP): Bruce (Xiaoyu) Liu of Canada was named early Thursday as the winner of the 40,000-euro (\$45,000) first prize in the 18th Frederic Chopin international piano competition, a prestigious event that launches pianists' world careers.

The announcement from the jury came just hours after Liu played as the last entrant among the 12 finalists, performing Chopin's concerto in E minor, opus 11 with the orchestra at the packed National Philharmonic in Warsaw. His inspired performance was met with huge applause.

"Oh my god. I don't know what to say, honestly," Liu said after being named winner.

"We have been dreaming with all these people here for this prestigious stage," the 24-year-old born in Paris said in English.

"Being able to play Chopin in Warsaw is one of the best things you can imagine, of course, so I'm truly honored for this award, of course, and for this jury's trust and for all the warmth I have received in recent days," Liu said.

The second prize and 30,000 euros (\$35,000) went jointly to Alexander Gadjiev, representing Italy and Slovenia, and Kyohei Sorita of Japan. Gadjiev also won Krystian Zimerman's prize of

10,000 euros (\$11,800) for the best sonata performance.

The third prize of 20,000 euros (\$23,000) was awarded to Martin Garcia Garcia of Spain, who also won the 5,000 euros (\$5,800) prize for best concerto performance.

The fourth prize and 15,000 euros (\$17,000) was shared by Aimi Kobayashi of Japan and Poland's Jakub Kuszlik, who also won best mazurka performance prize and 5,000 euros. Italy's Leonora Armellini was awarded the fifth prize of 10,000 euros (\$11,600), while the sixth prize and 7,000 euros (\$8,000) went to Canada's J.J. Jun Li Bui.

The first prize was funded by the office of Poland's president, and other prizes were funded by the government, state culture institutions and by private individuals.

High ranking in the renowned competition opens the world's top concert halls to the pianists and paves the way to recordings with best known record companies.

Jury head Katarzyna Popowa-Zydron said after the announcement that the level of the pianists was very high and made the award decisions very hard for the 17 jurors. She called the participants "wonderful young people."

During the competition, she had said that apart from being excellent pianists, the participants should also show sensitivity and bring freshness to the music.

"I try to look for a rapport between the performer and Chopin," Popowa-Zydron said in an interview. Music is a "message from a person, and (the musicians) should know what kind of person Chopin was."

Bowing to their artistry, the jury allowed two more finalists this year than usual. The competition, held every five years, was postponed from 2020 due to the pandemic.

Among previous winners are Maurizio Pollini of Italy, Argentina's Martha Argerich, Garrick Ohlsson from the United States, Poland's Krystian Zimerman and Artur Blechacz, and Seong-Jin Cho of South Korea.

Chopin, Poland's best known and beloved classical music composer and pianist, was born in 1810 in Zelazowa Wola near Warsaw to a Polish mother and a French father. He left Poland at 19 to broaden his musical education in Vienna and then in Paris, where he settled, composing, giving concerts and teaching the piano. He died on Oct. 17, 1849, in Paris and is buried at the Pere Lachaise cemetery. His heart is at the Holy Cross Church in Warsaw.

Music

Variety



This image released by Warner Bros. Pictures shows Sharon Duncan-Brewster in a scene from 'Dune.' (AP)

Film

Disney delays 'Indiana Jones 5,' 'Black Panther 2' releases

Villeneuve's doom-laden, dynamite 'Dune'

By Jake Coyle

A cool wind sweeps through the sands of "Dune," Denis Villeneuve's chilly, majestic adaptation of Frank Herbert's classic 1965 science-fiction novel.

Hot as it may be on Arrakis, the desert planet that draws the universe's most powerful interests to its mineral-rich but inhospitable sands, Villeneuve's film is a solemn slow burn. This "Dune," a cool-headed colossus, erects a massive, brutalist architecture of otherworldly science-fiction to craft a big-screen spectacle of thundering splendor.

It is, to be sure, rather cool to the touch. Villeneuve does atmospheric exteriors more than he does emotional interiors. In muted monochrome shades, rich textures and deep sonic soundscapes, his specialty — already familiar in the deep shadows of "Sicario," "Arrival" and "Blade Runner 2049" — is invoking a severe ominousness.

So "Dune" is a more somber trip into the desert than, say, the ferociously frenetic "Mad Max: Fury Road." Its tale of oppression and messianic fervor, though, does — like the book — recall "Lawrence of Arabia." Instead of Peter O'Toole and his aflame blue eyes laying siege at Aqaba, we have Timothée Chalamet seizing power, potentially, on Arrakis. There. Is. Another.

Herbert's opus, forged out of the Cold War and dawning environmental dread, begat a cottage industry of sequels but has before now made curiously little headway into wider popular culture. David Lynch's much-derided 1984 film, which even he disavowed, didn't help. This version, which was to debut Thursday evening in theaters and on HBO Max, is a second stab at turning "Dune" into a wide-screen event. And considering the dozens of entries in the book series, "Dune" could just as surely as the "spice" in the Arrakis sands be mined for more. "Dune" is optimistically subtitled "Part One," adapting just the first half of the 1965 tome.

The easiest criticism of the film is that it doesn't rise to a climax but withers away in the dunes. That bothered me less. I was transported enough to just hope "Dune" — which is well worth seeking out in theaters rather than at home — does well enough to lead to a part two.

Villeneuve has streamlined the book in a script by

him, Jon Spaihts and Eric Roth. That has lost some of the novel's eccentricities, but it has also made coherent an ambitious epic. Here, "Dune" is an operatic parable of power and exploitation, with an ecological resonance that's only grown more relevant.

With a princely sense of destiny, Chalamet plays Paul, whose father Duke Leto (Oscar Isaac) is head of House Atreides, one of several governing fiefdoms. The spice on Arrakis, which makes interstellar travel possible and has other mind-expanding capabilities, has long been harvested by the fascist House Harkonnen, as overseen by Baron Vladimir Harkonnen (played by a grotesquely swollen Stellan Skarsgard, with nods to Marlon Brando in "Apocalypse Now"). But for unknown reasons, a switcheroo has been ordered.

Operation

Harvesting spice is no easy task, though. It's oppressively hot. There are mammoth sandworms. And the local Fremens (among whom is Zendaya's Chani) resent their "out-worlder" overlords. Leto hopes to begin a friendly collaboration with the Fremens but quickly finds their operation sabotaged at every step. When things turn violent, attention turns to Paul, who has been trained in swordplay by Gurney Halleck (Josh Brolin) and mentored by his mother, Lady Jessica (Rebecca Ferguson, fabulous) in "the way" — a mysterious mind-controlling power. The Fremens believe he could be a prophesied savior. Whether "Dune" will tweak the white savior set-up will ultimately, though, have to wait for a possible sequel.

The plot is enough for even a sandworm to digest. All the world building leaves only so much room for anything very intimate in character development. "Dune," like most of Villeneuve's previous films, is a little hollow beneath its immaculate surfaces. But those surfaces! With Greig Fraser's cinematography and Patrice Vermette's production design, "Dune" is so sublimely rendered that you could easily follow it with the sound off, sans Hans Zimmer's hulking score. With an immense sense of scale ranging from mosquito to (Jason) Momoa, "Dune" renders an age-old tale of palace intrigue and indigenous struggle in exaggerated cosmic contours. Like any drift of sand, "Dune" feels sculpted by elemental, primal forces. "Dune," a Warner Bros. release, is rated PG-13 by

the Motion Picture Association of America for sequences of strong violence, some disturbing images and suggestive material. Running time: 151 minutes. Three and a half stars out of four.

Also:

LOS ANGELES: The Walt Disney Co. is pushing back the release dates of many of its upcoming titles, including the untitled Indiana Jones movie and the Black Panther sequel "Wakanda Forever."

The company said Monday that the fifth Indiana Jones, a James Mangold-directed and Steven Spielberg-produced installment which sees the return of Harrison Ford as the adventurous archaeologist, will be delayed almost a year and open in theaters in June 2023.

"Black Panther: Wakanda Forever" has also been pushed several months, from July 2022 to November 2022. Both films are currently in production.

Other Marvel titles like "Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness," "Thor: Love and Thunder," "The Marvels" and "Ant-Man and the Wasp: Quantumania" were also all delayed several months.

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NEW YORK: It is still good to be the king.

Forty years after the release of his beloved "History of the World, Part I," Mel Brooks has a sequel in the works. The 95-year-old show business giant has a deal with Hulu for an 8-part sequel, titled, of course, "History of the World, Part II." Brooks is among the executive producers and writers, along with Nick Kroll, Wanda Sykes, Ike Barinholtz, David Stassen and Kevin Salter.

"I can't wait to once more tell the real truth about all the phony baloney stories the world has been conned into believing are History!" Brooks said in a statement released Monday by Hulu, which will partner with Searchlight Television & 20th Television. Filming is scheduled to begin next year.

No cast members were announced. The original film, which spoofed everything from ancient Rome to the French Revolution, featured Brooks as Moses and King Louis of France among other people.

It also included many performers who have since died, including Gregory Hines, Madeline Kahn, Harvey Korman and Cloris Leachman. (AP)

NEW YORK: One of the country's most acclaimed and innovative literary magazines is shutting down.

The Believer, founded nearly 20 years ago, had been part of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas' College of Liberal Arts since 2017. The bi-monthly publication's final issue, No. 139, is scheduled for February/March 2022.

The school is calling the decision part of a "strategic realignment" shaped by the coronavirus pandemic.

"This was not an easy decision but a necessary one, unfortunately," College of Liberal Arts Dean Jennifer Keene said in a statement this week. "After reviewing the data with internal and external stakeholders, it was clear that there was no path forward to continue publishing the magazine. Print publications in general have been facing increasing headwinds in recent years, which makes them a financially challenging endeavor."

Within the school, the magazine had been overseen by the Black Mountain Institute, which runs a wide range of literary programs and other initiatives.

"While The Believer is a highly regarded vehicle for both new and established literary voices, we have a responsibility to direct our resources to the initiatives most central to BMI's mission," Keene said.

The Believer was founded in 2003 by authors Vendela Vida, Ed Park and Heidi Julavits, with a commitment "to journalism and essays that are frequently very long, book reviews that are not necessarily timely, and interviews that are intimate, frank and also very long."

Nick Hornby, Leslie Jamison and Anne Carson were among the many writers published by The Believer, a frequent finalist for National Magazine Awards.

"Feeling heartbroken that @believermag won't be published any longer," Jamison, whose books include the nonfiction collection "The Empathy Exams," tweeted. "They published 'The Empathy Exams' when no one else wanted it & it was the most exciting moment of my professional life. They've always been a home for weird work that comes straight from the heart."

The magazine had already been shaken by the departure earlier this year of its editor, Joshua Wolf Shenk, amid allegations that he exposed himself during a Zoom call. In a letter posted soon after on Medium, current and former

employees alleged "a years-long pattern of inappropriate and disrespectful behavior" by Shenk. (AP)

CHICAGO: A federal judge on Wednesday ordered R&B superstar R. Kelly to stand trial in Chicago on child pornography and obstruction of justice charges next



Kelly



Greenberg

year after the scheduled sentencing for his conviction in an earlier sex trafficking trial in New York.

US District Judge Harry Levinweber appeared to have wanted the trial in Chicago to begin earlier, but he set it for Aug 1 after one of Kelly's attorneys, Steven Greenberg, said that he another of Kelly's attorneys will be in trial on

other cases through July.

Kelly, who remains jailed in New York, was listening to the hearing on a conference call but he did not speak. His sentencing there is scheduled for May 4 and he faces up to life in prison.

Kelly, who was born Robert Sylvester Kelly, is also facing four separate indictments alleging

sexual abuse in state court in Chicago and a child prostitution charge in Minnesota.

Experts have said there is a possibility that prosecutors could drop the charges in state court if he receives a lengthy prison sentence in New York. But there is virtually no chance that the federal charges in Chicago will be dropped. (AP)