



CLASSICAL MUSIC &amp; DANCE

# Student at Park University already has stellar concert career. This news thrilled him

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JUNE 19, 2020 05:00 AM

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Times are tough for professional musicians. Their livelihoods have been seriously threatened by a pandemic that shows no signs of abating soon. But Kenny Broberg, a graduate student at Park University's International Center of Music, who already has a stellar concert career, recently received some very welcome news. He's been awarded \$50,000 for being a finalist in the 2021 American Pianists Award.

The competition, which Broberg says is "in between a competition and a grant," usually awards the finalists \$20,000 at the final competition, which is tentatively scheduled for spring 2021. Given the extraordinary challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, Joel Harrison, president/CEO and artistic director of the American Pianists Association, wanted these deserving musicians to receive their money — and more of it — as soon as possible.

"These pianists have no income at the moment and nothing in the foreseeable future and they're young and haven't had a chance to build up savings. What are

they going to do?” Harrison said. “A big part of our mission is supporting young American pianists, so I proposed this idea and the board applauded.”

The finalists have already received checks of \$10,000 dollars. They will get an additional check for \$10,000 dollars in January and the remainder next June at the celebration weekend when the winner of the competition will be announced. The winner won't get any additional money, but will receive career assistance for two years, publicity, performance engagements, an artist-in-residence post and a recording contract with the Steinway & Sons record label. According to Harrison, that can add up to an additional \$100,000 dollars.

“They get all the concert fees,” Harrison said. “We don't take a commission, so they get 100% of the fees. That can be a substantial amount of money, but I can't predict exactly how much right now because of the nature of the performing arts. Who knows when we'll get to have full concert schedules again.”

Broberg, who is originally from Minneapolis, went to college at the University of Houston, where he started competing. He won the silver medal at the 2017 Van Cliburn International Piano Competition, the bronze medal at the 2019 International Tchaikovsky Competition, as well as prizes at the Hastings, Sydney, Seattle and New Orleans international piano competitions.

Through his various competition wins, Broberg met Stanislav Ioudenitch, founder of the Park International Center for Music and himself a Van Cliburn gold medalist. Broberg eventually studied with Ioudenitch at the Lake Como Summer Piano School in Italy. Now he receives one-on-one instruction from Ioudenitch at Park.

“I came here to Kansas City to study with Stanislav, and it's turned out to be absolutely the right choice,” Broberg said. “Park is really focused on the performance aspect. There's very little coursework. It's the European apprenticeship model.”

Before the pandemic, Broberg had a thriving international concert career, but now he's only able to do online streaming concerts, which he describes as a "strange experience" and "more nerve-racking than playing in front of an audience." With his reduced money-making opportunities, Broberg says the American Pianists award couldn't have come at a better time. But other things are helping him keep a positive attitude during his current down time.

"I've gotten a chance to stay in the same place for more than a week and a half," he said. "I've had a chance to learn a lot of new music and practice more consistently than I probably have for years.

"When you're on the road, you don't know when a piano's going to be available, so it's really not the best way to learn. Now I'm learning all sorts of new things. So this has actually been a productive time for me. Of course, I want to be playing concerts, but there's always a positive way to look at things.

For more information about Kenny Broberg, <http://www.kennybroberg.com>. To learn more about the American Pianists Association, <http://www.americanpianist.org>.

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