

The Full Score

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Italian takes the Leeds

Colli flowers at prestigious International Piano Competition



RULING EMPEROR:
Federico Colli impresses with
Beethoven's Fifth Piano Concerto

Life is looking good for Federico Colli, who has won the Leeds International Piano Competition. In doing so, the Italian joins the likes of pianists Radu Lupu and Murray Perahia, both of whose careers were launched by their victories in the high-profile triennial event – so high is the standard of competition that losing finalists in previous years have included Mitsuko Uchida and András Schiff.

In this year's final, Colli, from Brescia in Italy, played Beethoven's Fifth Piano Concerto, *The Emperor*, with the Hallé under Sir Mark Elder, a performance that pianist Kathryn Stott described as 'totally

amazing'. 'He completely reinvented *The Emperor*,' she told Radio 3. 'It was fresh. He's a superb pianist.'

Colli, 24, wins £18,000 prize money and the chance to make a recording

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on the Champs Hill label, plus the Daw Aung San Suu Kyi Gold Medal – named after the Burmese politician who became an honorary ambassador for the competition earlier this year. 'This competition was always in my mind

Leeds winners



2009 **Sofya Gulyak** (Russia)
2006 **Sunwook Kim** (Korea)
2003 **Antti Siirala** (Finland)
2000 **Alessio Bax** (Italy, left)
1996 **Ilya Itin** (Russia)

1993 **Ricardo Castro** (Brazil)
1990 **Artur Pizarro** (Portugal)
1987 **Vladimir Ovchinnikov** (Russia)
1984 **Jon Kimura Parker** (Canada)
1981 **Ian Hobson** (Great Britain)
1978 **Michel Dalberto** (France)
1975 **Dmitri Alexeev** (Russia)
1972 **Murray Perahia** (US)
1969 **Radu Lupu** (Romania)
1966 **Rafael Orozco** (Spain)
1963 **Michael Roll** (Great Britain)

but when I started preparing it all felt like a distant dream,' Colli tells *BBC Music Magazine*. 'So when I started my incredible adventure in Yorkshire I felt I was fighting for one of my dreams, but by the final round I was very comfortable on the stage; I just played for the audience to understand this beautiful music. I wasn't worried by the jury, I was only thinking about the pleasure of making music.'

As is the tradition at the Leeds competition, there were six finalists. Of these, Louis Schwizgebel, 24, from Switzerland, took second prize with his performance of Beethoven's Fourth Piano Concerto, while Andrew Tyson, a 25 year-old from the US, became the first ever winner of the new Terence Judd-Hallé Orchestra Prize, an award voted for by members of the orchestra – Tyson wins £5,000 and the chance to appear with the Hallé in concert.

Dame Fanny Waterman, founder of the competition back in 1961, was particularly enthusiastic about this year's participants 'The standard of this year's competition was exceptionally high,' she said afterwards, 'and the six finalists were all truly remarkable.'