

# RUSSIA WINS THE LLOBET COMPETITION FOR THE FIRST TIME

- The young virtuous Sergey Perelekhov wins the seventeenth edition of the 2020 Llobet Contest. In second and third place went to Spain, Sara Guerrero and Izan Rubio
- Maestro Ernesto Bitetti receives the Honorary Award for a Lifetime for the Guitar. Anecdotal the annulled Audience Award for a security breach in electronic voting

*Barcelona | November 9, 2020 | 8:13 p.m.*

One more year, the Llobet Contest has had to deal with a new inclement in its development. If in the last edition the challenge was to overcome the political strangeness and social disturbances that occurred in the city of Barcelona; in this edition, it is the human species that is being challenged against the nature of a pandemic with social restrictions and a global dimension.

This new challenge caused drastic decisions and changes in the usual course of the Contest rules so as not to have to suspend it. The realization of an online edition and the cancellation of the development of the final with a string quartet.

But it was not all bad news. The participation of contestants increased considerably, something unusual in a contest of the rigor and difficulty that characterizes this contest; compulsory works and chamber finale, which defines the hard preparation of a complete musician. The fact of doing it online caused a record in the registrations of international talent that would hardly have been possible in person.

The 16 participants from Bolivia, Chile, China, Colombia, Cuba, Israel, Paraguay, United Kingdom, Russia, Ukraine and Spain, lived up to the expectations proposed, not only in the artistic interpretations, but also by the courage of develop the technical and logistical preparation that their participation required.

Usually, the official venues of the Contest have been the **Conservatori Municipal de Música** and in past editions the **Museu de la Música** and the **Auditori de Barcelona**. On this occasion, the homes of the participants or other chosen sound spaces became improvised auditoriums witnessing the development of the works proposed by the organizing committee.

Thanks to the professionalism, generous availability and rigorous equanimity of the members of the Jury, we were able to enjoy some exciting phases. Formed by the Mexican guitarist and composer **Winfried Kellner**, the Australian soloist **Jacob Codover** and the Catalan composer **Manel Ribera**, they confessed the great difficulty of decision due to the extraordinary interpretive level of the participants.



**SARA GUERRERO**  
Espanya



**SERGEY PERELEKHOV**  
Russia



**IZAN RUBIO**  
Espanya

The final was contested by the Russian Sergey Perelekhov and the Spaniards Sara Guerrero and Izan Rubio, who interpreted as a free choice three works from different periods ranging from the Baroque to the present because they were unable to develop in person the customary string quartet final.

The most exciting moment arrived with the solemn award ceremony, which was held in direct connection by audiovisual platform last Sunday, November 8. It began with the delivery of the *Honorary Award "All a life for the Guitar"*, to the outstanding Argentine soloist and pedagogue **Ernesto Bitetti**, who excitedly transmitted encouragement to future generations.

Then came the special awards. The organizing committee had to annul the *Audience Award* after finding irregularities by malicious bots in anonymous online voting. The *CAT Award* went to **Izan Rubio**, a veteran of the contest, five times already with this award. The *Llobet Prize* went to the English guitarist **Jonathan Parkin**, for the best interpretation of Miquel Llobet's transcription for guitar of the Andante of the Sonata op. 30 by Beethoven. The *Iznájar Award*, for the best interpretation of the work of the same name by José Galeote, went to the Russian **Sergey Perelekhov**.

Like all the development of the contest, the Jury had a difficult time in its decision, praising the different interpretive skills and the personality of the participants. Finally, the highest award went to the Russian representative, with the *First Prize* to **Sergey Perelekhov**. The *Second Prize* for **Sara Guerrero** from Salamanca and *Third Prize* for Catalan **Izan Rubio**, who repeated her position in 2013 and 2016.

The Secretary of the Contest, **José Galeote**, who led the event, ended this edition, encouraging the participation of the eighteenth edition of the 2021 Llobet Contest. And the founder-director, maestro **Eulogio Dávalos**, wrote some reflections for the next generations: *"The note must be heard with a vibration that the duration shown in the staff. The note must be heard before being emitted, previous vibration of the interpreter. Our noble guitar is and will be complaining, hurt and happy. We have much left to do. know, the wood must vibrate, with a soft touch of a string in the air."*

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