

Urgent message from George Li:

Today, August 18, 2015, I am announcing my withdrawal from the 17th International Chopin Competition.

This is truly the most painful and most regrettable decision I have ever had to make.

Participating in the great International Chopin Competition in Warsaw has been one of my biggest dreams since childhood. Indeed, I actually took a gap year in 2014-2015 from the Harvard-NEC dual-degree program in order to properly prepare for this competition. I participated in the United States qualifying Chopin Competition in Miami this spring and was honored to have been awarded third prize. I also traveled to Warsaw in April to perform in the preliminary round of the International Chopin Competition and was selected to compete in the first round this fall. After returning from Moscow, where I was honored with the silver medal in the 15th International Tchaikovsky Competition, I was focused and ready to prepare for the International Chopin Competition with complete joy and determination.

However, to my complete surprise, things started to change over the summer. I have been receiving many engagement requests – all of which are irresistibly important to my career as they are from the world's premiere presenters, greatest conductors, and top-class venues.

At this point, I simply can't turn down the honor of these requests; I feel that to do so would threaten my developing musical career!

Unfortunately, it's also quite apparent to me that after accepting these engagements, I just won't have the time and focus to be able to fully commit and prepare for the Chopin Competition. To me, not being able to fully prepare and perform at my highest level is disrespectful to the great International Chopin Competition and, therefore, is unacceptable!

For that reason, I have painfully and regrettably made the decision to withdraw from the 2015 International Chopin Competition. However, I am not ready to completely give up my dream. Should circumstances allow, I am planning on re-entering the next competition, which is to be held in 2020.

Sincerely yours,

George