

Class of 2014-2015 Student Achievements September 2014 through June 2015

6.2.15 Fortis Piano Quartet , grand prize winner of the 3rd Annual A.N. & Pearl G. Barnett Chamber Music Competition, recorded on **Introductions, 98.7 WFMT**, which will be aired later this summer. Joshua Brown and Kitsho Hosotani, violin/viola, Nathan Mo, cello, Daniel Szefer, piano are coached by Tatyana Stepanova and Rodolfo Vieira.

5.9.15 Congratulations to the **Atara String Quartet** for **Honorable Mention** at the Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition (**Karisa Chiu, Hannah White, Tess Krope, and Krystian Chiu**) and coach Mathias Tacke.

Congratulations to the following ensembles, all advancing to the SEMI-FINAL ROUND of the Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition on the campus of the University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana.

Atara (Karisa Chiu, Hannah White, Tess Krope, and Krystian Chiu)

Premier (Ria Honda, Nicholas Brown, Katie Gallagher, and Richard Li)

Etoile (Gallia Kastner, Serena Harnack, Freya Irani, and Alex Kim - Roland Vamos, coach)

Fortis (Nathan Mo, Daniel Szefer, Joshua Brown, and Kitsho Hosotani - Tatyana Stepanova, coach/ Rodolfo Vieira, string coach)

Omorfia (Maya Buchanan, Josiah Yoo, and Andrew Guo - Abraham Stokman, coach/ Rodolfo Vieira, string coach) Aurelius (Zachary Brandon, Nathan Walhout, and Natalie Nedvetsky - Milana Pavchinskaya-coach / Rodolfo Vieira, string coach)

4.25.15 Maya Anjali Buchanan, 15, violin student of Almita and Roland Vamos, won First Prize in the String Division and the overall GRAND Prize at the Kearney Symphony Orchestra Competition. YAC is a regional seven state competition for piano, violin, viola, cello and bass. Maya will perform Tchaikovsky VC with the KSO in 2015/16 season.

4.29.15 Natalie Nedvetsky, 17, piano student of Jim Giles, has been chosen as a First Prize Winner of the 2015 Bradshaw & Buono International Piano Competition. It was the consensus of the judges that your performance reflects the depth of interpretation, musicality, and technical expertise needed to distinguish oneself in the world of professional performance, and we are very pleased to award you this honor. The Winners' Recitals for 2015 will be held Sunday, May 17, 2015, at 1:30 and 6:30 PM in Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall.

4.18.15 The Atara String Quartet WINS GOLD at ST. PAUL! Hannah White, Karisa Chiu, Tess Krope, and Krystian Chiu won 1st place the St. Paul National Chamber Music String Quartet Competition in a field of six finalists. Atara won Silver in 2014. The group is coached by Mathias Tacke.

Seventeen chamber groups participated in the **3rd Annual A.N. & Pearl G. Barnett Chamber Music Competition** held yesterday at the Merit School of Music. We are proud to announce that the Academy swept the piano/string division and Fortis Piano Quartet was named Grand Winner!

The Barnett Chamber Competition Grand Award: \$1,500 (includes \$750 Division prize) The Grand Award Winner will have the opportunity to perform on 98.7 WFMT.

Fortis Piano Quartet, Academy of the Music Institute of Chicago - **Joshua Brown and Kitsho Hosotani**, violin/viola, **Nathan Mo**, cello, **Daniel Szefer**, piano - coached by Tatyana Stepanova and Rodolfo Vieira (string coach)

Strings & Piano Division:

1st Place = \$750- **Fortis Piano Quartet**, Academy of the Music Institute of Chicago

2nd Place = \$500- **Atara String Quartet**, Academy of the Music Institute of Chicago

Karisa Chiu and Hannah White, violins, Tess Krope, viola, and Krystian Chiu, cello – coached by Mathias Tacke

3rd Place = \$250-**Premier Quartet**, Academy of the Music Institute of Chicago

Nicholas Brown and Ria Honda, violins, Katherine Gallagher, viola, Richard Li, cello – coached by Mathias Tacke

This is the second time the Academy has swept the three-year-old competition. In the first year, the Academy won Grand Prize, First Prize and Third Prize.

3.21.15 The Society of American Musicians was founded in 1914 with the intent of promoting the best interests of music in America, and maintaining the highest standards of musicianship. Through the competition, its awards, and performance opportunities, the Society offers assistance and encouragement to young musicians and promising artists. The Society of American Musicians hosts an annual competition for a wide range of instruments: cello, guitar, flute, piano, viola, and violin each spring in Chicago.

Cello Senior Division

1st Place - **Annamarie Wellems**, 16, student of Tanya L. Carey

2nd Place - **Leevy Williams**, 16, student of Gilda Barston and Hans Jensen

3.21.15 Congratulations to Academy violinist **Maya Anjali Buchanan**, 15, third place winner in the Seventh Triennial Johansen International Competition for Young String Players (violin, viola, cello). The competition, which occurs once every 3 years, was held March 19-21, in Washington D.C. Maya studies with Almita and Roland Vamos.

A total of 30 semi-finalists, including violinist **Julian Rhee**, 14, student of Hye-Sun Lee, were selected from 170 applicants through CD auditions. Contestants came from Canada, China, Finland, Germany, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, Taiwan and all across the U.S. The esteemed competition is Sponsored by the Friday Morning Music Club Foundation.

Twelve Finalists representing 7 countries were selected to perform in the final round. The 2015 Judges were Glenn Dicterow, violin; Victoria Chiang, viola; Marcy Rosen, cello.

Maya performed: Mozart: Sonata No. 18 in G major K301, II. Allegro / Tchaikovsky: Violin Concerto in D major, Opus 35 III. Finale: Allegro Vivacissimo / Ysaye: Caprice after Saint-Saens' "Étude en forme de valse," Opus 52, No. 6.

Previous Winners:

2012 – 1st Gallia Kastner, violin

2009 – 1st Matthew Lipman, viola; 2nd Gabriel Cabezas, cello

2006 - 3rd Ben Beilman, violin

3.20.15 Congratulations to the following ensembles, all advancing to the **QUARTER FINAL ROUND of the Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition** May 8 - 10 on the campus of the University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana.

Atara (Karisa Chiu, Hannah White, Tess Krope, and Krystian Chiu)

Premier (Ria Honda, Nicholas Brown, Katie Gallagher, and Richard Li)

Etoile (Gallia Kastner, Serena Harnack, Freya Irani, and Alex Kim - Roland Vamos, coach)

**Fortis (Nathan Mo, Daniel Szefer, Joshua Brown, and Kitsho Hosotani - Tatyana Stepanova, coach/
Rodolfo Vieira, string coach)**

**Omorfia (Maya Buchanan, Josiah Yoo, and Andrew Guo - Abraham Stokman, coach/ Rodolfo Vieira,
string coach) Aurelius (Zachary Brandon, Nathan Walhout, and Natalie Nedvetsky - Milana
Pavchinskaya-coach / Rodolfo Vieira, string coach)**

Kudos to **Amare String Quartet (John Heo, Peter Morin, Tabby Rhee and Annamarie Wellems, Sang Mee Lee, coach)**- named 1st Alternate.

3.14.15 Congratulations to the Atara String Quartet (Karisa Chiu, Hannah White, Tess Krope, and Krystian Chiu) and Premier Quartet (Ria Honda, Nicholas Brown, Katie Gallagher, and Richard Li). The Academy quartets advanced to the final round of the 2015 Saint Paul String Quartet Competition in St. Paul, MN. The SPSQC final rounds will take place on Saturday, April 18, 2015 beginning with the Haydn Round and concluding with the Final Round.

The ensembles are coached by Mathias Tacke, former member of the acclaimed Vermeer Quartet from 1992 until 2007. Outstanding high school quartets from across the country are invited to compete in multiple rounds of the competition. The jury that day will be the renowned St. Lawrence String Quartet.

3.15.15 Congratulations to Richard Li, cello student of Gilda Barston, chosen as a First Place Winner of the American Protégé International Concerto Competition 2015. The Winners' Recitals will be held on Saturday, December 19th at 3:30PM at the Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall. Richard performed the Dvorak Cello Concerto and Prelude from Bach's 5th Suite. Competitive applicants hail from every corner of the world including various parts of the U.S., Puerto Rico, Canada, Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Bulgaria, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Lithuania, Israel, Russia, Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Mongolia, Japan, China, Korea, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Taiwan, Philippines, Australia and Costa Rica.

3.7.15 Serena Harnack, violin student of Almita Vamos, won the Farwell Trust Award of \$5000 at the Musicians Club of Women Competition in Rudolph Ganz Hall on Saturday, March 7. Musicians Club of Women

(MCW) is the oldest musical club in America. In 1873, a group of five music-loving women began meeting informally to play and sing for each other in what became known as "The Amateur Musical Club." Ensuing years witnessed phenomenal growth in both the size of the membership and the amount of musical activity. Each winner will receive a free three-year membership in the club, which presents a monthly concert series for the public in Preston Bradley Hall, Chicago Cultural Center, 78 E. Washington, and at the Fourth Presbyterian Church, North Michigan Avenue at Delaware Street, Chicago, and for MCW members at the Union League Club of Chicago. <http://www.musiciansclubofwomen.org/about-musicians-club-of-women.html>

Serena also received a Perfect Score on her Violin Solo: Wieniawski Scherzo-Tarantella, and Vocal Duet: Wouldn't Change a Thing for IHSA Solo & Ensemble Contest on Saturday, March 7.

3.7.15 Kitsho Hosotani, violin student of Paul Vanderwerf, has been accepted to the Bowdoin International Music Festival (BIMF) of 2015. Kitsho will study with both Professor Ilya Kaler and Dr. Olga Kaler. Each summer, the Bowdoin International Music Festival brings renowned artist instructors, performers, soloists, and gifted pre-professional classical musicians from around the world to beautiful Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine for six weeks of intensive chamber music study, collaboration, and performance. Musicians from groups such as the Ying and Pacifica Quartets and the Houston and Detroit Symphonies, and major conservatories like Juilliard, Eastman, Indiana, Peabody, New England Conservatory, and London's Royal College collaborate with our summer study participants and present more than 100 concerts and public educational events each season. <http://www.bowdoinfestival.org/>

Karisa Chiu will also be attending Bowdoin for three weeks in June.

3.7.15 Nathan Mo, student of Hans Jensen and winner of the Arthur D. Montzka Young Artists Concerto Competition, will be the featured soloist on Saturday, March 7, 7:30PM at NIU Memorial Concert Hall, DeKalb. Nathan will perform Cello Concerto No. 1 in Eb Major, Op. 107, by Dmitri Shostakovich. Arthur Dale Montzka was the conductor of the Kishwaukee Symphony Orchestra for more than 20 years.

<http://www.kishorchestra.org/competitions/competitions.html>

3.5.15 Leevy Williams, cello student of Gilda Barston and Hans Jensen, won the Northwest Symphony Orchestra Young Concerto Artist Award on March 5th and will perform the complete Elgar Cello Concerto in E minor, Op. 85, with the orchestra next season. The Northwest Symphony Orchestra partners with the Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestra by selecting and presenting a CYSO concerto artist in concert each spring. The NSO music director, Kim Diehnelt, is acknowledged as an authority on the music of Elgar. The Elgar Society in

England has sponsored her conducting of Elgar's Symphony No.1, the tone-poem, In the South, and the Cockaigne Overture. In 2010, she was invited to be a founding member of the North America Branch of the Elgar Society. So working with Ms. Diehnelt with the Elgar concerto will be a very special experience for Leevy next season!

Leevy was also selected to the Center Stage Strings Institute this summer. Center Stage Strings was founded by prize-winning violinist and passionate teacher, Danielle Belen, to develop the talents of young classical music students in the areas of solo and chamber music performance. Set in Three Rivers, California, at the foot of the Sequoias, the natural beauty of the surroundings and the music intertwine to create a unique summer experience.

3.3.15 Joshua Brown, violin student of Almita and Roland Vamos, was named the winner of the string division in the Luminarts Cultural Foundation's 2015 High School Classical Music Competition, part of the Union League Civic & Arts Foundation. One of Luminarts' oldest and most generous programs, it supports emerging classical virtuoso musicians in voice, piano, strings and winds. Each year one string and one piano student vie for a \$1000 scholarship. **Nicholas Brown**, violin student of Almita and Roland Vamos, and **Steven Song**, violin student of Gerardo Ribeiro, received Honorable Mention, a category added to recognize their distinguished performances. <http://luminarts.org>

Joshua Brown has been invited to perform with the New North Shore Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Anatol Lysenka on April 26. Joshua will perform the full Mendelssohn concerto with the orchestra.

3.1.15 Congratulations to **Quartet Étoile** winner of the 20th Annual Rembrandt Chamber Players High School Competition. Two ensembles were selected as first place 2015 Rembrandt Young Artists and two groups received Honorable Mention. There was no second place winner. Twenty-five ensembles participated in the competition.

1st Place: Quartet Étoile

Ayoun Alexandra Kim, Freya Irani, Serena Harnack, Gallia Kastner

Coached by: Roland Vamos

In addition to the prestige of being named a Rembrandt Young Artist, winners receive cash prizes, master class instruction from RCP musicians, and additional performance opportunities. 2014 competition winners participated in the RYA Outreach Program, bringing interactive educational sessions to Chicago area schools

with no established music program. Competition winners will perform at concerts on March 22nd in Evanston and March 23rd in Chicago.

The 2014 Rembrandt winner was the Academy's Vox Quartet -- Serena Harnack, Hansuh Rhee, Mira Williams, and Nathan Mo, coached by Mathias Tacke.

Founded in 1995, the RCP Annual High School Chamber Music Competition is widely regarded as one of the premier youth music competitions in the country. Participants are drawn from a variety of public and private schools throughout the Midwest, focusing primarily on the greater Chicago area. Competition winners have gone on to prestigious careers in music with some holding positions in the Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Los Angeles, and San Diego Symphony Orchestras, as well as the New York Philharmonic.

2.28.15 John Heo, violin student of Almita Vamos and Cornelius Chiu, was named winner of the Musichorale Annual Scholarship Contest for Instrumental Grade 6 – 12 held on February in Oak Lawn. For more than 60 years, Musichorale has brought song to the Chicagoland area. With approximately 75 members under the direction of Jeffrey Silhan, the group meets for rehearsals once per week and puts on two major concerts each season, one in December, the other in April. John will play with the orchestra on the December concert.

<http://www.musichorale.org/scholarship.html>

2.22.15 The Society of American Musicians was founded in 1914 with the intent of promoting the best interests of music in America, and maintaining the highest standards of musicianship. Through the competition, its awards, and performance opportunities, the Society offers assistance and encouragement to young musicians and promising artists. The Society of American Musicians hosts an annual competition for a wide range of instruments: cello, guitar, flute, piano, viola, and violin each spring in Chicago.

Violin - Senior Division

2nd Place - Joshua Brown

Honorable Mention - Steven Song

2.21.15 Hannah White, violin student of Hye-Sun Lee and Almita Vamos, was named 2015 Stars of Tomorrow winner of the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra's Young Artists Audition on Saturday, February 21. Scholarships are awarded to the three winners. The winners will appear as featured soloists, while finalists and honorable mentions will have the opportunity to rehearse and perform side-by-side with the Milwaukee Symphony

Orchestra at the Audrey G. Baird Stars of Tomorrow concert, presented at the Sharon Lynne Wilson Center for the Arts on April 16, 2015.

http://www.mso.org/education_community/competitions/young_artist_auditions

2.21.15 Tabby Rhee, violin student of Hye-Sun Lee and **Freya Irani**, viola student of Roland Vamos, were finalists in the 2015 Stars of Tomorrow Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra's Young Artists Audition on Saturday, February 21. As finalists they will have the opportunity to rehearse and perform side-by-side with the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra at the Stars of Tomorrow concert on April 16, 2015.

2.21.15 Freya Irani, 16, viola student of Roland Vamos and Almita Vamos) and **Tabby Rhee**, 17, violin student of Hye-Sun Lee were named High School Showcase Recital Awards winners at the Civic Music Milwaukee High School Competition. Many of the finest young musicians in the Milwaukee Metropolitan area competed in the competition. Each of these winners will receive a \$250 award and the opportunity to play their entire piece in the High School Showcase Recital.

2.21.15 Nathan Walhout has been accepted to the Aspen Music Festival and School for the summer of 2015 and is the recipient of the AACFA Fellowship. Nathan will study with Richard Aaron. The American Academy of Conducting at Aspen Orchestra Fellowships is the centerpiece of Aspen's conductor-training program directed by Robert Spano. Nathan will be playing in the orchestra that the program seats to work with master conductors. <https://www.aspenmusicfestival.com/students-welcome/programs-of-study/american-academy-of-conducting-at-aspen/>

2.15.15 Congratulations to Quartet Étoile winners of the 2015 MYA Discover National Chamber Music Competition Open Division Overall Winner AND Strings and Piano Category Winner!

The Étoile ensemble is comprised of **Gallia Kastner** and **Serena Harnack**, violins, **Freya Irani**, viola, and **Alexandra Kim**, cello. The group is coached by Roland Vamos.

Kudos to the **Atara String Quartet (Hannah White, Karisa Chiu, Tess Krope, and Krystian Chiu)**, coached by Mathias Tacke, and **Fortis Piano Quartet (Kitsho Hosotani, Joshua Brown, Nathan Mo, and Daniel Szefer)**, coached by Tatyana Stepanova and Rodolfo Vieira, for receiving Strings and Piano Honorable Mention.

The Midwest Young Artists 8th Annual Discover National Chamber Music Competition was held on Sunday, February 15, 2015, at Ravinia Festival's Bennett Gordon Hall. The annual competition is designed to provide

an educational as well as a competitive experience for young chamber ensembles. Overall Winning Ensembles will perform on a Winners Recital in April. The Overall Winning Ensembles will each receive a Cash Award of \$1,000.

2.11.15 Joshua Brown, 15, violin student of Almita and Roland Vamos was named the winner of the MIC Young Artist Concerto Competition held this past week. Joshua performed Waxman's Carmen Fantasy and will be featured as soloist with the Ars Viva Symphony on Sunday, April 12 at 3 pm at the North Shore Center for the Performing Arts in Skokie. Please also congratulate finalists, **Nathan Mo** and **Alex Kim**, cello students of Hans Jensen.

2.8.15 Premier Quartet won 1st Prize at the Naperville Woman's Club's Young Adult Music Competition held last weekend. The Naperville Woman's Club hosts a musical competition for students in grades 8th-12th to demonstrate their musical talents. The group received \$500, a MYA tuition scholarship worth \$500, and scholarships to OPUS Chamber Music Camp in Naperville. The group is comprised of violinists **Ria Honda** and **Nicholas Brown**, violist, **Katie Gallagher** and cellist **Richard Li**. They are coached by violin professor and former second violinist of the esteemed Vermeer Quartet.

2.7.15 Joshua Brown, 15, violin student of Almita and Roland Vamos, was named the winner of the Elmhurst Symphony Orchestra Robert Stanger Young Artist Audition, and Steven Song, 15, violin student of Gerardo Ribeiro, placed 3rd. Joshua will play with the ESO in the fall.

1.31.15 Joshua Brown, 15, violin student of Almita and Roland Vamos was named second place winner of the Dupage Symphony Young Artist Competition. **Nicholas Brown**, 18, violin student of Almita and Roland Vamos and **Steven Song**, 16, violin student of Gerardo Ribeiro were named Honorable Mention. DSO's Young Artists Auditions were held Saturday, January 31, at Wentz Hall on the campus of North Central College in Naperville. The DSO encourages serious study and musical excellence among young musicians through its annual Young Artists Auditions. <http://dupagesymphony.org/web/page.aspx?title=Young+Artists+Auditions>

1.30.15 18th Annual Sphinx Competition - Congratulations to Hannah White, 1st place winner!

Hannah, 15, studies violin with Almita and Roland Vamos and Hye-Sun Lee and is the Betsey and John Puth Academy Fellow. Hannah is the fifth Academy student to win first place in the annual competition.

The Sphinx competition is open to all Junior High, High School, and College age Black and Latino string players residing in the U.S. The Sphinx Competition offers young Black and Latino classical string players a

chance to compete under the guidance of an internationally renowned panel of judges and to perform with established professional musicians in a competition setting. The Sphinx Competition is held every year in Detroit, Michigan.

This year, applicants were narrowed to 18 Semi-Finalists, 9 junior division and 9 senior division. The first round of the semi-final competition was held yesterday where three performers in each division advanced to the Junior Division finals round—semifinalists **Hannah White**, **Mira Williams** (former Academy student and current viola student of Roland Vamos), and violinist Maria Sanderson. The finals round of the junior division was held today: Hannah White-1st place, Mira Williams-2nd place, Maria Sanderson-3rd place.

The Junior Division winner receives a cash prize, solo appearances with major orchestras, performances with the Sphinx Symphony Orchestra and at the Finals Concert, a nationally-broadcast radio appearance on From the Top.

The Seniors finals round is on Sunday at 2pm. During that competition, Hannah White will perform; listen to her performance via live stream: <http://www.sphinxmusic.org/finals-live.html>

Hannah White Sphinx History

2015 Junior Division Semi-Finalist - age 14

2014 Junior Division 3rd Place Laureate - age 13

2013 Junior Division Semi-Finalist - age 12

MIC Academy Sphinx Competition History

2015 - 1st Hannah White, violin (Almita and Roland Vamos, Hye-Sun Lee)

2nd Mira Williams, former viola Academy student (Roland Vamos)

2014 - 2nd place Laureate Mira Williams, viola (Marko Dreher)

3rd place Laureate Hannah White, violin (Hye-Sun Lee)

2012 – 1st Ade Williams, violin (Almita and Roland Vamos)

1st (Senior Division) Gabriel Cabezas, cello alumnus (Hans Jensen)

2011 – 1st Alexandra Switala, violin (Almita and Roland Vamos)

2008 – 1st Clayton Penrose-Whitmore, violin (Almita and Roland Vamos)

2006 – 1st Gabriel Cabezas, cello (Hans Jensen)

1.10.15 Freya Irani, 16, viola student of Roland and Almita Vamos, received an Honorable Mention at the Bolz Young Artist Competition in Madison, WI, January 10, 2015. Young artists from across the state of Wisconsin

compete in the Bolz Young Artist Competition's two preliminary rounds for a chance to perform a movement from a concerto with the Madison Symphony Orchestra during the final round, which will be held in the Capitol Theater at the Overture Center in March.

1.18.15 Each year since its founding, the **West Suburban Symphony Society** has proudly provided an opportunity each season for high school instrumentalists and vocalists to compete to perform a solo work with orchestra as a way to inspire, educate, and foster the musical talent of young adults. **Karisa Chiu**, 15, violin student of Almita Vamos, is the winner of the 2014-15 competition and will perform on the May 17 sublime concert at Hinsdale Central High School. She will perform a selection from Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto in D Major, complementing two other Tchaikovsky compositions on that concert's program: Symphony No. 6 and The Sleeping Beauty suite. <http://www.westsubsymphony.org/solo-competition>

1. 18.15 MIC Young Artist Concerto Competition

Congratulations to the following finalists who competed in the MIC/Ars Viva Symphony Orchestra Young Artist Concerto Competition:

Joshua Brown, 15, violin student of Almita and Roland Vamos – Carmen Fantasy, Waxman

Alexandra Kim, 16, cello student of Hans Jensen – Variations on a Rococo Theme, P. Tchaikovsky

Nathan Mo, 16, cello student of Hans Jensen – Concerto No. 1 in E flat Major, D. Shostakovich

These three finalists will perform on the final round which will occur on Wednesday, February 11 beginning at 7:00 pm in Nichols Concert Hall at the Evanston East campus.

Additionally, the adjudicators awarded Honorable Mention to **Karisa Chiu** and **Serena Harnack**.

The winner will perform with the Ars Viva Symphony Orchestra on the RISING STAR concert under the baton of Maestro Alan Heatherington, April 12, 2015 at 3pm, North Shore Center for the Performing Arts, Skokie, IL.

1.17.15 MTNA

Maya Anjali Buchanan, 14, Academy violin student of Almita and Roland Vamos, was named winner of the Junior Strings MTNA West Central Division Competition on January 10 in Fargo, ND, representing her home state of South Dakota. **Josiah Yoo**, 16, cello student of Hans Jensen, was named winner of the Senior Strings East Central Division representing Illinois. The East Central Division competition was held in Appleton, WI, on Saturday, January 17. Maya and Josiah will compete at the national competition held during the MTNA National Conference in March in Las Vegas, NV.

The Music Teachers' National Assn. Competitions consist of three levels: State Competition, Division Competition, and National Finals. The state competitions are considered the primary educational level with the division and national levels showcasing outstanding performance and honoring significant pedagogical achievement.

Academy students Tabby Rhee (Junior Division/Wisconsin), **Maya Buchanan** (Junior Division/South Dakota), **Josiah Yoo** (Senior Division/Illinois) and **Ria Honda** (Junior Division/Illinois) each won their state level competition and advanced to the Division Competitions.

1.17.15 Chicago Philharmonic Side-by-Side – Steven Song, 15, violin student of Gerardo Ribeiro, has been selected to perform side-by-side with the Chicago Philharmonic. This season, the Chicago Philharmonic celebrates its 25th anniversary with a focus on the five senses. Steven will perform on Taste the Music, February 15, 2015, 3:00p.m., at Nichols Hall, Evanston. Scott Speck will conduct Darius Milhaud's Le Bœuf sur le toit (The Bull on the Roof).

1.10.15 Nathan Mo, 16, cello student of Hans Jensen, winner of the Kishwaukee Symphony Orchestra's Arthur D. Montzka Young Artists Concerto Competition. Nathan performed the Shostakovich Concerto No. 1 in E Flat major, Op. 107, III Cadenza and IV Allegro con moto. The competition was held at the Northern Illinois University Boutell Memorial Concert Hall on Saturday, January 10, 2015. Nathan will be performing with the Kishwaukee Symphony Orchestra in March.

<http://www.kishorchestra.org/competitions/competitions.html>

1.10.15 Prestigious Johansen International Competition

Maya Anjali Buchanan, 14, violin student of Almita and Roland Vamos, has been named a semi-finalist in the Seventh Triennial Johansen International Competition for Young String Players. She will perform at the semi-finals in Washington, DC, March 18-21, 2015. The Johansen International Competition (JIC) for Young String Players Ages 13–17 (violin, viola, cello) takes place only once every 3 years. Some of the most gifted young string players in the world will perform at the Semi-Finals and Finals in Washington, DC. This year's Johansen International Competition for Young String Players received more applications than ever before from a total of 19 countries. A total of 30 semi-finalists have been selected who will represent 9 countries from around the world. The judges selected only 11 violinists, 8 violists, and 11 cellists. The students will compete for \$67,000 in prize money over a period of three days

FORMER WINNERS - The last Johansen International Competition took place in 2012 and first prize was awarded to Academy violin student **Gallia Kastner**, student of Almita and Roland Vamos.

In addition, former Academy student of Roland Vamos, **Matthew Lipman**, (Viola, First Prize, 2009 JIC) also won First Prize Viola at the 2012 Washington International Competition for Strings and First Prize and the Gold Medal at the 2012 Stulberg International String Competition.

Benjamin Beilman, former student of Almita and Roland Vamos, (Violin, Third Prize, 2006 JIC) was also the recipient of a 2012 Avery Fisher Career Grant. The award is designed to help young musicians build their careers.

The Music Institute of Chicago is proud of Julian and Maya for the very distinguished accomplishment of making it to the semi-final round of this prestigious international competition.

The DePaul Concerto Festival for Young Performers was founded in 2003 to provide an opportunity for intermediate level pianists in the Community Music Division to perform with an orchestra. Auditions were held and eight winners were selected to perform with the DePaul Youth String Orchestra. In 2004, the Festival was expanded to include violin students and also offered a wider range of repertoire for pianists. In 2006, cello and flute were added to the roster of instruments. To accommodate the increasing difficulty of repertoire, a decision was made to conduct the Festival with a full symphony orchestra. A partnership was formed in 2007 with the Oistrach Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Mina Zikri. That year, thirteen winners had the privilege of performing a concerto movement in concert. In 2008, the Festival was opened to students outside of the Community Music Division. Viola was added in 2009, clarinet was added in 2012, and oboe and bassoon were added in 2013.

1.11.15 2015 Open Division Concerto Festival Results

Cello

Winner

(Co-Winner) **Leevy Williams**, student of Hans Jensen and Gilda Barston - Elgar: Concerto in E Minor, Op. 85, Mvt. 4

Honorable Mention with Distinction

Krystian Chiu, student of Hans Jensen - Hadyn: Concerto in C Major, Hob. VIIb:1, Mvt. 1

Viola

Winner

Katherine Gallagher, violin student of Almita Vamos- Hoffmeister: Concerto in D Major, Mvt. 1

Violin

Winners

Joshua Brown, student of Almita and Roland Vamos- Mendelssohn: Concerto in E Minor, Op. 64, Mvt. 3

Karisa Chiu, student of Almita Vamos- Bruch: Concerto No. 1 in G Minor, Op. 26, Mvt. 1

Steven Song, student of Gerardo Ribeiro Massenet: Meditation from Thais

Honorable Mention

Kitsho Hosotani, student of Paul Vanderwerf- Mendelssohn: Concerto in E Minor, Op. 64, Mvt. 3

12.14 Midwest Young Artists hosted the 19th annual Walgreens National Concerto Competition

on December 28 & 29, 2014. Prizes for this solo competition include an opportunity to perform with the MYA Symphony Orchestra and on the prestigious From the Top radio program. Walgreens Corporation's annual sponsorship enabled MYA to provide students with distinguished judges, a digital recording of their performance, written performance evaluations, and an inviting and nurturing environment in which to participate.

Open Category Senior Division

String Category Honorable Mention

Students of Almita Vamos:

Joshua Brown, violin - Waxman Carmen Fantasy

Nicholas Brown, violin - Tchaikovsky Concerto in D Major, Op. 35

Karisa Chiu, violin - Tchaikovsky Concerto in D Major, Op. 35

Serena Harnack, violin - Tchaikovsky Concerto in D Major, Op. 35

Students of Hans Jensen:

Krystian Chiu, cello - Dvorak Concerto in B Minor, Op. 104, Mvt. 1

Nathan Mo, cello - Shostakovich Concerto No. 1 in E Flat Major, Op. 107, Cadenza-Mvt. 4

Junior Division

John Heo, violin student of Almita Vamos- Mendelssohn Concerto in E Minor, Op. 64, Mvt. 1

Maya Anjali Buchanan , 14 violin student of Almita Vamos, won first place in the Junior Strings MTNA South Dakota Solo Competition in November. She will advance to the West Central Division competition on January 10. The winner will then compete at the national competition held during the MTNA National Conference in March.

12.6.14 The Eleventh Annual Sejong Music Competition was held on Saturday, December 6 at the University of Illinois at Chicago Performing Arts Center. The goals of the Sejong Music Competition are to discover talented young musicians and encourage them in their studies, and to also introduce traditional Korean music expressed through Western media. The event helps to increase the awareness and understanding of Korea's cultural heritage amongst the younger generations growing up in the United States so as to promote harmony among people of various ethnic backgrounds and bridge Asian and Western cultures.

<http://www.sejongculturalsociety.org/music/past/2014/winners.php>

Violin Senior Division

First, **Joshua Brown**, 15, student of Almita and Roland Vamos

Second, **Karisa Chiu**, 15, student of Almita Vamos

Third, **Serena Harnack**, 16, student of Almita Vamos

Honorable Mention, **Nicholas Brown**, 18, student of Almita and Roland Vamos

Violin Junior Division

Second & Best Interpretation of a Korean Piece, **John Heo**, 14, student of Almita Vamos and Cornelius Chiu

The Winners' Concert will be held on Sunday, January 18, 2015 at 2pm - Claudia Cassidy Theater - Chicago Cultural Center- 78 E. Washington, Chicago.

12.7.14 Lydia Rhea, 15, student of Hans Jensen, placed second in the Carmel Symphony Orchestra Young Artist Competition, playing the 4th movement of the Elgar Cello Concerto. The CSO Young Artist Competition

encourages and affords student musicians from Central Indiana the opportunity to compete with their peers at the highest level of artistic excellence. This year's event marks the 34th year of competition.

12.7.14 For a number of years, **Ars Viva and MIC** has partnered to offer students the opportunity to perform in a side-by-side concert event with maestro Alan Heatherington and the Ars Viva Symphony Orchestra. Through the years, select Academy students have been invited to perform as part of the professional orchestra on one program per year. Congratulations to Academy violinist **Katie Gallagher**, 18, Naperville, student of Almita Vamos, and to cellist **Richard Li**, 18, Bolingbrook, student of Gilda Barston, who will join the Ars Viva Symphony Orchestra for their December 7 concert on an afternoon of Beethoven.

The **YoungArts Foundation** has announced, out of more than 11,000 applications received, they have awarded 786 YoungArts Winners in the visual, literary, design and performing arts. These young artists represent some of our nations very best in: cinematic arts, dance, design arts, jazz, music, photography, theater, visual arts, voice, and writing. Nicholas, 18, studies with Almita and Roland Vamos and Nathan, 17, studies with Gilda Barston.

Every year the country's most promising young artists are selected from across the country as National Winners. These Winners have the opportunity to attend YoungArts programs which include master classes with internationally renowned artists, workshops, interdisciplinary activities, performances, and exhibitions. In addition, all YoungArts Winners join the ranks of our 20,000 YoungArts alumni and go on to the top universities and conservatories across the country to become leading professionals in their fields.

Last November, National Winners from the Academy included Gallia Kastner, Hansuh Rhee, and Zachary Brandon. <http://www.youngarts.org/our-program>

Recognition Levels

Merit: Receive a Certificate of Achievement, a medallion, a Recommendation Letter and are invited to participate in regional programs. The winner's high school also receives an engraved plaque with the names of every winner from that school.

Honorable Mention: Receives the same benefits as a Merit winner plus a \$250 monetary award.

Finalist: Receives the same benefits as a Merit winner plus an invitation to National YoungArts Week held in January for final adjudication to determine award designation (Level 3 \$1000, Level 2 \$1500, Level 1 \$3000, Silver \$5000, Gold \$10,000).

12.1.14 Josiah Yoo, 16, cello student of Hans Jenson, won first place in the Senior Strings MTNA State Solo Competition held November 8-9 at Millikan University, Decatur IL. Josiah will advance to the East Central Division competition in January, which in turn takes place in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin. The winner of the East Central Division will then compete at the national competition held during the MTNA National Conference in March.

12.1.14 Ria Honda, 14, violin student of Almita Vamos, won first place in the Junior Strings MTNA State Solo Competition held November 8-9 at Millikan University, Decatur IL. State winners will advance to the East Central Division competition in January, which in turn takes place in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio and Wisconsin. The winner of the East Central Division will then compete at the national competition held during the MTNA National Conference in March.

<http://www.ismta.org/illinois.asp?page=mtnacompitions>

11.14 Katherine Gallagher, 18, violin student of Almita Vamos, won first place in the Northern Illinois University School of the Arts (CSA) Sinfonia Concerto Competition. She performed Concerto #5 in A minor, 1st movement, by Henri Vieuxtemps. Players are expected to perform one memorized movement of a standard concerto or work with orchestral accompaniment. The winner receives a prize of \$200 and performs the concerto with the orchestra at the February 18th concert.

http://www.niu.edu/extprograms/arts/ensembles_sinfonia.shtml#concerto

10.19.14 The following students were winners in the **30th Annual Music Festival in Honor of Confucius** held at the Merit School of Music on Sunday, October 19.

Founded in 1984, The Chinese Fine Arts Society (CFAS) is the leading champion of Chinese arts and culture in Chicago – from traditional to contemporary. The Chinese Fine Arts Society's annual Music Festival in Honor of Confucius (MFHC) introduces participants to the rich heritage of Chinese music through competitions, scholarships, and performance opportunities for winners. Every fall, hundreds of young musicians perform a required piece of Chinese music selected from Chinese repertoire and a western piece of their choosing for a panel of judges. The required repertoire reflects the beauty, majesty, and wide breadth of the Chinese musical tradition and is an inspiring challenge for the contestants. The flagship competition for cellists, violinists, and

pianists, is for students ages 18 years or younger. First place winners will be featured at the Winners Concert on Sunday, November 23 at Gottlieb Hall, Merit School of Music.

<http://chinesefinearts.org/programs/music-festival-in-honor-of-confucius/2014-winners-announcement>

VIOLIN – JUNIOR 2 (ages 12 – 14)

1st Place: **Joshua Brown**, student of Almita Vamos

VIOLIN – SENIOR (ages 15 – 18)

2nd Place: **Nicholas Brown**, student of Almita Vamos

3rd Place: **Tabby Rhee**, student of Hye-Sun Lee

CELLO – SENIOR (ages 15 – 18)

1st Place: **Josiah Yoo**, student of Hans Jensen

2nd Place (tie): **Annamarie Wellems**, student of Tanya Carey

2nd Place (tie): **Nathan Mo**, student of Hans Jensen

October - Natalie Nedvetsky, piano student of Jim Giles, will be featured on a rebroadcast of Introductions 98.7WFMT TONIGHT, October 23, at 10PM. Introductions features the Chicago-area's talented pre-college classical musicians every week.

J.S. Bach: Prelude and Fugue No. 16 in G Minor, WTC, Bk. 1.

Beethoven: Sonata in F Minor No. 23, Op.57

I. Allegro Assai

Chopin: Ballade No. 1 in G Minor

Chopin: Etude in A flat major No. 1, Op.25

Debussy: Selections from Preludes Book 1:

Des pas sur la neige: Triste et lent

(Footsteps in the Snow)

October 10 - Academy violinist **Gallia Kastner**, 17, student of Almita and Roland Vamos, will perform Waxman's Carmen Fantasy and Caprice in the form of a Waltz by Saint-Saens/Ysaÿe at Preston Bradley Hall on October 20, 2014. Gallia is a former winner of the Women's Club of Musicians Competition Jerome and Elaine Nuremburg Scholarship.

Gallia, a new member of the Skokie Valley Symphony Orchestra, will also perform this Sunday at the North Shore Center for the Performing Arts. The concert will feature winners of the Skokie Valley Symphony

Orchestra's Young Artist Competition and Beethoven's powerful Symphony No. 7. Hear Tomorrow's Stars Today Concert - October 12, 2014, 3pm. <http://svso.org/buy-tickets>

Serena Harnack, 16, violin student of Almita Vamos and one of three Stanger Young Artist Audition winners, will be featured on the Elmhurst Symphony Orchestra Concerto Night Gala on Saturday, October 18th at 7pm. The performance will be at the Elmhurst Christian Reformed Church, Elmhurst.

www.elmhurstsymphony.org

September - **Hannah White**, 14, violin student of Hye-Sun Lee and Almita Vamos, has been selected to tour with SPHINX VIRTUOSI, one of the nation's most dynamic professional chamber orchestras. Comprised of 18 of the nation's top Black and Latino classical soloists, these alumni of the internationally renowned Sphinx Competition come together each fall as cultural ambassadors to reach new audiences. Hannah will play first violin on the Sphinx Virtuosi tour. Hannah was named a Laureate in the 2014 17th Annual Sphinx Competition and will perform in fifteen concerts across the country in September and October.

www.sphinxmusic.org/performance-calendar.html

Summer Achievements Class of 2014-2015

July 18 - **Krystian Jinwoo Chiu**, Academy cello student of Hans Jørgen Jensen and **Karisa Chiu**, Academy violin student of Almita Vamos, attended the 4-week long Indiana University Summer String Academy hosted by the Jacobs School of Music. After winning the Haydn C Major Concerto Competition, Krystian performed at the Final Gala String Academy Concert in Auer Hall on July 18. This summer marked the 30th year of the Summer String Academy where students from around the world come to participate in two weekly private lessons, chamber music, master classes, and performances. Krystian and Karisa are members of the Atara String Quartet with Hannah White, violin and Tess Krope, viola.

July 3 - **Maya Anjali Buchanan**, violin student of Almita and Roland Vamos, attended the Brian Lewis Young Artist Program in Ottawa, Kansas and performed the Waxman Carmen Fantasy with the Ottawa Chamber Orchestra on July 3rd. The BLYAP is a tuition-free opportunity for twelve highly gifted violinists up to the age of 18 to receive intense daily private instruction on concerto repertoire, show pieces, sonata literature, scales and technical studies, solo Bach, duets, and music of Fritz Kreisler; to rehearse with both piano and perform as

soloist with orchestra. Maya was also featured on NPR affiliate WJXR, Morning Classics, in Lawrence, Kansas and performed the Waxman Carmen Fantasy with pianist Laura Kennedy.

Serena Harnack, violin student of Hye-Sun Lee and Almita Vamos, also attended the Brian Lewis Young Artist Program. Serena was also invited to play in a quartet at the Midwest Conservatory of Music in Hoffman Estates. (Debussy, 1st violin).

June - **Tess Kropf**, viola student of Li-Kuo Chang, had the rewarding experience of attending two great music programs this summer. First, Tess attended the Madeline Island Music Camp as it began its second quarter century of chamber music excellence. They provide music training and performance for talented young musicians in a structured, residential environment on beautiful Madeline Island. Over the past twenty-five years, the Camp has refined its curriculum to offer a truly exceptional program devoted exclusively to the study and performance of chamber music with distinguished faculty and resident string quartets and woodwind quintets from across the nation. After a stay in the Midwest, Tess was off to the San Francisco Bay area and **Music@Menlo**, an internationally acclaimed chamber music festival and institute. Founded by David Finckel and Wu Han as a program of Menlo School, **Music@Menlo** features unique immersive programming, a roster of world-class artists, and a Chamber Music Institute for emerging and pre-professional musicians.

June 21 - **Serena Harnack and the Browns, Nicholas, Joshua and Isabella**, performed live on a special broadcast from the Music Institute of Chicago's Nichols Concert Hall in Evanston in celebration of Make Music Chicago, a worldwide celebration of live music. The Browns performed Friedrich Hermann's Capriccio No. 2 for 3 Violins, Op. 5 and Serena performed Orange Blossom Special by Ervin T. Rouse and a movement of Vivaldi's Concerto No. 1 in E major, Op. 8, RV 269, "La primavera" (Spring). All of the violinists study with Almita Vamos. Introductions features the Chicago-area's talented pre-college classical musicians every week.

June 12 - **Leevy Williams**, cello student of Gilda Barston, toured with the Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestras' International Tour to China. Students embarked on a ten-day tour of China to the cities of Beijing, Xi'an, Hangzhou and Shanghai. In addition to performing at world class venues, Leevy participated in a variety of cultural activities designed to educate them about the history, culture and customs of China. Performance included: Beijing - National Centre of Performing Arts, Xi'an - Xi'an Concert Hall, Hangzhou - Hangzhou Grand Theater, and Opera Hall, Shanghai - Shanghai Oriental Art Center.

June 24 - Trio Solaris, **Gallia Kastner, Nathan Walhout, and Andrew Guo**, along with coach Sang Mee Lee, performed at Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival in Massachusetts in June. Continuing their incredible collaboration from a live performance at the Harris Theater in April with the Trey McIntyre Dance Project, Trio Solaris performed on a premiere of The Vinegar Works: Four Dances of Moral Instruction. The work was inspired by the surreal imagination and characteristic pen-and-ink drawings of writer and illustrator Edward Gorey. The trio performed live accompaniment for TMP with Dmitri Shostakovich's "Piano Trio No. 2 in E minor" at six festival concerts. A National Historic Landmark and National Medal of Arts recipient, Jacob's Pillow is home to America's longest running dance festival, located in the beautiful Berkshire Hills of Western Massachusetts. This summer, the Pillow will hosted its 82nd world-renowned dance Festival.

June 17 - Academy pianist **Daniel Szefer**, student of Ralph Neiweem, participated in the 8th International Tchaikovsky Competition for Young Musicians. The prestigious Tchaikovsky Competition took place from June 23rd - July 3rd, 2014 in Moscow, Russia.

June 8 - The Lake Forest Symphony presented their annual Music in the Garden event at the beautiful garden estate of John and Posy Krehbiel, in Lake Forest. This is the sixth year Academy students performed at a magnificent North Shore garden for this spring event. The **Vox String Quartet --Serena Harnack and Hansuh Rhee, violins, Mira Williams, viola, and Nathan Mo**, cello, coached by Mathias Tacke, performed along with **Gallia Kastner, violin student of Almita and Roland Vamos, and Josiah Yoo**, cello student of Hans Jorgen Jensen. Serena also performed Orange Blossom Special for over 200 symphony guests.

June 8 - **Natalie Nedvetsky**, piano student of James Giles, performed in a master class for Veda Kaplinsky at the Wisconsin Conservatory in Milwaukee. Natalie was invited by Piano Arts Festival. Kaplinsky, Juilliard Faculty, is a prizewinner in the J.S. Bach International Competition, Washington, D.C. and her numerous appearances in recitals, chamber music, and with orchestras, as well as on radio and television include master classes and performances throughout the U.S., Israel, and Korea.

June 2 - **Serena Harnack**, violin student of Hye-Sun Lee and Almita Vamos, performed at the Arts Alliance Illinois' 2nd Annual Benefit Luncheon at the Palmer House Hilton, Chicago. Nearly 500 of Illinois' cultural, civic, and corporate leaders gathered to celebrate the arts. Serena and pianist Milana Pavchinskaya performed the first movement of Antonio Vivaldi's Concerto No. 1 in E major, Op. 8, RV 269, "La primavera" (Spring) From the Four Seasons.