

Student Achievements 2019 - 2020

SUMMER 2020

8.20 Academy cellist **Jan Vargas-Nedvetsky** was named winner of the **Chicago Chamber Music Festival 6th Annual Concerto Competition** for pianists and string players. The winners will be invited to perform with the Northeastern Illinois University Orchestra conducted by Dr. Benjamin Firer during the '20 - '21 Academic Year. * CCMF Concerto Competition is open to pre-college students only.

Perform with NEIU Orchestra during the '20 - '21 season.

- Receive written feedback from a panel of three renowned orchestra conductors
- ONE private lesson with CCMF's faculty*
- ONE private meeting with conductor for valuable insight into playing as a soloist with an orchestra
- Access to CCMF Special Topic Seminars

Pianist Clara Zhang was the winner of the 2018 Concerto Competition.

2020 Chicago International Music Competition

8.20 Congratulations to members of **PRIMAVERA AND DASANI** ensembles.... tying for the Grand Prize at the **2020 Chicago International Music Competition**. More than 400 musicians in 22 countries applied to the virtual competition.

GRAND PRIZES DIVISION II—Amateur Division

1st Prize—**Trio Primavera coached by Rodolfo Vieira and Mark George. (US): Jan Vargas Nedvetsky / Esme Arias-Kim / Yerin Yang**

Tied with Dasani String Quartet coached by Mathias Tacke. (US): Isabella Brown/ Katya Moeller/ Zechariah Mo/ Brandon Cheng

2nd Prize—Not Awarded

3rd Prize—Brian Lin (US)

In addition, the Academy had winners in the Professional Young Artist II Division.

Isabella Brown was awarded first prize, and **Katya Moeller** second prize, in the Professional Young Artist II Division. Congratulations to everyone for high achievements in a distinguished competition.

7.1.20 - Träumerei Project: Timeless Tribute Video

With no end of year orchestra concert, no last day to say goodbye, and no graduation ceremony for the seniors, the Academy Class of 2019-2020, in their homes across four states, created a Time Capsule Video to honor their year together. Thank you Academy students for sharing your collective artistry, for your capacity to care for one another, and for providing inspiration and comfort to others with many heartfelt performances over the past four months. Thank you Yana Nedvetsky, Jan Nedvetsky, and Isabel Chen for creating a timeless keepsake.

MAY

"What a Wonderful World" video project: During this time of quarantine, collaborative music as we once knew it has become impossible. Nevertheless, musicians around the world are coming up with great ways to continue making music together and sharing it to help shine a light and make us all feel more connected. Spearheaded by Natalie (alumna) and

Jan Nedvestky, the video is aimed at honoring health care workers with a collaborative performance of Louis Armstrong's *What a Wonderful World*.

37th Annual Fischhoff Chamber Music National Competition

DASANI STRING QUARTET WINS SILVER IN VIRTUAL FISCHOFF COMPETITION

Katya Moeller, Isabella Brown, Zechary Mo and Brandon Cheng brought home a silver medal in the **Fischhoff Annual Chamber Music Competition**, a virtual competition held May, 2020. Coached by Mathias Tacke, the quartet was one of six groups advancing to the semi final round of the competition.

APRIL

4.2020 Cellists Cameron Chiu and Brandon Cheng spearhead The Swan Project

As people (musicians included) around the world, are practicing social distancing, it's become harder and yet more vital for us to come together. Two young area cellists, 18-year-old cellist Cameron Chiu of Palatine and 17-year-old Brandon Cheng of Chicago, both students of the Academy of the Music Institute of Chicago, have risen to the challenge. They've spearheaded a project that brings together 24 young cellists from 12 countries in one moving performance.

The Swan Project features Chiu, Cheng, and an international roster of 22 other young cellists who take turns performing excerpts from the penultimate movement of Saint-Saëns' *The Carnival of the Animals*, *The Swan*. They chose *The Swan* because it is one of the staples of the cello repertoire. A practical reason, sure, but it ensured that the battalion of cellists would all have it in their fingers. In addition to Cameron and Brandon, the project features Academy alums Alon Hayut, Luka Coetzee, Bethany Bobbs, and James Baik. Chiu's project has been promoted on WFMT, WTTW, and other media. Cameron will also be featured on *From the Top* radio program later this spring.

MARCH

37th Annual Fischhoff Chamber Music National Competition Semi-final Round

The Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition has decided to move forward with a virtual competition based on the video auditions originally submitted to the tape round.

The judges selected 13 groups for the junior division quarterfinal round. After a thorough review process, the judges will reduce that number to six (semi-final round), and then three medalists for the final round. I am happy to report the following groups have advanced to the next virtual round. The competition weekend begins Thursday, May 7. CONGRATULATIONS!

Aurora Piano Quartet - Sidney Lee, Elinor Detmer, Amelia Zitoun, Colin Song (Elaine Felder and Sang Mee Lee)

Dasani String Quartet – Isabella Brown, Katya Moeller, Zechary Mo, Brandon Cheng (Mathias Tacke)

Gemini String Quartet – Noelle Naito, Isabel Chen, Jonah Kartman, Cameron Chiu (Jasmine Lin)

Insieme Trio – Sonya Jones, Abigail Park, Ashley Kim (Abraham Stokman and Sang Mee Lee)

Primavera Trio – Esme Arias-Kim, Jan Nedvetsky, Yerin Yang (Mark George and Rodolfo Vieira)

Crain-Maling Foundation CSO Young Artists Competition

Three Academy students, violinist **Isabella Brown**, violinist **Esme Arias-Kim**, and cellist **Mia Wimbiscus**, and CYSO double bassist Nicholas Boettcher, participated in the 2020 Crain-Maling Foundation CSO Young Artists Competition held at Symphony Center on Saturday. It was incredibly special for three Academy students to be finalists in this rewarding experience. We are proud of their performances and their support for one another.

Congratulations to violinist Isabella Brown, winner of the 2020 Crain-Maling Foundation CSO Young Artists

Competition, who performed Beethoven's Violin Concerto in D Major, Mvt. I on Saturday at Symphony Center.

Congratulations also to the three other finalists: violinist Esme Arias-Kim (named first runner-up), double bassist

Nicholas Boettcher and cellist Mia Wimbiscus. During the final round, the four young musicians were accompanied by the Civic Orchestra of Chicago under the direction of conductor Michael Christie. As winner, Isabella Brown will have the opportunity to perform as a soloist with the CSO during a school and family concert next season.

William C. Byrd Young Artist Competition

Violinist **Noelle Naito** was awarded first place in the **William C. Byrd Young Artist Competition**, an international competition held annually at the Flint Institute of Music in Flint, MI. Noelle is the first Academy student to win this competition that rotates strings, voice, piano, winds and brass each year. Five finalists performed after being selected from applicants throughout the world. Contestants were judged on musicianship, technique and overall stature as a potential performing artist with a symphony orchestra. The finalists competed for a grand prize of \$6,000 and the opportunity to perform with the Flint Symphony Orchestra and Enrique Diemecke, Conductor and Music Director. Noelle will perform Paganini Violin Concerto with the Flint Symphony Orchestra next year.

LaCrosse Rising Stars Competition

Violinist **Katya Moeller** was the second place winner in the **LaCrosse Rising Stars Competition**. Katya played the 1st mvmt of Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto with the LaCrosse Symphony .

FEBRUARY

Fox Valley Youth Concerto Competition

Violinist **Esme Arias-Kim**, student of Almita Vamos, is the winner of the **Fox Valley Youth Concerto Competition** that was held Saturday, February 22. She will perform the first mvt of Sibelius Concerto with the Fox Valle Orchestra on April 26 at Aurora University's Crimi Auditorium, 407 S. Calumet Ave. in Aurora.

ROBERT STANGER YOUNG ARTISTS CONCERTO AUDITIONS

The Kiwanis Club of Elmhurst and the Elmhurst Symphony present the Robert Stanger Young Artist Concerto Audition each winter to provide a forum for outstanding area high school instrumentalists to compete for the opportunity to perform a concerto movement with the Elmhurst Symphony Orchestra.

Third Place: **Mia Wimbiscus**, Cello
Tchaikovsky Theme and (four) Variations on a Rocco Theme for Cello
Teacher: Hans Jensen

Fourth Place: **Elinor Detmer**, Violin
Mendelssohn Violin Concerto in E minor, Op. 64, 1st Movement
Teacher: Almita Vamos

Honorable Mention: **Abigail Park**, Violin
Vieutemps Violin Concerto No. 5 in A minor, 1st Movement
Teacher: Almita Vamos

The Society of American Musicians Competition

SAM, a non-profit organization, was founded in 1914 with the intent of promoting the best interests of music in America, and maintaining the highest standards of musicianship. Through she competition, its awards, and performance opportunities, the Society offers assistance and encouragement to young musicians and promising artists. First place winners receive a cash prize and are invited to perform at the Winner's Concert on May 17th, 2020.

Violin Senior 1st Place - **Isabel Chen**
Viola Senior 1st Place - **Zechariah Mo**

Cello Senior - HM - **Jan Nedvetsky**

MYA National Chamber Music Competition

The competition is open to chamber ensembles in 12th grade and younger and consists of two divisions (Open and MYAC).

Contestants compete for over \$5,000 in cash prizes and scholarships and the winner of each category in each division will perform in a Winners Recital (date TBA).

Insieme Piano Trio – Overall and Open Strings Winner

Sonya Jones: violin/viola, Abigail Park: violin/viola, Ashley Kim: piano

Sang Mee Lee and Abe Stokman: Coaches

Infini Quartet – Honorable Mention (Open Strings Category)

Sameer Agrawal: violin, Linda Wang: violin/viola, Kelly Kim: violin/viola, Mia Wimbiscus: cello

Rodolfo Vieira: Coach

23rd Annual Sphinx Competition

Esme Arias-Kim, 14, is the Junior Division 1st Prize winner of the **2020 Sphinx Competition**. Held each year in Detroit, the Sphinx Competition is open to American Black and Latino classical string soloists under 18-years of age. The Sphinx Organization is the social justice organization dedicated to transforming lives through the power of diversity in the arts. Sphinx's four program areas – Education & Access, Artist Development, Performing Artists, and Arts Leadership – form a pipeline that develops and supports diversity and inclusion in classical music at every level: music education, artists performing on stage, the repertoire and programming being performed, the communities represented in audiences, and the artistic and administrative leadership within the field.

Esme, an Academy student of Almita Vamos, will receive \$10,000, a number of solo concerto engagements plus a nationally-broadcast radio appearance on 'From The Top'. The 2020 jury comprised: Beverly Kane Baker, Lena Fankhauser, Pamela Frank, Bella Hristova, Charlotte Lee, Melissa Kraut and Tito Muñoz.

DuPage Concerto Competition

The DSO encourages serious study and musical excellence among young musicians through its annual **Young Artists Auditions**. Each entrant will be evaluated by experienced judges and will receive written comments and suggestions based on their individual performances. The First Place Winner will appear as a soloist at our March subscription concert (March 21 at 7:30 pm) and receives a cash prize of \$500. Second Place Winner receives a cash prize of \$300. 2nd Place – **Sonya Jones** - Mendelssohn Violin Concerto in E minor, 1st Movement

Honorable Mention

Zechary Mo - Walton Viola Concerto, first movement

Kate Nelson - Barber Violin Concerto, first movement

Linda Wang - Prokofiev Violin Concerto No. 2, 1st movement

JANUARY

REMBRANDT 25th Annual High School Chamber Music Competition

Congratulations **Aurora Piano Quartet**, 1st place winner at the **25th Annual High School Chamber Music Competition**. The competition took place Sunday, January 26 at North Park College. Founded in 1995, the Rembrandt Chamber Musicians Annual High School Chamber Music competition is highly regarded as one of the premier competitions of its kind in the Midwest. The Rembrandt Young Artists will perform at the Winds of Spring Concerts in March.

Aurora Piano Quartet – Sidney Lee, violin, Elinor Detmer, violin, Colin Song, piano, Amelia Zitoun, cello
The Academy of the Music Institute of Chicago
(Elaine Felder and Sang Mee Lee, Coaches)

Honorable Mention

Dasani String Quartet – Isabella Brown, Katya Moeller, Zechariah Mo, Brandon Cheng
The Academy of the Music Institute of Chicago
(Mathias Tacke, Coach)

The DePaul Concerto Festival

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. 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 Oistrakh Symphony of Chicago 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 in 2012, and oboe and bassoon in 2013. Today the DePaul Concerto Festival attracts nearly 150 participants in piano, strings, and woodwinds from the Midwest who audition for a chance to perform with the Oistrakh Symphony of Chicago. We invite and encourage young musicians to audition for an opportunity to participate in the Concerto Festival.

Cello

Winners

Amelia Zitoun, student of Horacio Contreras

Honorable Mention

Jan Vargas Nedvetsky, student of Horacio Contreras

Piano

Winners

Ashley Kim, student of Matthew Hagle and James Giles

Violin

Winners

Isabel Chen, student of Almita Vamos

Honorable Mention with Distinction

Esme Arias-Kim, student of Almita Vamos

Honorable Mention

Kelly Kim, student of Sang Mee Lee

Abigail Park, student of Almita Vamos

Arthur D. Montzka Young Artists Concerto Competition

Isabella Brown, student of Almita Vamos, won the **Arthur D. Montzka Young Artists Concerto Competition** (Kishwaukee Symphony Orchestra) this past Sunday. She will play the full Beethoven Concerto with the Kishwaukee Symphony Orchestra on February 22 at NIU's Boutell Memorial Concert Hall in Dekalb, IL. Previous Academy winners include Karisa Chiu, Maya Buchanan, and John Heo.

JANUARY

Midwest Young Artists Conservatory's 2019 Walgreens National Concerto Competition

Over 200 exceptional young musicians from all corners of the country, competed in **Midwest Young Artists Conservatory's 2019 Walgreens National Concerto Competition** from Dec. 28-30 at Ravinia's Bennett Gordon Hall and the MYAC Center at Fort Sheridan in Highwood.

Congratulations to the following MIC students who competed in the Open Division:

SENIOR OPEN DIVISION

Zechary Mo, viola (Strings HM) – student of Davis King and Roland Vamos

Ashley Kim, piano (Piano HM) – student of Matthew Hagle and James Giles

JUNIOR OPEN DIVISION

Early Music Winner - **Esme Arias Kim**, viola - student of Almita Vamos

Jan Nedvetsky, cello - (Strings HM) – student of Horacio Contreras

Lakeview Orchestra Young Artist Concerto Competition

The Lakeview Orchestra Young Artist Concerto Competition is open to current high school students who play an orchestral instrument. The winner of the competition will receive a cash prize of \$250 and be invited to perform their selected concerto with the Lakeview Orchestra. **Sidney Lee**, student of I-Hao Lee, was named runner-up in the Lakeview Orchestra Young Artist Concerto Competition. The competition is open to current high school students who play an orchestral instrument. The winner of the competition will receive a cash prize of \$250 and be invited to perform their selected concerto with the Lakeview Orchestra.

YoungArts 2020

YoungArts is proud to announce the 2020 YoungArts award winners—686 of the nation's most accomplished young artists from 40 states in the visual, literary and performing arts. Selected for their caliber of artistic achievement, award winners are chosen by esteemed discipline-specific panels of artists through a rigorous blind adjudication process. This year's award winners represent the top 9.5% of applications across ten artistic disciplines. YoungArts award winners gain access to one of the most prestigious programs for emerging artists in the United States in which they will have opportunities for creative and professional development throughout their entire careers. youngarts.org/winners.

YoungArts aspires to create a community of alumni that provides a lifetime of encouragement, opportunity, and support. All winners become part of a professional network of over 20,000 alumni artists and are eligible to participate in YoungArts' regional programs, including YoungArts Miami in February, YoungArts Los Angeles in March and YoungArts New York in April.

Violinist **Zechary Mo** (Faculty: Davis King and Roland Vamos) and pianist **Eriko Darcy** (Faculty: Matthew Hagle), Honorable Mention Winners in Classical Music

Cellist Cameron Chiu (Faculty: Horacio Contreras), pianist **Ashley Kim** (Faculty: Matthew Hagle and James Giles), and violinist **Noelle Naito** (Faculty: Almita Vamos), Merit Winners in Classical Music.

Honorable Mention and Merit winners have the opportunity to participate in the New York Regional Program in the spring, where students spend a week fully immersed in their art form and participate in interdisciplinary and genre-specific master classes.

Recognition Levels

Finalist: The YoungArts Finalist award recognizes work that demonstrates exceptional technique; a strong, sophisticated, nuanced, and clear artistic point of view; and a depth of thinking/performance that far exceeds the level of peers at this career stage. Finalists who meet eligibility requirements are considered for nomination to the U.S. Presidential Scholars Program

Honorable Mention: The YoungArts Honorable Mention award level recognizes work that demonstrates exceptional technique; a strong sense of artistry; and a depth of thinking/performance that exceeds the level of peers at this career stage.

Merit: The YoungArts Merit award level recognizes work that has been deemed as commendable by the panel, strong technically with a clear artistic point of view.

NOVEMBER

WFMT INTRODUCTIONS

Ashley Kim, piano student of James Giles and Matthew Hagle performed on WFMT's Introductions last Saturday. Ashley performed selections of Chopin, Bach, Mozart and Rochberg.

The Bolz Young Artist Competition

Jonah Kartman, violin student of I-Hao Lee, is a finalist in the **The Bolz Young Artist Competition** and will perform with the Madison Symphony Orchestra on February 26 and 27.

Preliminary Round: Saturday, October 26 Semi-Final Round: Monday, November 18 Final Round: Wednesday, February 26, 2020 (The Final Forte)

The Bolz Young Artist Competition is a highly-regarded statewide competition in which Wisconsin's young musicians compete for scholarships and the opportunity to perform as soloists with the MSO. The four semi-finalists compete in The Final Forte, which is broadcast on Wisconsin Public Television. Winners of the Bolz Young Artist Competition are featured as soloists with the MSO during the Spring Young People's Concert. <https://madisonsymphony.org/education-community/education-programs/young-artist-competitions/the-final-forte/>

The Sixteenth Annual Sejong Music Competition

The Sejong Cultural Society strives to advance awareness and understanding of Korea's cultural heritage in the United States. was held on Sunday, November 17, 2019 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.

Dating back to 2006, the Academy has had long-standing success at the Sejong Competition.

VIOLIN SENIOR DIVISION

First place: **Noelle Naito**, student of Almita Vamos and Davis King

Third: **Jonah Kartman**, student of I-Hao Lee

Honorable Mention: **Esme-Arias Kim**, student of Almita Vamos

The Chinese Fine Arts Society's 34th Annual Music Festival in Honor of Confucius Competition

The Chinese Fine Arts Society (CFAS) is a Chicago-based non-profit dedicated to promoting the appreciation of Chinese culture, enhancing cultural exchange, and pursuing excellence in Chinese music, dance, and visual arts. Since 1984, CFAS has been a leading champion of Chinese culture

1st Place: **Abigail Park**

2nd Place: **Sonya Jones**

Finalists

Junior II

Sameer Agrawal, student of Sang Mee Lee

The Symphony of Oak Park & River Forest Concerto Competition

Sameer Agrawal – Sameer won first place in The Symphony of Oak Park & River Forest Concerto Competition and will perform the first movement of the Vieuxtemps Violin Concerto, No. 5 in A minor, on Sunday, December 1, at 4pm. The symphony is conducted by Music Director Jay Friedman at Concordia University in River Forest. Sameer studies with Sang Mee Lee. The Symphony of Oak Park & River Forest's Solo Competition is open to all musicians who have yet to complete their senior year of high school and whose primary residence is within 10 miles of Oak Park/River Forest.

Illinois American String Teachers Association Concerto Competition

Zechary Mo won the Grand Prize at the Illinois American String Teachers Association Concerto Competition on November 2nd, at Illinois State University with a performance of the Walton Viola Concerto. Zechary studies with Roland Vamos and Davis King. The American String Teachers Association, founded more than 60 years ago, is a membership organization for string and orchestra teachers and players. The Competition is open to all string students aged 16-22 studying or living in Illinois who have an instructor who is an ASTA member. There are separate divisions for violin, viola, cello, bass, guitar, and harp, and one Grand Prize.

OCTOBER

Academy violinist Katya Moeller performed Glazunov's Violin Concerto with the Southeast Iowa Symphony (69th season), a regional orchestra that performs in Burlington, Mt. Pleasant and Ottumwa, Iowa. In addition to rehearsals and concerts, Katya was booked on the Young Professionals of Burlington, a 30-minute program that combined performance with a discussion about music. She also gave an interview on Iowa Public Radio about the Glazunov's performances and did the Williamsburg Library "Alive after 5" series.

Abigail Park, student of Almita Vamos, participated in a masterclass sponsored by Bein & Fushi and The Stradivari Society on October 15. The class was led by Spanish violinist Francisco Fullana, winner of the 2018 Avery Fisher Career Grant, who has received international praise as a "rising star". Abigail performed a movement from Vieuxtemps Concerto No.

Music Teacher's National Association(MTNA) State String Competition

Violinist **Noelle Naito**, student of Almita Vamos, was named the winner of the Music Teacher's National Association(MTNA) state string competition in Maryland on October 13. The MTNA National Student Competitions are the most successful and prestigious student competitions in the country. Noelle will advance to the Eastern Division Online-only Video Competition. Division winners compete in the national finals at the annual MTNA National Conference in March.

Cellist Sajdah Muhammad performed with the **South Side Chicago Youth Orchestra** this summer, and received the opportunity to be interviewed and appear on ABC news.

Tune in to hear Sajdah's compelling story. <https://abc7chicago.com/entertainment/conductor-starts-south-side-orchestra-for-young-musicians-of-color/5553850/>

Cellist Jan Nedvetsky played live this morning on **ABC's Windy City Live** celebrating Amazing Kids. The show will be repeated at 11pm tonight. Jan performed the Courante from Cello Suite No. 1 in G Major by Bach.

INTRODUCTIONS WFMT

9.28.19 Mia Wimbiscus will be featured on "Introductions" on September 28. Introductions is WFMT's weekly Saturday morning radio program that features talented pre-college classical musicians in the Chicago area.

Mia's program:

Pampeana No 2., Rhapsody for cello and piano, op 21 by Alberto Ginastera

Sonata in D Minor by Claude Debussy

Variations on a Rococo Theme, op. 33 by Pyotr Tchaikovsky

9th Annual Franz Liszt Birthday Gala Concert

Piano student Eriko Darcy will be featured on the 9th Annual Franz Liszt Birthday Gala Concert next month in Nichols Concert Hall. Watch for more information regarding tickets.

Summer 2019 Highlights

Katya Moeller, violinist in the Avita Duo, was featured in concerts across the globe this summer, appearing with her mother, pianist Ksenia Nosikova.

Isabella Brown won 3rd prize in July at the 2019 Thomas & Evon Cooper International Violin Competition – in Oberlin, Ohio, United States.

Katya Moeller, student of Almita Vamos, won GRAND PRIZE in the ENKOR International Music Competition, Violin, 6th Edition. <http://www.enkorcompetition.com/2019/07/katya-moeller-grand-prize-violin-6th.html>

Sidney Lee, student of I-Hao Lee, won 1st prize in ENKOR, Category B, ages 11-

15. <http://www.enkorcompetition.com/2019/07/sidney-lee-1st-prize-violin-6th-edition.html>

ENKOR provides students with the unique opportunity to get heard and recognized by hundreds of professionals and influential people in the music industry. ENKOR is the only competition with a Jury Board consisting of 500+ members from 70+ countries on 6 continents!

News from Aspen: Violinists Noelle Naito and Katya Moeller, students of Almita Vamos, performed in a master class with violinist Paul Huang, recipient of the prestigious 2015 Avery Fisher Career Grant and a 2017 Lincoln Center Award for Emerging Artists.