

The Music Institute of Chicago

The Academy Class of 2022-2023

May 2023

AMELIA ZITOUN WINS GOLD AT STULBERG!

Amelia Zitoun, 17
2023 GOLD MEDALIST
United States
cello

Amelia Zitoun, 17, is a scholarship Fellow at the Music Institute of Chicago's Academy, a training center for advanced pre-college students. She has been a student there since 2019. She currently studies cello with Hans Jensen.

Most recently Amelia was the 1st place winner of the Bolz Final Forte Competition in Madison, WI. In October of 2022, Amelia played the Barber Cello Concerto with the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra on their Family Concert and Youth Performance Series. In May of 2022 Amelia was the winner of the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra's Stars of Tomorrow Competition. She was also a winner of the 2022 Civic Music Association of Milwaukee's High School Competition. In 2021, Amelia won First Prize in the Schubert Club Competition, and in 2020 she was a winner of the DePaul Concerto Competition, performing the Kabalevsky Concerto with the Oistrakh Symphony Orchestra.

Amelia is also an active chamber musician. As a member of the Pelios String Quartet they recently won 2nd place in the 2023 Barnett Chamber Music Competition, and will be competing in the 2023 Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition, as well as the St. Paul String Quartet Competition. In 2022, as a member of the Hermes Piano Trio, she competed in the Quarterfinals of Fischhoff. In 2020, as a member of the Aurora Piano Quartet, her group won First Prize in the Rembrandt Chamber Music Competition, as well as advancing to the Quarterfinals in the Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition.

This summer, Amelia will attend the Perlman Music Program. In the summer of 2022, Amelia attended the Heifetz International Music Institute, as well as the Moulin d'Ande Cello Festival in France, where she studied with Jerome Pernoo (Paris Conservatory).

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FISCHOFF NATIONAL CHAMBER MUSIC ASSOCIATION

HEARTFELT CONGRATULATIONS TO THE FOLLOWING AMAZING ENSEMBLES:

PELIOS STRING QUARTET (ELLEN ZHOU, CLARK SNAVELY, TRISTAN ZHU AND AMELIA ZITOUN) & RODOLFO VIEIRA -- **FISCHOFF SILVER MEDAL WINNER**

LUMINOS PIANO TRIO (LAUREN KIM, LUCY WU AND MATTHEW HAHN) & SUNG HOON MO AND SARAH PLUM -- **FISCHOFF SEMIFINALISTS**

CALCIFER STRING QUARTET (ZAK CHEN, KANA AIHARA, LEO ZUPKO AND JAN VARGAS-NEDVETSKY) & JASMINE LIN AND PAUL ZAFER -- **FISCHOFF QUARTERFINALISTS**

GRADUATING SENIOR TRIBUTE!

*“Today is your day. You're off to Great Places!
You're off and away!” — [Dr. Seuss, Oh, The Places You'll Go!](#)*

SAMEER AGRAWAL - Curtis Institute of Music majoring in Violin Performance, studying with Midori

KANA AIHARA - Royal College of Music (London, UK), Bachelor of Music (Honours), Main specialism Violin, studying with Prof. Detlef Hahn

ZAK CHEN – University of Wisconsin - Madison, double majoring in Chemistry and Violin Performance, studying with David Perry

MA'AYAN KERTCHER - Oberlin College and Conservatory, majoring in Cello Performance and Environmental Studies, studying with Darrett Adkins

ANNA KNIGHT – Anna will continue to study piano with Marta Aznavoorian, as she makes college decisions.

PAVLO KYRYLIUK – Chicago College of Performing Arts at Roosevelt University, majoring in Violin Performance, studying with Almita Vamos

LUKE REAUME - University of Missouri, dual degree - BS in Business and BA in Music Performance/Double Bass, studying with Sue Stubbs

ELLEN ZHOU – Colburn Conservatory of Music, majoring in Violin Performance, studying with Martin Beaver

Violinist **Neal Eisfeldt**, student of Almita Vamos and Injoo Choi, has been awarded first place in the **Montgomery Symphony Orchestra's Concerto Competition** in Maryland. He has also been invited to play with the Montgomery Symphony Orchestra in June as a part of their Winner

and Juneteenth celebrations. Neal will be playing Henri Vieuxtemps Violin Concerto #5 in A minor with the Orchestra, and will be a recipient of the Scott Wood Scholarship. The MSO was founded in 1946-47. Since launching its youth concerto competition, the MSO has showcased several winning soloists, providing an opportunity to perform with them at their annual June concert.

Violinist **Lily Sullivan**, student of Grigory Kalinovsky, was awarded first-place in the **Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra Michael Ben and Illene Komisarow Maurer Young Musicians Competition!** The Young Artist Competition is a highlight of the IYO season as an opportunity to engage the talents of young musicians from around the state of Indiana. The competition features two divisions: the Senior Division, which includes ages fourteen through eighteen, and the Junior Division, which includes musicians through the age of thirteen. The Winners Concert, live with the ISO, will be at the Hilbert Circle Theater at noon on Wednesday, July 12, 2023.

The **Goya Piano Trio**, winners of the **28th Annual Rembrandt High School Young Artist Competition**, will perform **Sunday, May 7 in NCH, at 3pm** on the Rembrandt Chamber Players *Where the Sidewalk Ends*. Experience the future of chamber music with the 2023 Rembrandt Young Artists, The Goya Piano Trio. Ticket and program information: <https://mailchi.mp/.../where-the-sidewalk-ends-this-sunday>

MIC GALA BENEFIT - Sameer Agrawal, Pelios String Quartet, Svitanok Piano Trio, Duo piano students Ethan Zheng, Anna Knight, Zachary Guo, and Noah Kim, and the Academy cellists will perform at the Annual Gala Benefit at the Peninsula Hotel. The cellists open the program with the famous tango from Carlos Gardel, Por Una Cabeza, and end the night with a finale under the baton of Marin Alsop with a reprise of The Aria from Villa Lobos' Bachianas Brasileiras No. 5 with soprano Angela DeVenuto and faculty cellist Bianca d'Avila Do Prado.

APRIL 2023

The 18th Annual Saint Paul String Quartet Competition

With great confidence, poise, and precision performances, we are incredibly proud of ...

PELIOS STRING QUARTET (Ellen Zhou, Clark Snavelly, Tristan Zhu, and Amelia Zitoun)

1st Prize Gold Medal & Best Haydn

CALCIFER STRING QUARTET (Zak Chen, Kana Aihara, Leo Zupko, and Jan Vargas-Nedvetsky)

3rd Prize Bronze Medal and Haydn Honorable Mention

The Academy community is proud of the hard work these students put into a busy spring schedule with many extra rehearsals, coachings, and performances. We also salute their parents for helping to make this all happen, and we are grateful for their dedicated coaches—Rodolfo Vieira, Jasmine Lin, Paul Zafer, and of course, a few other special teachers along the way who deserve acknowledgement—Jim Setapen, Sang Mee Lee, and Linc Smelser.

Pianist **Noah Kim**, student of Marta Aznavoorian, will be performing solo piano concerts in collaboration with Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Chicago Sister Cities International on Tuesday, March 28 in Paris, France (at Rachmaninoff Conservatory) <https://conservatoire-sr.com/> and on Saturday, April 1 in Hamburg, Germany (at Hamburg City Hall).

BRAVO to the winners at the **Eleventh Annual A.N and Pearl G. Barnett Chamber Music Competition**, sponsored by the Merit School of Music.

The Barnett Competition awards a monetary prize to the top ensemble of the competition, as well as to the 1st and 2nd place winners within each division. The Barnett competition is open to musicians aged 18 and under with two divisions:

- Strings and Piano
- Winds, Brass, Percussion, and Voice

Goya Piano Trio, 1st Place Strings and Piano - Lily, Serge, and Noah Kim | Coached by Mark George and Claudia Lasareff-Mironoff

Last Sunday's win meant a **three-peat for Goya**, also winning the **Rembrandt Chamber Musicians 28th Annual Chamber Music Competition** and the String and Piano Category of the **Chicago National Chamber Competition** earlier this year.

Pelios String Quartet, 2nd Place Strings and Piano – Ellen, Clark, Tristan, and Amelia | Coached by Rodolfo Vieira

The Calcifer and Pelios String Quartets have advanced to the finals of the **18th Annual Saint Paul String Quartet Competition**, which will take place on Saturday April 22, 2023 (Junior Category). The Saint Paul String Quartet Competition's primary mission is to celebrate excellence in string quartet playing, foster an increased appreciation for the chamber music art form, and enhance the music culture in this country. Diversity and Inclusion are now at the forefront of the competition, and they have created required competition rounds for Women composers and Composers of Color.

The selection jury members were Andrew Jennings (Concord String Quartet), Mari Sato (Cavani String Quartet), John Largesse (Miró String Quartet), and Laura Sewell (Lark Quartet/Artaria String Quartet).

MARCH 2023

Cellist **Amelia Zitoun** won 1st place in Strings 2 division and **Lucy Wu** won 2nd place in the Strings 1 division of the **Schubert Club Student Scholarship Competition**. **Kana Aihara** was also a finalist in the Strings 2 division.

Violinist **Zak Chen** was selected as the **Bryant Scholarship Winner for Wisconsin Philharmonic Shining Stars Competition**. The name “Shining Stars” refers to students in the community who have exceptional musical talent. Zak was chosen unanimously by the judges to be the recipient of a \$1,500 Scholarship provided by Anthony and Andrea Bryant and the Wisconsin Philharmonic. The Wisconsin Philharmonic offers scholarships to middle and high school students who reside in Waukesha County. Auditions are held annually in the Spring. Scholarship winners are required to perform in the Shining Stars Recital also held in the Spring where students perform for an admiring audience and are awarded their scholarship funds. <https://www.wisphil.org/shining-stars-competition/>

Zak will perform on Tuesday, April 18, at 6:30 p.m. at St. Luke's Lutheran Church in Waukesha in the Shining Stars Recital.

Bravo to Academy cellist **Amelia Zitoun**, winner of the **2023 Final Forte, the Final Round of the Bolz Young Artist Competition**. MIC is incredibly proud of Amelia and Academy cellist **Lucy Wu** (Honorable Mention), two of the four finalists who took the stage on March 8 to perform with the Madison Symphony Orchestra. Amelia studies with MIC affiliated faculty member Hans Jensen and Lucy is student of Stefan Kartman. The four finalists were chosen from eight competitors at the Bolz Young Artist Competition Semi-Finals for the opportunity to compete in The Final Forte. The Bolz 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. Each winner receives a \$2000 scholarship and the Marian Bolz Prize for Distinguished Musical Achievement or the Steenbock Youth Music Award.

Amelia: "Both of my parents are musicians. My life is basically music. I listen to it all the time. I'm always thinking about it. It's my focus, it's my goal."

<https://pbswisconsin.org/article/meet-the-2023-final-forte-musicians/>

And if the Final Forte is not enough, **Amelia has been selected as a semi-finalist in the 48th Annual Stulberg Competition** in May. Twelve semifinalists will compete in Kalamazoo, Michigan on Friday, May 19 and Saturday, May 20, 2023, before a panel of judges and an audience. Semifinalists will perform a selection from a required list of Bach and a movement(s) from a standard concerto. Bringing in students from all around the globe, the Stulberg International String Competition is a great way for gifted artists under the age of twenty to participate in an internationally recognized competition.

Judges include violinist Benjamin Beilman, former Almita and Roland MIC student, class of 2006.

<https://www.stulberg.org/wp-content/uploads/Stulberg-Teacher-Packet-2022-23.pdf>

Congratulations to piano student **Ethan Cheng**, awarded **First Place Winner for the American Protégé Concerto Competition**, playing the Grieg Piano Concerto. Ethan will be performing at Carnegie Hall this December. The American Protégé International Concerto Competition is

open to all instruments, including strings, piano, voice and winds. Students in the competition get the opportunity to perform in Isaac Stern Auditorium, Zankel Hall and Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall in New York City. This year competitive applicants from 67 countries submitted videos. <https://americanprotege.com/>

50TH Anniversary Fischhoff National Chamber Music Association - Three groups advance to the quarterfinal round!

THE PELIOS STRING QUARTET AND COACH RODOLFO VIEIRA, CALCIFER STRING QUARTET AND COACHES JASMINE LIN AND PAUL ZAFER, and LUMINOS PIANO TRIO AND COACHES SARAH PLUM AND SUNG HOON MO --- WE SALUTE YOUR HARD WORK AND DETERMINATION! YOU ARE ON THE ROAD TO SOUTH BEND IN MAY!

Lily Sullivan, student of Grigory Kalinovsky, has won First Prize in the Grand Prize Virtuoso Brussels and London International Competition. The International Music Competition Salzburg "Grand Prize Virtuoso" is open to all nationalities and ages for: strings, piano, wind, vocal and chamber music disciplines. A selected group of winners will receive an invitation to debut at the Solitär Mozarteum in Salzburg (Austria) the birthplace of the 18th-century composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Lily has decided to decline the concert opportunities in Europe. <https://www.grandprizevirtuosointernationalmusiccompetition.com/>

Lily has also passed through the preliminary round of the Arthur Grumiaux International Competition. The "Arthur Grumiaux International Violin Competition" is a competition open to violinists of any nationality and organized by the Arthur Grumiaux Foundation. The 15th edition will take place from April 11 till April 16, 2023, in Brussels, Belgium at the Royal Conservatory of Brussels (KCB). <https://www.concoursgrumiaux.be/en/competition>

Academy piano student **Noah Kim**, winner of the 2022 Crain-Maling Foundation CSO Young Artists Competition, will be performing with the CSO under the baton of [Vinay Parameswaran](#) on May 3 and 4. It would be wonderful to get a group of students, parents, faculty, and staff to attend the

Youth Concert with his teacher Marta Aznavoorian --to cheer him on! There is a 10:15am and noon performance on each day. We are thinking about the Wednesday concert at 10:15! Ticket information can be found at: <https://cso.org/performances/22-23/school/school-youth-concerts/>

FEBRUARY 2023

With a moving and powerful performance of Mendelssohn's Piano Trio No. 2 in C minor, Op. 66, first movement, the **Goya Piano Trio (Lily Sullivan, violin, Serge Kalinovsky, cello, and Noah Kim, piano)** students from the Music Institute of Chicago Academy, won first place yesterday at the **Rembrandt Chamber Musicians 28th Annual Chamber Music Competition** in North Park's University's Anderson Chapel. The group, coached by MIC President Mark George and Academy faculty member Claudia Lasareff-Mironoff, has been together since September. Lily and Serge travel to the Academy each Saturday from Bloomington, IN.

Rembrandt founded its highly acclaimed Annual High School Chamber Music Competition in 1995. Winning ensembles receive cash prizes, coaching sessions from Rembrandt musicians, performance opportunities, and participate in educational outreach projects for Chicago-area schools.

The **West Suburban Symphony Society** is pleased to announce violinist **Tristan Zhu** the winner of the 74th Annual West Suburban Symphony Solo Competition for string, woodwind, and brass. Tristan will perform the Beethoven Violin Concerto in D Major with the symphony on May 7th at Hinsdale Central High School. Each year since its founding, the symphony has provided an opportunity for high-school musicians to compete to perform a solo work with orchestra.

JANUARY 2023

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, In 2006, cello and flute were added to the roster of instruments. A partnership was formed in 2007 with the Oistrakh Symphony of

Chicago under the direction of Mina Zikri. In 2008, the Festival was opened to students outside of the Community Music Division, and 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.

MIC Community Music School and Academy students have had great success through the years in the DePaul competition. A list of 2023 Academy winners are listed below. Watch for all MIC winners on social media and on the MIC website.

Students in piano, violin, viola, cello, flute, clarinet, oboe, bassoon, and saxophone in 12th grade or younger competed in the DePaul Concerto Festival for Young Performers. Winners perform a movement of a concerto with the [Oistrakh Symphony of Chicago](https://music.depaul.edu/cmd/news-and-events/Pages/competitions.aspx). <https://music.depaul.edu/cmd/news-and-events/Pages/competitions.aspx>

Cello Winner (Serge was one of two winners in the cello division)
Serge Kalinovsky - Bruch, M.: Kol Nidrei, Op. 47 (student of Susan Moses)

Honorable Mention

Jan Vargas Nedvetsky - Haydn, F. J.: Concerto in C Major, Hob. VIIb:1 - Mvt. 1 (student Hans Jensen)

Lucy Wu - Elgar, E.: Concerto in E Minor, Op. 85 - Mvt. 4 (student of Stefan Kartman)

Violin Winners

Emily Chen – Mozart, W. A.: Concerto in G Major, K. 216 – Mvt. 1 (student of Injoo Choi and Almita Vamos)

Tristan Zhu - Mendelssohn, F.: Concerto in E Minor, Op. 64 – Mvt. 3 (student of Almita Vamos)

Honorable Mention with Distinction

Clark Snavely - Mendelssohn, F.: Concerto in E Minor, Op. 64 – Mvt. 3 (student of Almita Vamos)

Honorable Mention

Julia Perekhozhuk - Wieniawski, H.: Concerto No. 2 in D Minor, Op. 22 – Mvt. 1 (student of Sang Mee Lee)

Leo Zupko - Bruch, M.: Concerto No. 1 in G Minor, Op. 26 - Mvt. 2 (student of Sang Mee Lee)

More good news... *Serge* is also one of the semifinalists for the New Music School International Concerto Competition in Chicago (semifinals and finals are with orchestra). The semifinals are on Saturday, Jan. 21st. Stay tuned for more on this special event.

Arthur D. Montzka Young Artist Competition, Northern Illinois

Congratulations to violinist **Neal Eisfeldt**, awarded Runner-Up in the **Kishwaukee Symphony Orchestra's Arthur D. Montzka Young Artists Concerto Competition**. Arthur Dale Montzka was the conductor of the Kishwaukee Symphony Orchestra for more than 20 years. During that time, the group expanded from a handful of amateur music-makers, practicing in church basements and high-school band rooms, to a full orchestra of more than 60 players performing a series of concerts for the public each year.

Mr. Montzka especially enjoyed working with young people, and he encouraged his private- and public-school students to join the orchestra. Knowing that there were many exceptionally talented young players in the area, he established the Kishwaukee Symphony Orchestra Concerto Competition. Since its inception in 1985-86, with the first concerto-competition winner announced in the 1986-87 season, more than 150 musicians have auditioned to play with the orchestra and four dozen have been selected for that opportunity. Many of the concerto winners have gone on to prestigious schools of music and successful artistic careers.

Previous Academy Winners

- 2022 – [Esme Arias-Kim](#), playing Korngold: Violin Concerto in D Major, Op. 35
- 2020 – [Isabella Brown](#), playing Beethoven: Violin Concert in D Major, Op. 61
- 2019 – [John Heo](#), playing Walton: Concerto in B minor for Violin and Orchestra
- 2017 – [Maya Anjali Buchanan](#), playing Korngold: Violin Concerto in D Major, Op. 35
- 2016 – Karisa Chiu, playing Sibelius: Violin Concerto in D Minor, Op. 47
- 2015 – Nathan Mo, playing Shostakovich: Cello Concerto No. 1 in E-flat Major, Op. 107
- 2013 – Kelly Talim, playing Brahms: Concerto for Violin, Op. 77

- 2012 – Claire Bourg, playing Khachaturian: Concerto for Violin and Orchestra
- 2011 – Laura Park, playing Prokofiev: Concerto for Violin in G Minor, Op.63.
- 2010 – Ryan Murphy, playing Sibelius: Concerto for Violin in D Minor, Op. 47
- 2008 – Mindy Park, playing Shostakovich: Concerto No. 1 for Cello in E-flat Major, Op. 107
- 2008 – Vincent Meklis, playing Ravel: Tzigane for Violin
- 2007 – Benjamin Lash, playing Hindemith: Concerto for Cello, 1940, 1st movement

Bolz Young Artist Competition, Madison Symphony Orchestra, Madison, WI

<https://madisonsymphony.org/education-community/education-programs/young-artist-competitions/bolz-young-artist-competition/>

Update! Congratulations to cellists Amelia Zitoun, student of Hans Jensen, and Lucy Wu, student of Stefan Kartman, both ADVANCING TO THE FINAL FORTE!!

Amelia played the Barber Concerto and Lucy performed the Elgar Concerto.

Amelia and Lucy have advanced to the semifinal round of the competition where eight semifinalists were chosen from over 30 contestants. **They return to Madison tonight to play for a new panel of judges, when four finalists will be chosen for the FINAL FORTE!**

Hats off to the 2022 Final Four: Ellen Zhou (1st), Clark Snavelly (2nd) and Zak Chen (runner up).

Three rounds of the competition:

- Preliminary Round: Saturday, January 7 and/or Sunday, January 8, 2023
- Semi-Final Round: Friday, January 13, 2023 (evening)
- Final Round (The Final Forte): Wednesday, March 8, 2023, at Overture Center for the Arts

About 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 competition is open to Wisconsin residents in grades 9-12. The four semi-finalists compete in [The Final Forte](#), which will be broadcast on PBS Wisconsin and Wisconsin Public Radio. Each winner receives a \$2000 scholarship and the Marian Bolz Prize for Distinguished Musical Achievement or the Steenbock Youth Music Award. Up to two Honorable Mention scholarships of \$1000 may also be awarded.

Violinist Tristan Zhu was named the winner of the 69th Annual DuPage Symphony Orchestra | Young Artists Audition. The DSO strives to encourage serious study and musical excellence among young musicians through its annual Young Artists Auditions. The audition experience is designed to be both educational and rewarding for the participants. Tristan will receive a cash award of \$500 and the opportunity to appear as a soloist performing for 10-15 minutes with the DuPage Symphony Orchestra during the 2:00 PM & 4:00 PM "Our Talented Youth" concerts on Sunday, March 19, 2023.

The Crain-Maling Foundation CSO Young Artists Competition

<https://cso.org/education-community/musician-training/young-artists-competition/learn-about-young-artists-competition/>

The Crain-Maling Foundation CSO Young Artists Competition is a prestigious concerto competition for Illinois' top young soloists. Applicants audition live at Symphony Center for a distinguished panel of judges. Following a preliminary round, four finalists are selected to perform in the final round in Orchestra Hall, accompanied by the Civic Orchestra of Chicago. The winner is featured on the following season as soloist with members of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra as part of CSO School and Family Concerts.

This year's competition was open to strings. The final event is hosted by WFMT's Robbie Ellis next Saturday, January 21, 2pm. Reserve tickets on the CSO website -general admission.

2023 Young Artists Competition

- **FINALISTS**

- Esme Arias-Kim, violin (Academy alum) - WINNER

- Jan Vargas-Nedvetsky, cello, Alternate Winner
- **HONORABLE MENTIONS**
 - Emily Chen, violin
 - Lauren Kim, violin
- **2022** - 1st Noah Kim, piano
- **2020** - 1st Isabella Brown, violin
 - 1st Alternate Winner - Esme Arias-Kim, violin
 - Finalist - Mia Wimbiscus, cello
- **2018** - 1st Yerin Yang, piano
- **2017** - 1st Maya Anjali Buchanan, violin
 - 1st Alternate Winner Joshua Brown, violin
 - Finalist - Thompson Wang, violin
 - HM - Isabella Brown, violin
- **2015** - Finalist, David Hou, piano
- **2014** - 1st Gallia Kastner, violin
- **2012** - 1st Kyle Jannak-Huang, piano
- **2011** - 1st Johannes Gray, cello
- **2009** – 1st Adam Kim, piano
- **2008** – 1st Gabriel Cabezas, cello

26th Annual Sphinx Competition, Detroit, MI

<https://www.sphinxmusic.org/sphinx-competition>

2023 Junior Division Semi-Finalist - Jan Nedvetsky and Senior Division 2nd place winner--Alexandra Switala

The Sphinx Competition, held every year in Detroit (MI), is a national competition offering young Black and Latinx classical string players a chance to compete under the guidance of an internationally renowned panel of judges and to perform with and receive mentorship from established professional musicians. Cheer on Jan, January 25-28, 2023.

Exceptional young musicians from all corners of the country, competed in **Midwest Young Artists Conservatory's Annual Walgreens National Concerto Competition** at the end of December. Students from elementary through twelfth grades competed for more than \$20,000 in scholarships and

cash prizes in the MYAC Division and the Open Division, which were both further divided into the Junior Level (up to 8th grade) & Senior Level (grades 9-12). *Watch for all MIC winners information posted to social media and the MIC website.*

Congratulations to Clark and Neal, both string winners in their category, and to the following Academy students:

- **SENIOR OPEN DIVISION**

- Strings Winner: Clark Snavely, 17, violin student of Almita Vamos
- Simon Updegraff, 15, cello student of Avi Friedlander, Early Music Honorable Mention
- Jan Vargas Nedvetsky, 16, cello student of Hans Jensen, Early Music Honorable Mention
- Ethan Zheng, 16, piano student of Marta Aznavoorian, Piano Honorable Mention

- **JUNIOR OPEN DIVISION**

- Strings Winner: Neal Eisfeldt, 13, violin student of Almita Vamos and Injoo Choi

IMEA ALL-STATE FESTIVAL - Congratulations to piano students **Noah Kim** and **Ethan Zheng**, and cellist **Simon Updegraff** all attending the (Illinois Music Educators Assn. (IMEA) All-State Festival in Peoria at the end of the month. Simon, and our talented pianists (Noah, violin) and (Ethan, clarinet) in the honors orchestra.

Clark Snavely was the first runner up in the **Concord Chamber Orchestra Competition** on Saturday, December 10th at Nicolet High School in Glendale, WI. The competition offered scholarship prize money and a performance opportunity.

DECEMBER 2022

Congratulations to cellist **Jan Vargas-Nedvetsky**, a finalist in the 2023 CSO Young Artists Competition, and to violinists Lauren Kim and Emily Chen, both Honorable Mention winners. Violinist Aiden Yu in the Community Music School has also been named a finalist. <https://cso.org/education->

[community/musician-training/young-artists-competition/learn-about-young-artists-competition/](#)

The Crain-Maling Foundation CSO Young Artists Competition is a prestigious concerto competition for Illinois' top young soloists. Applicants audition live at Symphony Center for a distinguished panel of judges. Following a preliminary round, four finalists are selected to perform in the final round in Orchestra Hall, accompanied by the Civic Orchestra of Chicago. The winner is featured on the following season as soloist with members of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra as part of CSO School and Family Concerts.

- **FINALISTS**

- Esme Arias-Kim, violin (former MIC Academy student)
- Henry Auxenfans, violin
- *Jan Vargas-Nedvetsky, cello (MIC Academy)*
- Aiden Yu, violin (MIC Community Music School)

- **HONORABLE MENTION**

- *Emily Chen, violin (MIC Academy)*
- Bianca Ciubancan, violin
- Kaylee Kim, violin
- *Lauren Kim, violin (MIC Academy)*
- Maurice Neuman, cello
- Bea Sjostrom, violin
- Joshua Wolford, violin

Congratulations to pianist **Matthew Hahn**, student of Christiana Tio and Winston Choi, who's program was released on **From the Top** on **December 12**. Matthew performs Ballade No. 2 in F major, Op.38 by Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849). <https://fromthetop.org/>

From the Top is America's largest national platform celebrating young classically trained musicians. Through NPR broadcasts and digital content, and the Learning and Media Lab Fellowship, From the Top empowers young musicians to use their music and stories to engage and inspire audiences of all ages.

How to Listen: Episode (**SHOW 423**) will air nationally during the week of Dec. 12

Listen on our website

beginning 12/12/22: <https://fromthetop.org/show/show-423/>

Daily Joy

In addition, the Daily Joy series reaches thousands of fans who love to see videos of FTT performers, and Matthew's recording will be featured on the series on 12/13/22. <https://www.daily-joy.org/video/15-year-old-plays-beautiful-ballade/>

Cellist **Jan Vargas-Nedvetsky**, student of Hans Jensen, has been selected as a Junior Division Semi-finalist in the [Sphinx Competition 2023](#), which will take place in Detroit, Mich. January 26-28, 2023. The Sphinx Competition is a national competition in the U.S. offering young Black and Latinx classical string players a chance to compete under the guidance of an internationally renowned panel of judges and to perform with and receive mentorship from established professional musicians. Finalists in both divisions have the opportunity to perform with the Sphinx Symphony Orchestra and compete for \$100,000 in prizes, including the top Robert F. Smith Prize. Each semi-finalist is introduced in a video: <https://youtu.be/5YrCMoJMm5g>

NOVEMBER 2022

Senior violinist and 2022 Final Forte Winner, **Ellen Zhou**, was the guest musician on The Midday last week, a daily feature on Wisconsin Public Radio. Tune in for some beautiful Sibelius, Mozart, and Bach, and Ellen's insightful interview. Congratulations, Ellen!

<https://www.wpr.org/listen/2032811>

Congratulations across the globe to **Lily Sullivan** (and teacher Grigory Kalinovsky), who placed third in the International LOUIS SPOHR Competition for Young Violinists. This year, the competition received 113 applications across three age categories — of those, 60 candidates from 20 countries worldwide performed in Weimar for the event. Students in the final round performed the Bruch Violin Concerto No. 1, G minor op. 26, with the Orchestra of the University of Music FRANZ LISZT Weimar, with conductor Nicolás Pasquet. The competition is named for Louis Spohr (1784-1859), who

was a masterful violinist, conductor, pedagogue, music festival organizer, and composer of almost 300 works including violin concertos, symphonies, string quartets, and operas.

- 1st Prize: Anton Carus - USA
- 2nd Prize: Elza Siliņa - Latvia
- 3rd Prize: Lily Sullivan – USA

*Congratulations too, to **Emily Chen**, student of Almita Vamos and Injoo Choi, who was also accepted and participated in the international competition in Germany.*

Sejong Competition - 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. Through this competition we hope to increase the awareness and understanding of Korea's cultural heritage amongst the younger generations growing up in the United States to promote harmony among people of various ethnic backgrounds and bridge Asian and Western cultures. Visit the MIC website to see the full list of MIC winners.

- Violin Junior Division Winner & Best Interpretation of a Korean Piece – **Neal Eisfeldt**, student of Almita Vamos and Injoo Choi
- Violin Senior Division – 3rd place – **Lauren Kim**, student of Almita Vamos and Injoo Choi
- Piano Senior Division Best Interpretation of a Korean Piece – **Ethan Zheng**, student of Marta Aznavoorian

To watch the winning performances

online: <http://www.sejongsociety.org/videos/index2022.htm>

Kudos to **Serge Kalinovsky**, cellist in the Heifetz Ensemble in Residence. As the Heifetz Institute prepares for the next Heifetz Hear & Now Concert on Nov. 6, at Mary Baldwin University's Francis Auditorium in Staunton, Virginia, they are showcasing the exceptional young musicians of the Heifetz Ensemble in Residence, who will perform alongside legendary violinist Ani Kavafian. Serge will play Schumann Romances, some of the Dohnányi String Trio with other

students, and the complete Dvorak Piano Quintet with Ani Kavafian. Serge is a member of the Heifetz Ensemble in Residence with violinist Carlos Martinez Arroyo and violist Joseph Skerik. Serge studies with Susan Moses.

<https://heifetzinstitute.org/event/heifetz-hear-now-ani-kavafian/>

Here is Academy cellist Serge Kalinovsky, performing "Prayer," the first movement of composer Ernest Bloch's triptych "From Jewish Life," at the 2022 Heifetz Festival of Concerts. https://fb.watch/gypMx_aXnq/

SEPTEMBER 2022

Cellist Jan Vargas-Nedvetsky, student of Hans Jorgen Jensen, will perform the Haydn Cello Concerto in D Major with Oistrakh Symphony Orchestra conducted by Maestro Mina Zikri, at the Holtschneider Performance Center of DePaul University on Sept. 18, 2022.

Please see attached information. https://events.depaul.edu/event/oistrakh_symphony_of_chicago_fall_concert#.YxafSPdOm_Y

Jan has been accepted into the masterclasses program at the Kronberg Academy in Kronberg, Germany, September 25th until October 3rd. Kronberg Academy hosts cello masterclasses every two or three years, and it is an opportunity to meet the best of the world cello pedagogues as well as young cellists of ages up to 30 years of age. This is a particularly momentous year, as the masterclass schedule was interrupted by Covid, and because this event will coincide with the opening of Pablo Casals Concert Hall at Kronberg, where leading cellists will perform a series of concerts and masterclasses this year. Jan will be playing for Jans Peter Mainz, a professor at the Berlin University of the Arts and a renowned soloist.

Hats off to **violinist Neal Eisfeldt**, student of Almita Vamos, who had a busy end of summer! Neal composed his first solo violin piece in collaboration with "Chicago, From Scratch", a composition project with the Civic Orchestra of Chicago. He called it "Ukrainian Dream and Cradle". Over the 8-week course of the program students learned about extended composition techniques,

dove into an overview of non-traditional notational styles, and ultimately wrote a solo or duo piece of their own. Neal completed the studio recording of his piece in August, and will share the link once available.

Neal auditioned for NPR's From the Top (FTT) program and has been selected as a Fellow. As a 2022-23 Fellow, Neal will record a performance and an interview on Sept 14 in Chicago's WFMT studio, with host Peter Duggan - to be featured on the NPR radio show (date TBD). A critical element of being a FTT fellow is participating in the FTT Learning and Media Lab — a 7-part series of programs that includes workshops, community engagement, media content creation sessions, and learning events such as The Artist's Life.

SUMMER 2022

Violinists **Esme Arias-Kim** and **Sameer Agrawal** competed at the Cooper International Competition earlier this month. The Thomas & Evon Cooper International Competition is a piano or violin competition held annually at the Oberlin College in Oberlin, Ohio. Both students performed their programs for grateful audiences at The Merion and Westminster Place, local senior communities, before they headed to OH. Competing with outstanding musicians from across the globe, Sameer, advanced to the final round of the competition, and claimed Second Prize. Bravo, Sameer! Sameer studies with Sang Mee Lee and is also a member of CMPI.

Piano student **Zachary Guo** wrote a piece performed on July 16 by Ensemble Dal Niente as a part of a DePaul summer program. Congratulations, Zach! <https://www.dalniente.com/dal-niente-depaul-summer-program-1>

In addition, Zach created The Chicago Youth Contemporary Ensemble, a student-led group of musicians dedicated to performing lesser-known and played music, with a focus on works written in the 20th and 21st century. Rehearsals began this week at Deerfield High School. Please contact Zach if you want more information.

