

Class of 2023/2024 Accolades

Violinist **Clark Snavely** toured with the Milwaukee Youth Symphony Orchestra. He will be featured as soloist, and will perform Sarasate's *Carmen Fantasy* at the Royal Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, Queen Elizabeth Hall in Antwerp, and the Parkzaal Muis Sacrum in Arnhem. There is a bon voyage performance at the Sharon Lynne Wilson on Saturday, July 8th. Clark will be the featured soloist with the Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra on July 5th as part of 40th anniversary Concerts on the Square series. The audience could exceed 50,000 people that day. He will perform the first movement of Prokofiev's second violin concerto. (event details: <https://wcoconcerts.org/events/contrastes>)

Academy pianist **Noah Kim** won 1st prize and Young Jury Award at the Arthur Fraser International Piano competition in South Carolina. Noah, a student of Marta Aznavoorian's, will perform a complete concerto with the South Carolina Philharmonic in Masterworks concert series during the 2024/2025 season. For one week every June, the Southeastern Piano Festival transforms the University of South Carolina School of Music and the city of Columbia into a major cultural destination that draws in audiences and young piano talent from across the United States. Twenty of some of the best most accomplished pre-college pianists on the piano scene today take part in a rigorous program that includes daily lessons with University of South Carolina piano faculty, master classes with guest artists and up to five hours of practice a day. The week's events culminate with the Arthur Fraser International Piano Competition, adjudicated by a distinguished panel of judges. Past Academy winners include David Hou, Yerin Yang, and Sean Yeh.

<http://southeasternpianofestival.com/study/competition/winners/2023/>

- Cellist **Serge Kalinovsky** and violinist **Clark Snavely** split 3rd prize in the senior category of the Ronald Sachs International String Competition. Violinist **Lily Sullivan** split 3rd prize in the junior category of the competition.
- Cellist **Simon Updegraff** and former Academy violinist **Leo Zupko**, winners of the Chicago Chamber Music Concerto Competition, soloed at Northeastern Illinois University on October 18, 2023, under the baton of conductor Ben Firer and the NEIU Orchestra.
- Cellist **Jan Vargas Nedvetsky** performed at the Annual Hope for Miracles Gala and fundraiser in Lake Placid, New York. Hope for Miracles is a nonprofit organization bringing hope to families of children with Neuroblastoma and other childhood cancers, by funding research for life saving trials and cures. You can read more at <https://www.hopeformiracles.org/>
- Pianist **Zachary Guo** was selected as the winner of the Music Teachers National Association (MTNA) Senior Piano Division for the state of Illinois. Zachary competed in the regional divisions in March of 2024. Zachary is a student of Matt Hagle.

- YoungArts Winners - Founded in 1981, YoungArts identifies exceptional young artists, amplifies their potential, and invests in their lifelong creative freedom. Every year thousands of performing, visual and literary artists age 15-18 apply to YoungArts through our national competition. Award winners with distinction attend National YoungArts Week to collaborate with peers and develop their crafts with internationally recognized leaders in their fields. Award winners with distinction in their senior year are further eligible for nomination as a U.S. Presidential Scholar in the Arts—one of the nation’s highest honors for high school students. This year, the following academy students were YoungArts winners: **Bianca Ciubancan, Zachary Guo, Matthew Hahn, Noah Kim, and Xavier Miyazaki.**

The YoungArts Award with Distinction 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. Winners at this level are invited to participate in National YoungArts Week and are also considered for nomination to the U.S. Presidential Scholars Program. This year, academy student **Jan Vargas-Nedvetsky** was a winner of this prestigious honor.

- Cellist **Jan Vargas Nedvetsky**, student of Hans Jensen, was selected as a Junior Division Semi-finalist in the 27th annual Sphinx Competition. The Sphinx Competition is a national competition held in Detroit, Michigan, 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.
- **Neena Agrawal** is one of six finalists for the American Viola Society Competition, Junior Division. She will be going to the Colburn School in Los Angeles, California in June to compete as part of the American Viola Society Conference, which is held in conjunction with the Primrose Competition. Neena studies viola with Sang Mee Lee.
- **Clark Snavelly**, student of Almita Vamos, won second place in International Young Artist Concerto Competition with his performance of Tchaikovsky’s Violin Concerto in D Major. Violinist **Sasha Varchenko**, student of Grigory Kalinovsky, was a semifinalist and cellist **Serge Kalinovsky**, a student of Susan Moses, received an honorable mention. The International Young Artist Concerto Competition showcases extraordinary young talents from around the globe, offering an opportunity for young musicians aged 18 and under to perform as soloists alongside a professional orchestra in the semifinal and final rounds.
- At the invitation of performing artist Vadim Gluzman, violinist **Lily Sullivan** performed the first movement of the Brahms Concerto for Emmy Award-winning violinist Robert McDuffie at the North Shore Chamber Music Festival Onstage/Offstage Series in December. Lily is a student of Grigory Kalinovsky.
- Cellist **Lucy Wu** tied for first place in the Strings 9th Edition of the ENKOR International Competition. ENKOR provides young musicians with the unique opportunity to be heard and recognized by hundreds of professionals and influential people in the music industry and has a Jury Board consisting of 500+ members from 70+ countries on 6 continents.

- The Elysian Quartet, made up of **Nolan Chang, Kai Isoke Ali-Landing, Vivian Van de Sype-Cucu, Katarina Kenney**, and coach Claudia Lasareff-Mironoff received an Honorable Mention at the 2024 Rembrandt High School Chamber Music Competition.
- Cellist **Jan Vargas Nedvetsky** was named winner in The Central Oregon Symphony Association Young Artist Competition. A celebration of exceptional talent and dedication to musical excellence, the competition attracted submissions from young musicians nationwide. Notably, winners were selected based on their outstanding performances and promise in the world of classical music. Each winner will have an opportunity to perform on the Central Oregon Symphony's Winter Concert Series, Bend Senior High School on February 24th and 25th, 2024. This year's winners were selected by a panel of judges, evaluating performances that resonated with passion, technical skill, and artistic interpretation. The COSA Young Artist Competition not only provides a platform for emerging talent but also offers monetary awards to support the winners' musical journeys. The first-place recipient will receive \$1250, the second place will receive \$1000, and the third-place winner receives \$750.
- In February, cellist **Jan Vargas Nedvetsky** and violinist **Bianca Ciubancan** were named finalists in “The President’s Own” United States Marine Band, in conjunction with the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation, Concerto Competition for High School Musicians. The event was held in Washington DC. Seven exceptional high school musicians from across America convened at John Philip Sousa Band Hall to compete in the final round. The winner received a \$2,500 scholarship courtesy of the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation and a performance with the Marine Band. This was quite an honor for our Academy students to be named finalists in this prestigious competition.
- Cellist **Lucy Wu**, student of Stefan Kartman, has advanced to the finals of the Schubert Competition at Macalester College, St. Paul, MN, on Sunday, March 10. The Bruce P. Carlson Student Scholarship Competition, held each spring, awards a total of over \$70,000 annually to young musicians to be used for further musical education. The competition began in 1922, celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Schubert Club. It started modestly with three winners representing the categories of voice, violin, and piano. The competition has since grown to fifteen different categories with three cash prizes awarded for each category to be used for further musical education. The winners of each category are also invited to perform in the annual Winners Recital, Musicians on the Rise.
- 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 grade 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). Cellist **Amelia Zitoun** was the overall Open Division grand winner. Violinist **Clark Snavely** was a winner in the Senior Division in the Early Music category and received an honorable mention in the Strings Category of the Senior Division. Cellist **Lucy Wu** also received an honorable mention in the Strings Category of the Senior Division.

- Academy students competed in the DePaul Concerto Festival. Since 2003, the DePaul Concerto Festival has given students from the Midwest the opportunity to compete and receive performance evaluations from well renowned judges. Winners had the opportunity to perform a movement of a concerto with the Oistrakh Symphony of Chicago in March of 2024. Cellist **Lucy Wu** and violinist **Clark Snavely** were winners in their instrument categories, and violinist Kai Isoke Ali-Landing received an honorable mention.
- The MYA Chicago Chamber Music competition is an annual event designed to provide an educational and competitive experience for young chamber ensembles. The competition is open to chamber ensembles in 12th grade and younger and consists of two divisions (Open and MYAC). The competition is open to all instruments and is divided into the following two instrument categories: Strings and Piano and All Other Instruments (brass, percussion, voice, winds). 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. Quartet Meraviglia, made up of academy students **Elle Cho (violin), Lauren Kim (violin), Emily Chen (viola), and Lucy Wu (cello)**, won the Overall Open Division and were the winners of the Strings and Piano Category.
- Cellist **Lucy Wu** is a finalist in The Audrey G. Baird Stars of Tomorrow competition. This competition highlights the great musical talent of teens across the state of Wisconsin. Three student finalists will appear as featured soloists with the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, along with an exciting performance featuring musicians of the MSO side-by-side with semi-finalists for a public performance on Tuesday, April 30, 7:30pm.
- In February, Quartet Meraviglia had the opportunity to perform at the Pilgram Chamber Players Rising Stars concert in Highland Park. Each year, Pilgrim dedicates one concert to showcasing the talents of advanced high school musicians. It's a free event, open to the community, and features exceptional young soloists and chamber ensembles, all 18 years old and younger. Quartet Meraviglia is made up of **violinist Elle Cho, violinist Lauren Kim, violist Emily Chen, cellist Lucy Wu**, and coach Rodolfo Vieira.
- Cellist **Amelia Zitoun**, student of Hans Jensen, advanced to the finals of the 2024 Concert Artists Guild Competition. Winners receive management and performance opportunities and join a network of rising young artists who are ready to launch their careers internationally. Amelia performed in the finals concert in New York City on May 10. MIC alumna Hannah White, former student of Hye-Sun Lee and Almita Vamos, was also a semifinalist in the competition this year.

Amelia, also a semi-finalist in the prestigious Irving M. Klein International String Competition, won the silver medal in San Francisco in June. Celebrating 39 years of nurturing and championing the world's finest young string players, the event takes place on June 1-2 at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. Amelia was the 2023 first place winner of the Stulberg International String Competition.

Academy former winners:

- 2021 – Ria Honda, 4th, violin
- 2019 - James Baik, 1st place, cello

- 2018 - Julian Ree, 2nd, violin
 - 2017 – Karisa Chiu, 4th, violin
 - 2015 – Erika Gray, 4th, viola
 - 2012 – Emma Steele, 2nd violin, Alexandra Switala, 3rd violin
 - 2011 – Mindy Park, cello, 4th
- Pianist **Zachary Guo** performed with his school orchestra in Edinburgh, Glasgow, and London at the end of March. While playing viola for most of the concerts, Zach also performed organ solos at three churches.
- Cellist **Katarina Kenney** was one of four winners of the Madison Symphony Orchestra’s 2024 Bolz Young Artist Competition, and went on to win the Final Forte, receiving a scholarship, and the Marian Bolz Prize for Distinguished Musical Achievement. The performance was broadcast live on PBS Wisconsin and Wisconsin Public Radio. As the first-place winner, Katarina also had the opportunity to perform on Madison Symphony Orchestra’s Spring Young People’s Concert. PBS Wisconsin came to the Academy to film Katarina in chamber music and orchestra rehearsals as a part of a feature on the finalists. Katarina is a student of Cornelia Watkins.
- Seraphim Quartet, **Clark Snavely (violin), Sasha Varchenko (violin), Tristan Zhu (violin), and Serge Kalinovsky (cello)**, won 1st Place and Grand Prize at the Twelfth Annual A.N. and Pearl G. Barnett Chamber Music Competition, Sunday, March 17, 2024. This regional competition offers cash prizes and an opportunity for chamber ensembles in grade 12 and under to compete. Quartet Meraviglia, **Elle Cho (violin), Lauren Kim (violin), Emily Chen (violin), and Lucy Wu (cello)** received an Honorable Mention. Seraphim Quartet is coached by Sang Mee Lee and Quartet Meraviglia is coached by Rodolfo Vieira.
- Quartet Meraviglia won the Silver Medal and Elysian Quartet won the Gold Medal in the finals of the St. Paul String Quartet Competition in St. Paul Minnesota on April 13, 2024. Founded in 2012, the St. Paul String Quartet Competition provides an educational opportunity for young musicians in Minnesota and surrounding states to hone their chamber music skills, perform, and compete for monetary prizes, scholarships, and musical gifts. Quartet Meraviglia, **violinist Elle Cho, violinist Lauren Kim, violist Emily Chen, cellist Lucy Wu**, and coach Rodolfo Vieira and the Elysian Quartet, **violinist Nolan Chang, violinist Kai Isoke Ali-Landing, violist Vivian Van de Sype-Cucu, cellist Katarina Kenney**, and coach Claudia Lasareff-Mironoff, prepared all spring for these top spots. *The Academy has won GOLD at St. Paul three years in a row.*
- **Jan Vargas Nedvetsky** was one of six cello fellows in the Music Academy of Lichtenstein. Jan received a full scholarship to study with Jens Peter Maintz, a Professor of Cello at the Berlin University of the Arts, one of the world’s leading cello pedagogues. Jan performed in masterclasses at the Academy and in a concert in Vaduz, capital of Liechtenstein.
- Violinist **Neena Agrawal** was chosen to be Principal Viola of the National Pathways Festival Orchestra, a program of Equity Arc. This program selects the top students from all US programs for underrepresented students in classical music and brings them together for a weekend to play

with a professional orchestra. Neena will be playing with the Nashville Symphony April 5-8, 2024. Neena is a student of Sang Mee Lee.

Cellist **Jan Vargas Nedvetsky** performed Variations on a Rococo Theme by Pyotr I. Tchaikovsky, at the Athenaeum Theater in Chicago. Performing on Serious Fun at the Symphony, under the baton of guest conductor Jeffrey T. Parthun, Sr., Jan performed Variations on a Rococo Theme as the winner of the 2024 Lakeview's Young Artist Concert Competition. The Lakeview Orchestra was founded in 2013 and is recognized as “Chicago’s premier non-professional orchestra” (Chicago Classical Review). First Place: Jan Vargas Nedvetsky, cello (performing Tchaikovsky's Variations on a Rococo Theme) Second Place: Clark Snavelly, violin (performing Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto)

Cellist **Simon Updegraff** performed at the One Composer One Community MIC Faculty & Student Showcase Concert featuring the music of composer Reena Esmail. He played the piece "Perhaps" for solo cello. At the concert, Dr. Esmail shared that she wrote the piece for her senior recital at Juilliard. She wrote it in conversation with her friend and fellow student, Heather McCalden, who is a filmmaker and author, and with whom she is still in close contact as an artist. She shared this as an example of how relationships that students form now can have a long-lasting and profound influence on their creative life.

Simon was also the soloist with the New Trier Symphony Orchestra on Thursday evening, playing the first and second movements of Edward Elgar's Cello Concerto. He was this year's winner of the New Trier High School concerto competition.

Violist **Neena Agrawal** also performed on the Reena Esmail student showcase concert with Voice Dept. Chair Barbara Martin. Neena performed Take What You Need while Ms. Martin performed the reflective vocals. Cellist Amelia Zitoun and the Callisto Trio (Noah, Lily, and Amelia) also performed for Ms. Esmail.

Violinists **Lily Sullivan and Sasha Varchenko**, both students of Grigory Kalinovsky, performed Shostakovich Symphony No. 4 with the Civic Orchestra in the Chicago Youth Music Festival. The Festival is an annual celebration of young people who are passionate about symphony orchestras. The 2024 Festival took place April 20-29 at Symphony Center. The Festival Orchestra was comprised of the Civic Orchestra of Chicago sitting side-by-side with Chicago's most advanced young musicians, led by world-renowned conductor, Giancarlo Guerrero. Youth from five partner organizations, Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestras, Merit School of Music, Music Institute of Chicago, Chicago Musical Pathways Initiative and The People’s Music School, will participated in the Festival. The symphony is a massive, sprawling work, for these young musicians.

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THE YEAR ENDS ON A HIGH NOTE! Five Academy chamber groups advanced to the live quarterfinal round in the Junior Strings Division of the 51st Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition. Known as one of the largest and most prestigious chamber music competitions in the world, Fischhoff offers winners cash prizes as well as performance opportunities and prestige.

The Quarterfinal round South Bend, Indiana, May 10. The following groups were accepted into the next round of the competition: **Callisto Trio***- Lily Sullivan (violin), Amelia Zitoun (cello), Noah Kim (piano) coached by Rodolfo Vieira & Marta Aznavoorian; **Elysian Quartet**- Nolan Chang (violin), Kai Isoke Ali-Landing (violin), Vivian Van de Sype-Cucu (viola), and Katarina Kenney (cello), coached by Claudia Lasareff-Mironoff; **Quartet Meraviglia**- Elle Cho (violin), Lauren Kim (violin), Emily Chen (violin), and Lucy Wu (cello), coached by Rodolfo Viera; **Seraphim Quartet**- Clark Snavelly (violin), Sasha Varchenko (violin), Tristan Zhu (violin), and Serge Kalinovsky (cello), coached by Sang Mee Lee; **Trioscuro**- Mingshi Xia (violin), Simon Updegraff (cello), and Ethan Zheng (piano), coached by Elaine Felder and Stefan Kartman. * Due to a date conflict with another competition, Callisto Trio forfeited their quarterfinal spot.

May 11-Semi Final Round: Meraviglia, Trioscuro and Seraphim advance.

May 12-Final Round: MERAVIGLIA BRINGS HOME THE BRONZE MEDAL. Later in the month, Meraviglia would go on to perform at MIC's Annual Benefit Gala at the Four Seasons Chicago, honoring pianist Marcus Roberts. Congratulations to the quartet and their coach for a marvelous year.

WELL DONE, CLASS OF 2024!