



Progressive Musicians



VIRTUAL
CONCERT
HALLS



Laureate Gala

Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall



Tuesday November 21, 2023 @ 7:00pm



James Welch
Progressive Musicians



Anna Ouspenskaya
Sound Espresso & Virtual Concert Halls

Welcome to our 3rd Laureate Gala hosted by Progressive Musicians, Sound Espresso, Virtual Concert Halls, & The New York Chamber Players Orchestra. Today's program will feature musicians from numerous countries who have won our 2022-2023 Laureate's Auditions.

Progressive Musicians' and Sound Espresso's mission is to help musicians of all ages achieve their goals by advancing artistically through innovative formats of online competitions. Since 2020, we have been hosting online and Internet TV events that provide musicians with a live virtual platform to reach out to world-wide audiences, receive expert feedback from professional musicians, share their artistic views, new albums, and to compete for prizes ranging from our Internet TV showcases, to the most prestigious performance venues around the world. We believe that it is important to recognize all the instruction and support that goes into the development of a musician. We also recognize the value of experience and progress. Progress does not always happen at a consistent rate, it may be quicker at one stage, and slower at another. Aspirations also vary at different stages of life, and from person to person. As one steps out of their comfort zone, it takes courage to share one's art for humanity.

Music is an artistic vehicle that brings together storytelling, math, history, art, imagery. Most significantly, it provides an environment and a language for deeply emotional connections. Although music is appreciated by many, art can never be perfected, providing an opportunity for eternal evolution and enjoyment. Music illuminates the gifts of many cultures, our world's biggest historical events, and continues to inspire stories, movies, dance, and enhance social gatherings. Some key ingredients to strong musical training include engaging highly qualified instructors, supportive family and community of friends and fans. It also demands a disciplined practice routine, collaborations with other artists, and many opportunities to perform on various stages and venues. There are endless musical possibilities and unique artistic voices being discovered.

We are thrilled to be working with an amazing team of professionals that continue educating, encouraging, and rewarding musicians of all ages and stages of their careers. Today we are honored to have pianist James Adler to offer the James Adler Audience Favorite Award, as well as to present additional awards from iClassical Academy.

It would be impossible for us to continue these types of events without the dedication and support of all our families and everyone who contributed!

THANK YOU FOR EVERYTHING! Enjoy the Gala!

**Progressive Musicians
Sound Espressivo
Virtual Concert Halls &
The New York Chamber Players**

proudly presents its

3rd

LAUREATE GALA

*Weill Recital Hall at
Carnegie Hall*

November 21, 2023

*with special guest
Maurizio Mastrini*

Program

Opening Announcements

James Welch, Progressive Musicians
Lee D. Stockner, Occupational Octaves

Students of Occupational Octaves

Für Elise (fragments)	<i>Ari Amir, piano</i>	Ludwig van Beethoven
Pomp and Circumstance	<i>EJ O'Connor, piano</i>	Edward Elgar
Prelude and Fugue in C Major from WTC I, BWV 846	<i>Jason Wasserman, piano</i>	Johann Sebastian Bach
Nocturne No. 3 "Liebestraum" (fragments)	<i>Shane Patel, piano</i>	Franz Liszt
Prelude in G Major, Op. 28 No. 3	<i>Brendan Yu, piano</i>	Frédéric Chopin

2022-2023 Laureates

To This We've Come, from "The Consul"	<i>Marie-Claire Giraud, soprano</i> <i>Chris Ka Long Au, piano</i>	Gian Carlo Menotti
Aboio e Dança Negra for violin solo	<i>Marcio Candido, violin</i>	Paulo Bosisio
Donde Lieta Uscì, from "La Bohème"	<i>Jelena Stefanic, soprano</i> <i>Jennifer Wang, piano</i>	Giacomo Puccini
Barcarolle from Six Pieces, Op. 11	<i>Kristina Henckel & Amanda Virelles, pianists</i>	Sergei Rachmaninov
Leo, from "Zodiac"	<i>Sophie Dunér, mezzo-soprano</i> <i>Chris Ka Long Au, piano</i>	Karlheinz Stockhausen
Étude No. 3 in G-sharp minor "La Campanella"	<i>Antian Jiang, piano</i>	Franz Liszt

Pause

Remarks

Anna Ouspenskaya, Virtual Concert Halls & Sound Espressivo Competition James Adler, The Adler Oaks Foundation

The New York Chamber Players Orchestra
Conductor: Maestro Giacomo Franci
Guest Feature: Pianist, Maurizio Mastrini

Hey Doctor

++ Sophie Dunér

Sophie Dunér, mezzo-soprano
Deborah Nixon & Sooyeon Jun, violins
Kerrick Sasaki, viola & Igor Zubkovsky, cello

Romance in G Major, Op.40

Ludwig van Beethoven

Ralitsa Tcholakova, violin

Rhapsodie

Claude Debussy

Ariel Levy, saxophone

Cello Concerto No.2 in D Major, Hob.VIIb:2
I. Allegro moderato

Joseph Haydn

Qianci Liu, cello

Longing

****++ Lowe Finney**

Stacey Stofferahn, soprano

Concerto in D Major
I. Vivace

Joseph Haydn

Emily Snelbecker, piano

Concerto in D Major
III. Rondo all'Ungherese: Allegro assai

Joseph Haydn

Olivia Zhang, piano

Waltz, from "Masquerade"

Aram Khachaturian

Marcela Gonyea, piano

Baci
Love Dream
Giga Figa

Maurizio Mastrini

Maurizio Mastrini, piano

Concierto fantástico, Op.78
I. Allegro ma non troppo

Isaac Albéniz

Rubén Ángel Russo Guitiérrez, piano

Concerto No. 4 in G Major, Op. 58
III. Rondo. Vivace

Ludwig van Beethoven

Chris Ka Long Au, piano

Concerto No. 2 in G minor, Op. 22
I. Andante sostenuto

Camille Saint-Saëns

Jennifer Wang, piano

The Host



Steve Robinson

Steve Robinson is an American radio manager, producer and executive producer. He has held senior management positions with numerous American radio stations, including WFMT and the WFMT Radio Network/Chicago, WBUR/Boston, WGBH/Boston, WCRB/Boston, KPFA/Berkeley, WBGO/Newark, Vermont Public Radio and Nebraska Public Radio Network. Robinson served as general manager of the statewide Nebraska Public Radio Network (1990-2000) and WFMT and the WFMT Radio Network from 2000 until October 2016.

A 50-year radio veteran, he has produced programs ranging from classical music documentaries to public affairs programs and has directed over 100 on-air pledge drives.

In 1984, he co-founded AIR, the Association of Independents in Radio, a service organization to assist independent radio producers in the United States. Robinson wrote AIR's first two successful grants from the New York State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts. Throughout his career, Robinson has produced dozens of radio programs that have been heard throughout the world, including live broadcasts from Salzburg, Austria (on the occasion of Mozart's 250th birthday); Durbin, South Africa (for the world premiere for the opera, "Princess Magogo"); Quebec City, Canada (for a live broadcast of Mahler's Symphony of a Thousand with 1000 performers); Jerusalem, Israel (for a broadcast from the Jerusalem International Chamber Music Festival); and has produced numerous live broadcasts from Chicago and throughout the U.S. He has worked with William Schuman, Elliott Carter, Charles Dodge, Roger Reynolds, Alan Hovhaness and other composers on programs about their music. In 2003, he created the daily classical music appreciation radio program, Exploring Music with Bill McGlaughlin. The series is carried by state networks throughout the world including Australia and China. At the WFMT Radio Network he created the first classical music radio exchange between the United States and China.

In 2000, Robinson became the general manager of WFMT and the WFMT Radio Network. Founded in 1951, WFMT is considered as one of the most admired classical music stations in the U.S. and under his leadership many new programs were added to the local schedule, including Introductions, Impromptu and others. Robinson worked on diversifying the programs of WFMT by expanding the amount of live broadcasting from the station.

One of his most important initiatives at the WFMT Radio Network was the creation of Exploring Music with Bill McGlaughlin, in 2003. This daily, one-hour music appreciation program is heard on over 60 U.S. stations and has a weekly audience of over 400,000 unique listeners. The program is also heard in Australia, Guam, the Philippines and in Beijing. Initial funding for Exploring Music was provided by the National Endowment for the Arts with additional funding from individuals and foundations.

The station under his leadership focused on live music by broadcasting a wide array of local Chicago groups and ensembles. In 2007, the Chicago Tribune named him "Chicagoan of the Year" in the arts.

In 2015, he executed a cross-cultural broadcast relationship between America and China by exporting to China for the first time broadcasting concerts by the NY Philharmonic, LA Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, Dallas Symphony, Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall. He also arranged for concerts from the Shanghai Spring International Music Festival and the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra to be exported to the West with broadcasts in the U.S., Canada and Europe.

In 2004 and again in 2010, Robinson created and produced two, live, 17-hour fundraising campaigns involving all Chicago radio and TV stations to aid victims of the tsunami in the southeast and the earthquake in Haiti. Each campaign raised over \$3 million. Robinson received two Wesbury Award from the American Red Cross of Greater Chicago for the fundraising campaigns. In 2008, Robinson and Bill McGlaughlin received the Dushkin Award for Exploring Music with Bill McGlaughlin from the Music Institute of Chicago. He has received local and national awards for his work in Chicago, including the Champion Award from the Merit School of Music, the ASCAP/Deems Taylor Award for creative programming and others.

Audience Favorite Award



James
Adler

James Adler AdlerOaks Music Library

James Adler is a pianist who “can create whatever type of music he wants at the keyboard” (Chicago Sun-Times) and a composer who writes “with uncommon imagination” (Atlanta Journal-Constitution). He has been commissioned by the Curtis Institute of Music to compose a work as part of the Curtis Centenary Commissioning Initiative “100x100”. Mr. Adler will compose a work for solo piano to be performed and recorded by him in 2023, marking the 50th anniversary of Mr. Adler’s graduation from Curtis.

In April, Mr. Adler returns to the Arts on Bergen midday concert series at Saint Peter’s University, where he will premiere a new work by Henco Espag: *Mistieke Feetjies* (Mystical Fairies), composed for and dedicated to him. Throughout the season, Mr. Adler will be recording his theater and art songs at the Yamaha Artist Services Piano Salon for a forthcoming release by Albany Records. The release also features Mr. Adler’s latest work, “Hope” is the thing with feathers (poetry by Emily Dickinson).

He recently joined the Sound Espresso Advisory Board. Sound Espresso - Virtual Classical/Jazz music is known for the competitions and events it hosts. For the 2022-23 concert season, they will be introducing auditions to compete for an in-person concerto appearance at Carnegie Hall, New York City, as well as with orchestras around the world, in addition to offering online Virtual Concert Halls concerts and events. The James Adler Audience Favorite Award is presented at Carnegie Hall during the Laureates Gala. Mr. Adler made his orchestral performing debut with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and has appeared in the recital on the Orchestra’s Allied Arts Piano Series, and the Dame Myra Hess Memorial Concerts Series. His appearances have brought him from Chicago’s Grant Park, to London’s Royal Albert Hall (broadcast by the BBC), to Thessaloniki, Greece, to New York’s Alice Tully Hall, Symphony Space, and the Paramount Theatre at Madison Square Garden.

His extensive list of compositions is headed by *Memento mori: An AIDS Requiem*. Performed worldwide, recorded by AmorArtis Choral and Orchestra, and published by Alfred Music, *Memento mori* features a “range of expression [that] is expansive” and is “a unique, well-crafted, emotionally rich piece” (American Record Guide). Other compositions include *Reflections upon a September morn* (poetry by Walt Whitman); *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* with poetry by William Blake; *A Winter Triptych* (recorded by the choir of Judson Memorial Church, Henco Espag, music director); *Monday’s Child*, performed at The Cathedral of Saint John the Divine and at The Metropolitan Museum of Art; *Daughters of Music* (lyric by Debra Rue), commissioned by Sigma Alpha Iota International Music Fraternity Fort Worth Alumnae Chapter and performed at the SAI National Convention in 2018; *Carols of Splendour*, premiered at Carnegie Hall (“A cheerful, splashy tour de force, skillfully constructed and full of clever ideas,” *The Choral Journal*); *It’s Gotta Be America*, commissioned for the Centennial Celebration of the Statue of Liberty; *FANFARE XL* for symphonic band, written for the 40th anniversary of The Lesbian & Gay Big Apple Corps; *Elegy and Impromptu* for Oboe and Piano (commissioned and premiered by Ian Shafer); and *Canticle For Peace*, written for the opening of the 43rd session of the United Nations General Assembly (published by Colla Voce Music). Mr. Adler is also the composer of *Concerto in G for Piano and Orchestra* (published by Alfred Music and distributed by Luck’s Music Library), the children’s “pOpera” *Herbie and Carnie: A Dinosaga*, the *Classic Rag-time Suite* for orchestra, numerous solo, chamber, and choral works, and the award-winning film score for *The Hat Act*. As performer and composer, Mr. Adler can be heard on recordings from Albany Records, Capstone, Navona, and Ravello Records. He is a member of the Department of Fine Arts at Saint Peter’s University, a National Arts Associate in the Sigma Alpha Iota International Music Fraternity and was selected in 2018 for membership in the SAI Composer’s Bureau. James Adler is a recipient of the 2017 Marquis Lifetime Achievement Award.

Mr. Adler is a Yamaha Artist.

The New York Chamber Players



The New York Chamber Players is a Professional Chamber Orchestra of 42 players . It is dedicated to producing performances of mostly classical music. About 2/3 of the Orchestra is core and the remaining 1/3 is new at every production chosen through regular auditions: in NYC there is a wealth of talented musicians and we want to give the opportunity to all deserving professionals . The Artistic Director welcomes professionals from all nationalities and races as a reflection of the true spirit of New York City . Our main mission is to promote live classical music through presentations of classical music to contemporary audiences, using different formats to enliven and inspire musical experiences. The formats include spontaneous communication with the audiences, unusual in most concert settings, as well as full awareness of proper alternative visual effects such as alternative lightings (inserted sometimes during the performance of contemporary or modern music) and / or insertion of dancers that can enrich the communication especially during the performance of contemporary music. The organization will fulfill its mission by :

- enhancing the career and musical activity of its artists, mostly young professionals who have graduated from colleges, universities and conservatories.
- promoting classical music to contemporary audiences.
- expanding beyond traditional presentation (musicians in tuxedos, on a stage, silent except while playing music)
- giving particular attention to contemporary music and lesser known but great composers.

Violin I

Deborah Nixon (Concertmaster)
Romulo Benavides
Hui Wang
Hannah LeGrand

Violin II

Sooyeon Jun (Principal)
McCall Andersen
Amelia Muccia

Viola

Kerrick Sasaki (Principal)
Devon Faith English
Bo Park

Cello

Igor Zubkovsky (principal)
Jennifer Shaw

Bass

Stefano Battaglia
Devin Di Mauro

Flute

Philippe Delage

Oboe

Mary Gatchell
Tyler Kuehn

Clarinet

Fred Rosenberg

Bassoon

Ben Montalbaron

French Horn

Juvenal Santiago
John Morgan Bush

Piano

Jennifer Wang

The Maestro



Giacomo

Franci



Italy

Maestro Giacomo Franci is the Artistic Director and the Conductor of The New York Chamber Players, an organization he founded in 2004. For the 2010-11 season Maestro Franci was elected Guest Maestro of Escuela de Direccion de Orquesta in Cordoba, Spain.

Giacomo Franci is world renowned as the leading interpreter of the music of Aaron Copland. He earned this highly coveted position based on the merits of his acclaimed world premiere recording “The Complete Edited Piano Works by A. Copland”, a triple CD released by Fone’ Classics. Maestro Franci performed at Alice Tully Hall, Lincoln Center, for the centennial of Copland’s birthday in February 2000, receiving rave reviews for his performance.

In December 2010, his World Premiere Recording “Igor Stravinsky: The Complete Published Piano Works” was released by Fone’ Classics. The double CD recording was praised by Audio Review Magazine as “...the Great Igor Stravinsky in the outstanding performance by Giacomo Franci.” In 2016 he started the Recordings of The Complete Piano Sonatas by Beethoven on Sheva Collection Record Company, this year (2020) he has in program the 3rd CD Recording. In 1998 Franci debuted at the Carnegie Recital Hall and the Italian Music Magazine “Musica” compared him to Glenn Gould and Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli. Mr. Franci hails from Tuscany and now resides in New York City. When not performing he works at The Tribeca Music Studio, a teaching studio for aspiring pianists and singers.

Maestro Franci started his Concert Career in Italy with appearances at Teatro Comunale “Guglielmi”, Teatro San Filippo di Torino, Circolo della Musica di Bologna, and Teatro Comunale di Ferrara. When Franci is not performing as a featured pianist/soloist he devotes his time to conducting his new chamber orchestra. He is very excited about the recent attention which he and the orchestra are receiving. The chamber orchestra had their debut at the CAMI Concert Hall in New York City in May 2004, performing the Bach Piano Concerto in D minor, and they have been in growing demand ever since. Franci who is constantly looking to interpret new works, studied with Gaetano Gaeta and Giampiero Semeraro while earning his Bachelor’s Degree in Piano from the Boccherini Music Institute in Lucca, Italy. He was awarded his Master’s Scholarship from the Scuola di Alto Perfezionamento Musicale in Saluzzo, Italy, studying with Jean Fassinat and the famed Aldo Ciccolini. He also studied conducting with Piero Bellugi and Gustav Kuhn at Teatro Comunale di Pisa. Over the last few seasons Franci has been a featured soloist for engagements throughout the USA, Italy, England, Finland, France, Bulgaria, Chile, Turkey, China, Hungary. He is a returning soloist with: Philharmonic Orchestra of Veneto, Orchestra Sinfonica di Grosseto (where he has been featured as Soloist/Conductor), La Grande Ronde Symphony Orchestra, ISO Symphony, Turkey State Symphony in Istanbul, Richmond County Orchestra, New York Chamber Players, Orchestra da Camera Fiorentina, Bacau Philharmonic Orchestra, Ensemble Orchestral de Bordeaux and The Beijing Symphony Orchestra (where he has been featured as Soloist/Conductor). Since the year 2004 when he founded his Orchestra in New York, he has conducted many great Orchestras such as: The Shanghai Baroque Chamber Orchestra, Orchestra Sinfonica di Grosseto, Beijing Symphony Orchestra, New York Chamber Players, Concepcion Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra dei Pomeriggi Musicali di Milano, Orchestra Modigliani, Boston Chamber Orchestra in Tanglewood and Richmond County Orchestra. Very recently he has been featured in 2 Radio Programs by David Dubal: “Piano Matters” on WWFM Radio and “Reflections from the Keyboard” on WQXR. These radio programs feature the most legendary pianists of today and of all times. He has also appeared on radio and television aired by New York One, ABC, WPIX, Manhattan Cable, Hofstra University Radio, Blusat Radio 2000 (an hour long interview broadcast to an audience of over 2 million people) and Antenna 3. In 2008 Maestro Franci was selected to the Cambridge Who’s Who Registry which lists the most accomplished professionals in the U.S.

Feature Pianist



Maurizio Mastrini



Italy

Maurizio Mastrini is one of the best pianists and an uncontaminated composer of the international musical and instrumental panorama. He came to the fore these last two years because he plays famous classical masterpieces starting from the last note backward to the first. The musical result is astonishing and the audience can listen to a new piece having the same notes of the original one, but played backwards. His musical creativity has its roots in the retreat in Umbria where he lives, far away from the frantic rhythms of daily life routine. This is exactly what makes him uncontaminated in his compositions and full of emotions that he transmits through his works. He has been defined a "wild heart" for his way of living and being a little bit solitary but with a heart that, when he plays, expresses a world of emotions. His compositions are the link between the traditional standards of music and the new Contemporary Classical Music, thanks to a cultured and emotional research, that fuses itself, in some parts to dodecaphony, leaving aside the harmonic hardness of this latter. Many of his works are minimalist compositions, others show a mathematical conception, others are constituted by very few notes "... even just few notes may move a person to tears" says the maestro, other compositions have instead such abundance of sounds that they sound like an orchestra". The most recent comments about him:

"Maurizio is extraordinary" Steve Orchard, sound engineer of the Air Studios in London, winner of a Grammy Award (for a Béla Fleck album)

"A little bit crazy and a little bit genius: but the genius is 80% ..." Corrado Canonici, double bass player, World Concert Artists agent, London

"Phenomenal pianist" Margherita Ferrandino, RAI journalist

"Mastrini: madness and brilliance to its pure essence ... fantastic!!" Federico Taddia, RADIO RAI speaker

"Maurizio Mastrini is a genius!" Michele Cucuzza, RAI journalist

"Mastrini represents one of the best international music talents" Fabrizio Frizzi, RAI TV presenter Etc.

"Newspaper articles published about him by: Corriere della sera, Repubblica, Il Giornale, La Nazione, Il Messaggero, Focus, l'Espresso, etc.

He has been the music guest in the following channels: RAIUNO, RAIDUE, RAITRE, ITALIA 1, CANALE 5, RETE 4, DEUTSCHE WELLE ENGLISH, BBC, RADIO RAI, Etc. His world tour will bring him to the most important cities of the world. Maurizio Mastrini graduated from the music conservatory "F. Morlacchi" in Perugia while studying with Maestro Vincenzo Vitale. He expresses his highest artistic expression playing the piano, though he is also a composer and director. Born in Panicale, a small village in Umbria, from very young parents (his father was 18 and his mother 16).

His father perceives he is a boy out-of-the-common when he discovers him, at the age of 7 or 8 years old, playing rudimentary drums built with empty paint tins used by his father for mechanic constructions. His father brings him to a music teacher, who soon understands the talent of the young boy and suggests him to go to the conservatory. Maurizio starts playing the piano and he is soon considered a child prodigy. He has won several national and international music contests.

He started touring around the world and made CD recordings for the AZZURRA label that sold incredibly well throughout the world. Particularly important is the CD collection "Storia della Musica – Capolavori" (History of music – the masterpieces) distributed by Ricordi where Maestro Riccardo Allorto chooses to put together in the same CD A. Rubinstein and M. Mastrini, this latter playing R. Schumann Fantasiestücke. His record production includes: "I Miei Romantici, vol. 1", "Sogno D'Amore", "Sacro & Profano", "I miei Classici" published by "Progetti Sonori" particularly interesting because Maurizio Mastrini is the first pianist to record the first works of the classical authors such as Mozart, Beethoven, etc.; Love Music, Classical Music For Christmas, "Le Musiche dello Zodiaco", "Love Piano". He composed a Mass in Latin at the age of 14, an opera, an Ave Maria and many other compositions, some of which he still plays during his concerts. His many tours bring him to Iceland, Denmark, Turkey, France, England, Netherlands, the U.S.A., Spain, The Czech Republic. He held concerts in prestigious towns such as: Dijon, Basil, Cincinnati, London, Inverness, Paris, Verona, Rome, Besancon, Perugia, Milan, Messina, Reykjavík. He made video recordings for Italian RAI, Swiss radio and television, BBC, ABC, Mediaset. The teachers that mostly influenced him are Vincenzo Vitale, Don Mario Venturi and Wijnand van De Pol. Meanwhile he founds and directs one of the most valued music schools in Europe "Accademia Nazionale d'Arte Musicale" (National Academy of Musical Arts) where, alongside with the music classes, he adds courses for pre-school children so to bring them close to music in an active way with solfeggio and playing the instrument thanks to the Pentamano system, that he invented himself. He wrote several didactic books as: "La tecnica del pianista contemporaneo", "Mastro solfeggio", "Mastrini piano", collections of 4-hands pieces, etc.

He directed the Royal Academy of Music Art from 1994 to 2002. Starting from 1998 he puts up short operas as: Mozart's "La finta semplice", A. Scarlatti's "Il trionfo dell'onore", D. Cimarosa's "Il marito disperato", A. Salieri "Falstaff", Donizetti "Giovedì Grasso" and "Il Campanello". He starts playing his own compositions together with pieces by Chopin, Liszt, Brahms, Beethoven, Scarlatti. The reactions of the surprised public is so positive that he starts giving concerts playing only his music and obtaining a great success. The critics have defined him "a great technician with a sublime sensibility". He then offers his creativity to the company he founded thereafter: Mastrini Production & Communication, that works in the field of musicals, tv productions, communication and marketing. Some of the best productions are: VIP MOBILE a company for phone services Canale 5, Italia 1, MTV, All Music; Dindo Mobile a company for phone services Canale 5, Italia 1, MTV, All Music.

Maurizio Mastrini has conceived and implemented for the TV circuit Cinque Stelle 3 editions of the musical programme "Musica Maestro" and two editions of "Palcoscenico Aperto", "Il Diavolo e l'Acqua Santa". He created the tv formats "Din Game", "L'Autostop", "Tutti a sCQuola", "Un biglietto per due". He produced the fiction "Oltre la collina" ("Beyond the hill") chosen and awarded a special mention for merit at "RomaFictionFest 2009". He is the author of the soundtrack of "Così fan tutte" sit-com broadcasted by Mediaset. Maurizio manages anyway to find the right balance between business and private life, that he spends in his retreat in the Umbrian countryside. From 1992 he was the artistic director of the following music festivals: Piano festival in Verneuil en Halatte (France), Ross Shire Music (Scotland) and of the youth orchestra Malden Young Strings, Reykjavík Song Skolinn. He is the manager of the festival and the musical contest "Città di Folgarìa Musica & Neve" from 1993 to 2003 and is the artistic director of the international festival "Euritmia Sonora" and of the international music contest "M. Petri" in Città della Pieve (PG), "Città di Marsciano" (PG) and is the founder of the music festival "Mosaico Sonoro" of Panicle. He composes several works for RAI such as theme songs, musical arrangements for the series of twenty-seven episodes "Favolando Favolando" broadcasted by RAI Stereo Due. He wrote the musics for "UNO MATTINA" RAI UNO. He worked as musical consultant for the TMC tv programme "Zap Zap Tv" in 1998/1999 and 1999/2000. He was the musical consultant for "UNOMATTINA" since 1996 and from 1999 to 2003 of the programme "I FATTI VOSTRI" RAIDUE.

In 2001 he composed the shortest opera in the world "Il Bacio" (the Kiss) on a text by Sergio Tasso, length 3 minutes and 20 seconds that will be inserted in the Guinness World Records. The opera will have its premiere in 2011. His style highlights in a very clear way the basic elements of his language: cultured and complex, but emotional and immediate at the same time.

His concerts raise increasing attention and enthusiasm in Italy, but the consecration as composer of international height arrives in 2009 with the album "Il Mio Mondo al Contrario" ("My world to the Reverse") where Mastrini plays classical masterpieces and original compositions backwards, that is starting from the last note backward to the first. He is inspired by an endless research and experimentation of new musical frontiers. The musical result is surprising. He draws the attention of the media that range him among the most talented and amazing world contemporary pianists.



Progressive Musicians

***Learn, *Progress, *Compete, *Perform**
Progressive Musicians is dedicated to helping musicians of all ages and levels achieve their goals and advance artistically

Opportunities for Musicians

- *Performance evaluations from Professional Musicians*
- *Opportunities to improve your performance*
- *Opportunities to perform in prestigious concert halls*

We strive to make our events and competitions positive experiences for each contestant, their teachers, and their families

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Season Events

2023-2024

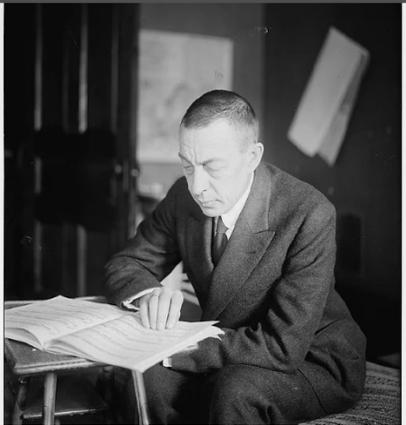
Empowering tomorrow's musicians

Celebrating the Life and Music of Sergei Rachmaninoff AUDITIONS



Selected Artists will be invited to perform at Laureates Gala* at Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall

Dates of upcoming Laureate Galas:
November 21, 2023
April 1, 2024
April 4, 2024



***Laureates**
are presented at the Gala Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall at no additional cost, **no performance fee required**
ONE solo/ensemble piece
or
One Movement of a larger work
or
One Vocal work (Romance/Aria)

***Winners**
Invited to perform at one of the Galas
See below for Performances fees



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Laureate Ensembles in Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall - Apply by DECEMBER 1

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Occupational Octaves



Lee D. Stockner



USA

Lee D. Stockner is the creator of a new, user-friendly language of music which he has parlayed into a new world of choice for people who want to learn the piano. As the President of Adaptive Learning for the World Piano Teachers Association and the author of Occupational Octaves Piano™ (a 300+ page classical piano curriculum written in the adaptive language he invented), Lee's methods are used by piano teachers, music therapists, occupational therapists, recreation therapists, special educators, and other related professionals around the world.

After teaching hundreds of students with Autism in his private practice and then training dozens of other professionals, Lee authored "Classical Piano as a Pathway to Flow States for Learners with Disabilities" (published April 2020, Traditional Medicine Research). This paper lays out a replicable system to use the complex works of Mozart, Bach, Beethoven and other classical ancestors to experience a state of flow, or a zen state, or being "in the zone." This is important because when done so correctly, the flow state leads to physical benefits and an addition to one's mental health tool kit. Results (of which there are many) include positive attributes such as the relaxing sensation of lowering of heart variability or the exciting sensation of a rise in dopamine.

With a pure focus on maximizing piano playing dreams for people with varying abilities and disabilities, Lee has dedicated his life to the power of music on both clinical and spiritual levels. He has created the world of Occupational Octaves™ from scratch, having invented the method, translated each song, written and published every book, designed how professionals can reach clinical goals at the piano, published medical research, been the feature of news stories and documentaries, and more. His approach to students combines empathy with tough love. Empathy helps him understand people's struggles and how they learn while tough love sees more in a student than they may see in themselves and provides a path towards greater goals. Lee is a person who must know that if you spend your time and energy on his products or program, you will get a maximal result if you trust in the process.

Websites/social media: <https://linktr.ee/occoctavespiano>

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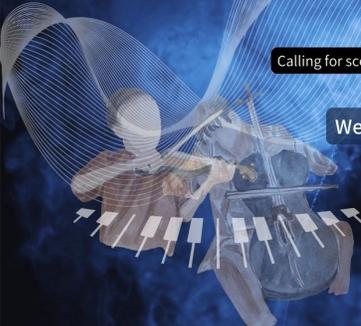
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Vincent David

Richard Barrett

Lee D. Stockner

Anna Ouspenskaya

Anthony Manoli

Special Thank You's

John Gray

Gevorg Sargsyan

Bill Sigmund

The Staff of PianoPiano Studios

Collaborative Musicians



Jennifer Wang

pianist

USA



Jennifer Wang is a professional pianist based in New York and the DC area as well as Program Coordinator and Administrator Assistant at the Summit Music Festival. She received her Master Manhattan School of Music, New York, currently studying piano performance with Arkady Aronov and Efrem Briskin under the Elva van Gelder Memorial and Constance Keene piano scholarship, previously studying at the MSM Precollege and with Dr. Anna Ouspenskaya at the Levine School of Music. An avid performer, Jennifer has appeared as a soloist with the Virtuosi Brunensis orchestra and at prestigious venues such as the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC, Kaufman Center's Merkin Hall, historical Palazzo dei Priori in Perugia Italy, the DiCapo Opera Theater in New York, Embassy of Italy, Mexican Cultural Institute, Lyceum in Alexandria, featured on Cable TV: A Holiday Recital, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, Netherlands Embassy, Alden Theater Music Friends Concert, and the Kimmel Center in PA as well as giving a lecture-concert in Wuhan, China.



Chris Ka Long Au

pianist

Australia



Celebrated for his 'intimate dialogue between him...and the audience' (Barrie Examiner), Chris Au is a 1st Prizewinner of the 2020 Sound Espresivo Global Competition (specializing in the Music Ambassador Category), Prizewinner of the 2020 Texas State International Piano Concerto Competition, Semi-Finalist of the 2020 Maestro Art Taiwan International Piano Competition, and Prizewinner of the 2016 Shean Piano Competition. Recently, he performed and competed in REXXAM Hall as part of the 2023 Takamatsu International Piano Competition. 2023 highlights included a Fellowship and Artistic Residence at the Lunenburg Academy of Music Performance under the guidance of Steven Isserlis, James Somerville and Jane Coop. He also made his concerto debut with the premiere movement of Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 4 with the Central Texas Philharmonic as part of the Texas State International Piano Festival 2023 in June. In August 2023, through Orford Musique he was invited to perform for Bill and Hillary Clinton at Manoir Hovey. This November, Chris makes his Carnegie Hall Debut performing the Finale of the Beethoven Piano Concerto No. 4 with the New York Chamber Players Orchestra conducted by Maestro Giacomo Franci. Chris Au was born in Hong Kong and raised in Sydney, Australia. He began serious studies at the age of 14 upon his acceptance in the studio of renowned Australian pedagogue Margaret Hair. He has since received the top prizes at the Sydney and Parramatta Eisteddfods. Unfortunately, his progress was significantly hindered for a few years when he was diagnosed with Juvenile Rheumatoid Arthritis at the age of 16. Under the care of Dr. Jeffrey Chaitow, he continues to take a weekly biologic injection that keeps his condition under control. His first musical experience overseas brought him to Germany, where he won the Audience 1st Prize at the 2010 Klaviersommer Bad Bertrich whilst under the tutelage of Professor John Perry. Inspired by this experience, Chris began to pursue a career in music. Chris began his Undergraduate studies at The Colburn School with Ory Shihor, and continued them John Perry and David Louie at the Glenn Gould School of Music of the Royal Conservatory of Music, Toronto. There, he also attained his Artist Diploma. During that time, he was generously sponsored by the Full-Tuition Joan and Jerry Lozinski Scholarship, and has performed in Koerner Hall. In May of 2020, Chris completed his Masters of Music Degree with Jean Saulnier and Jeanne Amiele at the University of Montreal. He also pursued his D.E.P.A. at the University of Montreal with Jean Saulnier and Charles Richard-Hamelin, in 2021. Chris has won scholarships to many international summer festivals including the Banff Centre, the Orford Academy, the John Perry Academy, the Gijon International Piano Festival, the International Holland Music Sessions, and the Kawai Sydney International Piano Festival. He has had the great opportunity to work in masterclasses with legendary artists such as Menahem Pressler, Leon Fleisher, Richard Goode, Krzysztof Jablonski, Daniel Shapiro, Anton Nel, Andre Leplante, Marc Durand, Marietta Orlov, and Robert McDonald. His inspired performances have secured multiple re-engagements particularly at the Barrie Concert Association, where he is a regular guest artist of the Midday with Shigeru Concert Series, as well as their Pianofest. He is also a regular guest artist at both Concerts@100 of Toronto, performing with the likes of Timothy Chooi as well as members of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Chris also works at Virtual Concert Halls as Live Broadcast Host, Social Media Manager, and Jury member.

The Performers



EJ O'Connor

USA



EJ is thrilled to be making his concert debut at Carnegie Hall. He has been playing piano for 3 years and progressed quickly because it brings him so much joy. EJ also enjoys running, gymnastics, the beach and traveling. His family is so proud of all this hard work.



Brendan Yu

USA



Brendan has been an avid piano player since joining Occupational Octaves Piano at the age of 5. He also plays drums and participates in adaptive tennis, skiing, and soccer programs. He's currently an eighth-grade student at North Middle School in Great Neck, Long Island. He loves traveling and exploring the world through Google Maps.

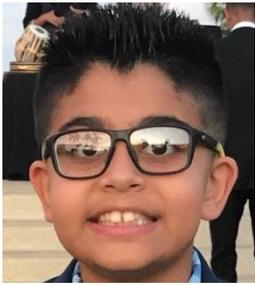


Jason Wasserman

USA



Jason Wasserman has been playing piano with Lee Stockner through the Occupational Octaves School of Music since 2015 at the age of 6. It became evident from the beginning Jason was a musically inclined guy! He loves to play piano, sing in the Chorus at his Middle School and plays casually at home on his guitar. He has performed the last two years in his school musicals; The Addams Family and Aladdin. Jason is so excited for the opportunity to perform in concert at Carnegie Hall. His family is all proud of how far Jason has come musically through his hard work and enthusiasm. Besides his love of music, Jason also enjoys participating in our synagogue's daily services and playing basketball. Jason is a 14 year old boy in the 8th grade at Roslyn Middle School.



Shane's love for music began six years ago when he discovered Occupational Octaves™ and started playing piano. Since then, Shane has looked forward to every piano lesson and his love of music has branched out to playing the clarinet as well as auditioning for his middle school's jazz band. In addition to loving music, Shane enjoys traveling, skiing, playing hockey and cheering on the Mets and Islanders.

Shane Patel

USA



Music occupies a major part of Ari's life. Ari's passion for music started out as a toddler playing drums, which paved the way for him to become the percussionist for the band Mayhem Long Island. His love for music led him to taking piano lessons five years ago with Lee Stockner – Occupational Octaves. Ari was a member of F.R.E.E.'s Drumline and now Calhoun Music and Drum Academy's Drumline. He has recently started playing the electric guitar. Ari's taste in music runs from Pop, Rock and Roll, Oldies, Reggae, to foreign artists. He is a TV show and movie enthusiast and enjoys traveling and going to concerts & Broadway shows. Ari is proud to be playing at Carnegie Hall.

Ari Amir

USA



Olivia is 10 years old. She started playing piano when she was about six, under the guidance of Dr. Anna Ouspenskaya. Over the years, she participated in several piano competitions, receiving first prize in Great Composers Competition, first and second prize in Northern Virginia Music Teachers Association piano competition. She was also a semifinalist of the Sound Espressivo competition. Olivia likes performing on the stage. Besides piano, Olivia loves dancing. She is currently in a junior dance competition team, practicing ballet, jazz, tap, lyrical dance and musical theater. Olivia is very energetic and has broad interests. She likes drawing and gymnastics. She also plays basketball, and recently is into badminton on our driveway with her dad. Olivia is warm hearted. Every year since she was five, she performs piano and dance during Christmas in local senior houses, bringing holiday joy to elders.

Olivia Zhang

USA



Classical pianist and student at Hunter Mill Piano Studio in Vienna, Virginia with Anna Ouspenskaya for 7 years. Received technical and performance training, participated in six judged studio concerts each year, learned a new concerto each year. Played four-hand duets with other pianists. Played baroque, classical, contemporary, and romantic piano pieces.

Emily Snelbecker

USA





Marcela Gonyea

USA



Marcela has played classical piano since the age of 5. Her 11 year piano experience has given her a strong foundation in music and knowledge of musical performance. Over the years Marcela has placed and qualified for several piano competitions receiving 1st, 2nd place and honorable mentions in the Northern Virginia Music Teachers Association (NVMTA) piano competitions. She joined her high-school orchestra as a freshman and was placed in the Chamber Orchestra, the most advanced of her high-school's ensembles, as a piano soloist. Her most notable competition accomplishment to date was earning the Sound Espressivo Carnegie Hall Performer award where she performed the Sergey Zubkovsky's Piano Concerto.



Antian Jiang

Canada



Antian, a 16-year-old pianist from Ontario, Canada, is a remarkable musician and scientist. She won a bronze medal representing Canada at the 34th International Biology Olympiad. She was featured in the 30-under-30 Canadian Classical Musicians by CBC. Antian set a record by earning the Licentiate Diploma (LRCM) with Distinction from the Royal Conservatory of Music at the age of 10. She has performed at prestigious venues, including Carnegie Hall and Steinway Hall in New York, and has won numerous music awards, including the Sound Espressivo Global competition. Additionally, she received a full scholarship to the Morning-side Music Bridge program at NEC (Boston).



**Rubén Ángel
Russo Gutiérrez**

Spain



Born in Madrid, on June 22, 1997. He is currently studying for a Master's and Internationale Musikakademie Anton Rubinstein - Dusseldorf Germany with the supervision of Professor Gabriele Leporati (Italy) Awards: First Prize, "47 Young Pianists of Catalonia Contest", Villafranca del Penedés, Barcelona, Spain, July 2, 2017. Second Prize and Silver Medal, International Music Competition, Moscow, Russia, September 2021. First Prize and Gold Medal, Premier Music International Competition December 2021, Budapest, Hungary. First Prize and Special Artist Gold Medal, Golden Arts Contest, Valencia, Spain, December 2021. First Prize and Special Artist Gold Medal, Golden Arts Contest, Valencia, Spain, December 2021. Fourth Prize in the London Classical Music Competition, being the only Spanish pianist awarded in all categories, February 2022. Second Prize in Nouvelles Étoiles Competition in Paris, France, June 2022. Third Prize, International Music Competition "Medici", 2022. First Prize and Second Four Notes International Piano Competition, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates 2022.

Concerts: Palais Wittgenstein, Dusseldorf, Germany. Espacio Ronda Auditorium, "Portrait of a Decade" 10.05.2022, Madrid. Auditorium of the Royal Economic Society of the Country, 15.05.2022, Jaen. Official Opening Beethoven Conservatorium, 25.05.2022, Tegelen, Netherlands. Antoniussaal de la Maxhaus, 04-06-2022, Düsseldorf. Internationale Musikakademie Anton Rubinstein, June 24 2022, Düsseldorf. Cagnes Sur Mer, July 4 2022, France. Talent Summer Courses and Talent Summer Opera Festival, 24 y 26 August 2022, Brescia, Italy. "Viva Classic Live Festival" Venlo, September 2022, Netherlands.



Ariel Levy

Israel



My name is Ariel Levy. I am 20 years old from Israel. I grew up in a very small town in which saxophone education was very poor, but with my enthusiasm, I managed to improve and study in the Shtriker conservatory in Tel Aviv. and last year after five years in Tel Aviv, in which I won some competition in Israel, I was accepted to study in Brussels with Vincent David, one of the greatest saxophonists today.



Marcio Candido

USA



Brazilian violinist Dr. Marcio Candido has performed extensively worldwide as a soloist, concertmaster and chamber musician. His most recent album, Brazil x Argentina, was awarded several prizes and received many including two gold stars at the Music & Stars Awards 2021, a silver medal at the 2020 Global Music Awards (emerging artist and new release), and a nomination for the Anchorage Press Person of the Year 2020. In 2021 Dr. Candido made his solo debut at Weill Hall -Carnegie Hall.



Qianci Liu

USA



Qianci Liu earned her master's degree in cello performance from Manhattan School of Music under Prof. Marion Feldman and her bachelor's degree under Prof. Jiuhe Chen from the Shanghai Conservatory of Music. She has 15-year experience in the performing arts industry as a performer, instructor, composer, recording artist, and concert producer. She is the Executive Director of Paulus Hook Music Foundation, New York Big Apple Music Festival and New York International Symphony Orchestra.

Qianci has been a cellist at the Shanghai Opera House Orchestra. She took the role of the principal cellist in Broadway Musical The Lion King Shanghai Tour in 2005, and performed as a soloist for the Shanghai Bund Lights Show Walking on the Bund. Qianci participated in many recording projects including Global Music Award winning album On and Between composed by Zhen Chen, and soundtrack Wait for Me composed by Shanghai-based composer Wei Luo for China Central Television (CCTV) TV series. Her other major commercial albums release include A Cellist in the Shaoxing Road, Xian Qin, Little Reunion, and Pray for the World. Most recently, Qianci composed for a music animation Lily, to Mom, and a piece for Cello and Jazz Band Candy.

On October 15th, 2023, Qianci made her "Wandering Melody" Carnegie Zankel Hall Debut Concert with the New York International Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Elias Miller.



**Marie-Claire
Giraud**

USA



NYC Caribbean Heritage Award recipient, NAACP Image Award recipient for teaching inner city kids in her neighborhood of the South Bronx about the joys of classical music along with citations from NYS Senate, City Hall and the UN . Marie-Claire Giraud was born on the island of Dominica and raised in The Bronx, New York City.

Marie-Claire has performed at the Barclays Center, MSG, City Hall, Smalls Jazz Club, Jamaica Jazz and Blues Festivals, Cartagena Jazz Festival, Weill Recital Hall, Carnegie Hall and Joe's Pub at The Public Theater to name a few. Marie-Claire is a soprano who sings opera, jazz, musical theater and is also a songwriter who made her Broadway debut starring in the Tennessee Williams one act play Hello From Bertha in 2022 .

Marie-Claire is a regular at Parker's Thompson Hotel Central Park accompanied by Lee Musiker and other well known pianists, performing her one woman show, "The Great American Songbook at the Movies".



**Stacey
Stofferahn**

USA



Professional credits include Tosca (West Bay Opera, Landlocked Opera), Senta/Der fliegende Holländer (Opera Siam, SD Symphony), Mimi/Bohème (Heartland Opera, Modesto Opera), Minnie /La fanciulla del West (Apotheosis Opera), Masetta/Bohème, Donna Elvira / Don Giovanni (WGO), Donna Anna/Don Giovanni (SD Symphony), Hanna/Merry Widow (Lyric Opera San Diego), Erste Dame/Die Zauberflöte, (LOKC), and Contessa/Le nozze di Figaro (WBO). Other role credits are Micaëla/Carmen, Magda/La rondine, Violetta/La traviata, and Nedda/Pagliacci. Professional concert appearances: Mozart Requiem/Joplin Orchestra, SD Symphony; Mahler #2/Bozeman Symphony, SD Symphony; Mahler #8/SD Symphony; Beethoven 9th/SD Symphony, Joplin Orchestra; Brahms German Requiem/Joplin Orchestra; Beethoven Mass in C/Bulgaria International. Stacey holds a BA in Music Education from Augustana University, two MMs in Choral Conducting, Vocal Performance from UMKC, and a DMA, Vocal Performance from UMKC.



**Kristina Henckel
Amanda Virelles**

USA



Czech pianist Kristina Henckel and Cuban pianist Amanda Virelles formed 4HANDS Piano Duo in 2019. Their duo repertoire includes masterpieces from the Classical, Romantic, and 20th-century periods. Both pianists started performing careers in their home countries and completed doctoral degrees in piano performance and pedagogy in the United States. Kristina and Amanda received a Grand Prize and were named Artist of the Year by the International Youth Music Competition in 2022. Both Kristina and Amanda hold full-time faculty positions in NC, Kristina at Sandhills Community College, and Amanda at Fayetteville State University. Their duo recordings are available on all digital platforms.



Lowe Finney

USA



I am a freelance orchestral arranger, composer, and orchestrator. My works and arrangements have been commissioned and most recently performed by the Jackson Symphony Orchestra in Jackson, Tennessee, and the Savannah Philharmonic Orchestra in Savannah, Georgia. I have written and arranged for large orchestras, soloists, and choirs in a variety of genres including classical, pops, Broadway, and holiday productions as well as commissions for original compositions.



**Ralitsa
Tcholakova**
Canada



Ralitsa Tcholakova is an internationally renowned, Ottawa-based violin and viola player. She is currently a violin and viola instructor at the City of Ottawa, Carleton University and Canada Music Academy. She has performed as a soloist with orchestras at chamber music series and festivals in over 25 countries. She was nominated for the Premier's Award for Excellence in the Arts in 2018. In 2017, she was nominated for the Governor General Persons Case Award. Ralitsa has recorded many highly acclaimed albums, including "Ballad of the North", an album featuring music by Canadian female composers and distributed by SOCAN to 135 radio stations worldwide.

For her CD "Remembered Voices" released under Carleton University label Carleton Sound, Ralitsa collaborated with Dr. Elaine Keillor, appointed to the Order of Canada. The CD is praised as "An excellent CD" by the Whole Note magazine.

Her CD, "Aboriginal Inspirations" featuring multiple Grammy winner Ron Korb is promoted nationally and internationally by the Canadian Music Centre and NAXOS. Since 2015, Ralitsa has performed annual recitals at the Parliament of Canada.

During the pandemic, Ralitsa participated online in local and international festivals. In 2021 she Performed at the National Prayer Breakfast, a yearly event held under the combined authority of the Speakers of the Senate and the House of Commons.

In 2022 she premiered a composition Prayer for Peace commissioned for her by Evelyn Stroobach at the Laureate Gala at Carnegie Hall.

Ralitsa plays on a custom-made violin especially for her by the luthiers of Kremona, Bulgaria, a copy of Stradivarius Oppenheim 1716.



Jelena Stefanic
Croatia



Jelena is a young soprano performing a wide range of roles, spanning from iconic Baroque heroines, to Mozart, Verdi, Puccini and Operetta Diva roles.

When she was only 16 years old she made her debut in Varaždin as Hyale in Acteon under the baton of Laurence Cummings. Through years she appeared on numerous stages such as Vienna Musikverein, State Opera Ruse, Bulgaria, State Opera Maldybayev, Croatian National Theatres in Varazdin, Osijek, Pola. Then NCPA Beijing, Bunka Kaikan Tokyo, Mythos Opera Festival (Catania, Taormina Teatro Greco), Schlosstheater Schönbrunn Vienna, Vienna Volksoper, Teatro della Ciudad Mexico, Grand Theatre Suzhou, Bridewell Theatre London, Kensington Opera London and many more. Her repertoire include roles: Traviata, Leonora in Il Trovatore, Elettra in Idomeneo, Vitellia in Clemenza di Tito, First Lady in Magic Flute, Konstanze, Rosalinde in die Fledermaus, Countess Mariza, Angelica in Orlando, Verdi's Requiem, Lady Macbeth, Thais, Donna Anna, and many more.

She is an alumni of iSING Festival China, under guidance of Hao Jiang Tian and honorary chair Placido Domingo. In 2012 Jelena was invited to participate on Domingo's Operalia as a first Croatian female singer in the long history of this greatest competition.



Sophie Dunér

Sweden



Sophie Dunér is a Swedish singer, improviser and composer who travels and performs internationally. Her most recent act is her new solo show - A blend of jazz influenced by world music & contemporary classical writing. With performances spanning from the infamous 'CBGB's' to 'The 13 & 14th Annual Charles Mingus Festival' in NYC to 'Buenos Aires Festival de Música Contemporánea La Plata' as well as 'Festival O/Modernt' in Sweden, she has been a composer in residence with the US based new music group 'Present Musi'. CD recordings include 'The City of My Soul' (2013) together with the UK based string quartet 'The Callino Quartet', produced by legendary Grammy award winning producer Michael Haas (PARMA Recordings). She is also a frequent collaborator of 'Composers Concordance' in NYC. During fall 2021, she toured with Dutch composer Jacob TV, premiering his 'The Freedom Songs' at 'Concertgebouw' in Amsterdam. Sophie studied jazz improvisation with horn players Hal Crook, George Garzone & Ed Tomassi and she has a Degree in vocal performance from Boston's 'Berklee College of Music' She has also studied at the Stockhausen summer courses in Germany, awarded a grant from The Swedish Arts Council. Sophie has collaborated with musicians such as Dominic Duval Sr, Matt Penman, Gene Pritsker, Guy Livingston, Eric Segnitz, Rory Stuart, Paul Clarvis, Kahlil Kwame Bell, Don McCaslin, Guillermo Klein, Aaron Goldberg, Dick Griffin, Mark Turner, Seamus Blake, Steve Hamilton, Gerry Brown, Hugo Ticciati, Valery Ponomarev, Tommy Campbell, Bertram Lehman, Sébastián Dubé etc. A visual artist as well, her short 'Art Film Noir' 'When the saints go marching in' was selected for the Harlem based 'AddAMovie Film Festival' in NYC, featuring Eleonor Sandresky on piano & arrangement. In 2022, she released her solo CD 'Strictly Business', produced by acclaimed British producer Darren Allison. A CD that was awarded 'The annual What a performance! Award 2022' by 'The Art Music Lounge'. Previous CD's include 'The City of Dizzy' together with electric cellist Jeremy Harman (2016) and 'Songs Eclectic' together with Gene Pritsker (2020). Sophie has also recorded a duo CD with the late iconic avantgarde jazz bassist Dominic Duval Sr (previously in Cecil Taylor's band) in 2014. Her newly recorded CD 'Modern Mingus' together with Bertram Lehman on percussion & electronics is to be released during spring 2024.

Other performances include concerts at venues such as Concertgebouw, Tivoli Vredenburg, November Music (NL) Confidencen, Festival O/Modernt, Stockholm Jazz Festival, Stockholm New Music Festival, Scandinavium, Gothenburg Symphony Hall (SE) EMX / Sowieso Neukölln (DE) Circulo de Bellas Artes, Jazz en La Costa, Getxo Jazz Festival, Bimbache Open Art Festival (ES) Baltic Jazz Festival (SF), Pizza Express Jazz Club (UK) Sapporo Snow Festival (JP) Symphony Space, Cornelia St. Café, ShapeShifter Lab, Small's, The Bop Shop, The LilyPad, PARMA Music Festival, NPR, NBC (USA) etc. In September, Sophie was featured singer for 'The Other Concert' at Moods Jazz Club in Zürich, Switzerland, directed by Swiss / American composer & reed player Daniel Schnyder to be followed by a concert of her new solo show at the Glenn Miller Café in Stockholm, Sweden in November. Other ongoing collaborations include work with composers such as José Luís Greco and Francis Schwartz.

For more info, visit www.sophieduner.com

Our Judges



Vera Danchenko

Voice & Piano

Pianist Vera Danchenko-Stern graduated with honors from Moscow's prestigious Gnessin Institute of Music in piano, solo performance, chamber music, vocal, and instrumental accompaniment. Immigrating to Canada in 1979, she joined the faculty of the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto, still continuing her pianist's career. She then moved to Washington, D.C. in 1990. Her concert appearances include accompanying world-renowned artists, such as violinists Martin Beaver, Ilya Kaler, violist Ryvka Golani, sopranos Carmen Balthrop, Jennifer Casey-Cabot, mezzo-sopranos Susana Poretzky, Audrey Babcock, baritone Sergei Leiferkus and bass Nikita Storojev, to name only a few. A most significant and enjoyable artistic collaboration was - and still is - to share the stage with her brother, world-famous violinist Victor Danchenko. Ms. Danchenko-Stern served as the teacher of "Russian lyrics and diction" class at the Catholic University in Washington, D.C. from 1992 till 2002. Since 1990, she has also been teaching the "Singing in Russian" class at the faculty of Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University. Four times, she has had an opportunity to present students of the Peabody Institute at the International Week of the Conservatories in St Petersburg, Russia, followed by concerts in Moscow. [Read more on our website...](#)



Emil Chudnovsky

Strings

Emil Israel Chudnovsky hearkens back to the grand romantic tradition of the golden age of violinists. His lush sound and inimitable ability to connect with audiences have garnered him accolades from listeners, presenters and critics alike. Recent seasons have been full of firsts, including his debut this season at the Seoul Arts Center in South Korea with the KammerSymphonie Berlin, and his recent inaugural recording with the St. Petersburg Symphony Orchestra. Equally notable benchmarks include Chudnovsky's debut with the Orquesta Filarmónica de Jalisco in Mexico, when he replaced an indisposed soloist for a previously unknown concerto on ten days' notice. [Read more on our website...](#)



Avguste Antonov

Piano

Born in Bulgaria, Avguste Antonov studied piano in Bulgaria (Dobrich), France (Ecole Normale de Paris, Conservatoire de Bordeaux Jacques Thibaud) and the United States (2000: University of Missouri-Kansas City; 2001-2004: University of Kansas; 2006 -2008: Texas Christian University). He studied under the guidance of Alain Motard, Herve N'Kaoua, Robert Weirich, Stanislav Ioudenitch, Jack Winerock and Tamas Ungar. Avguste Antonov also had the privilege of taking masterclasses with Gerhard Oppitz, Jean-Claude Pennetier, Olivier Gardon, Grigory Sokolov, Olga Kern, Laure Favre Kahn, Anton Nel, Roman Rudnytsky and Yoheved Kaplinsky.

Avguste Antonov is at home in all repertoire, with a special interest in 20th and 21st century music. He has performed World and USA premieres at venues across North America and over the years he has worked with composers Carter Pann, Gregory Hutter, Michael Colgrass, Raina Murnak, Matthew Lewis, Till Meyn, Matthew Saunders, Robert Rollin, William Vollinger and others. [Read more on our website...](#)



Julio Reyes

Guitar

Julio Reyes was born in Oakland and learned the guitar at age 5 from his father. By age 18, he performed recitals in the US and Paraguay, the Concerto de Aranjuez with the Oakland Symphony and received a scholarship to the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. He has conducted youth and adult orchestras in the US, Europe, Paraguay, and Havana, Cuba. He has lectures at conservatories of music, universities and Guitar Societies in the US, Cuba and Canada. He made his Carnegie Hall debut Last year winning the Professional category in the Progressive Musicians Competition.



Galina Ivannikova

Voice

Ukrainian-American dramatic mezzo-soprano Galina Ivannikova is hailed by critics and audiences alike for her rich, lustrous voice as well as for her passionate dramatic portrayals. Bruce Michael Gelbert of NY Art Review raved “Ivannikova’s timbre was ruby in color, her chest register aptly gutsy, and her emotion pitch-perfect. She possessed a big glorious Verdi voice reminiscent of the Golden Age tradition.” She kept busy during the pandemic, performing online concerts, judging competitions, and recording several works by modern composers. The 2019-2020 season successfully kicked off with such performances as Brangäne in Wagner’s Tristan and Isolde with Connecticut Lyric opera, as well as an acclaimed aria concert with Northern Art Center, Yellowknife, NT, Canada.

During the 2018-2019 season, Ivannikova performed the roles of Amneris in Verdi’s Aida with Gateway Classical Opera society, as the Mezzo Soloist in Mahler’s Das Lied von Erde, Eboli in Verdi’s Don Carlo with Connecticut Lyric Opera, Waltraute in Wagner’s Götterdämmerung with NYVWOG, Azucena in Verdi’s Il Trovatore and The Witch in Humperdinck’s Hansel and Gretel with Regina Opera, Ulrica in Verdi’s Un Ballo in Maschera with Amore Opera, in addition to numerous concert appearances. [Read more on our website...](#)



Gevorg Sargsyan

Strings

Hailed as “...one of the most inspiring artists of his generation...” Gevorg Sargsyan is a Singapore based conductor and music director from Armenia. Recipient of Sir Georg Solti Award he has been guest-conducting in various venues around the world with different orchestras including Czech Chamber Philharmonic Orchestra, Armenian National Opera and ballet productions, Jayakarta Symphonic Orchestra, Pescara Chamber Philharmonic Orchestra among others. Gevorg studied in his native Armenia at the Yerevan State Conservatory and later continued in Vienna Conservatory in Austria and Goldsmiths College of Music, London (UK). After moving to Asia, he is combining his career between conducting and running masterclasses and lectures. He is a visiting professor of the University of Philippines College of Music, and is regularly guest-lecturing in various educational establishments across South East Asia. Gevorg is also a member of adjudication panels of various festivals and music competitions and worked as a music director of Madison Academy of Music and SCGS String Orchestra. He has recently been appointed an Artistic Director of Music Hubs with the Ministry of Culture of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.



Giacomo Franci
**New York
Chamber Players**
Concerti

Maestro Giacomo Franci is the Artistic Director and the Conductor of The New York Chamber Players, an organization he founded in 2004. For the 2010-11 season Maestro Franci was elected Guest Maestro of Escuela de Direccion de Orquesta in Cordoba, Spain. Giacomo Franci is world renowned as the leading interpreter of the music of Aaron Copland. He earned this highly coveted position based on the merits of his acclaimed world premiere recording "The Complete Edited Piano Works by A. Copland", a triple CD released by Fone' Classics. Maestro Franci performed at Alice Tully Hall, Lincoln Center, for the centennial of Copland's birthday in February 2000, receiving rave reviews for his performance. [Read more on our website...](#)



Michelle Lynne

Piano

Canadian pianist Michelle Lynne is known for her dynamic and exciting performances, connecting with audiences in a personal and touching way. Based in the Netherlands, she has performed across Canada and Europe. A frequent chamber musician, she is also in demand as a collaborative pianist and festival adjudicator. She is regularly invited to give masterclasses in International Schools across Europe with violist Deanna Petre as part of the Juilliard Global program. As Artistic Director of the concert series Opus 16 Concerten, she creates concert programs with other young professionals to connect and inspire audiences. She is the Co-Founder of The Fearless Artist Mastermind, a coaching program for professional musicians with co-facilitator Deanna Petre, where they work with musicians to equip them with skills needed to build successful careers as classical musicians. The recipient of numerous awards, she is a laureate of the Prix d'Europe, the Helene Roberge Competition (ARAM), the Canadian Music Competition, the Kiwanis Competition, the Shean Competition. Michelle has attended summer festivals across Europe, studying with renowned professors such as Julian Martin (Juilliard), Claudio Martinez Mehner (Basel), Dominique Weber (Geneva), Klaus Hellwig (Berlin), Ferenc Rados, Marian Hahn (Peabody) and André Laplante (Conservatoire de Montréal). She received a Professional Studies Diploma and a Masters degree in piano performance from the Université de Montréal, studying with Dr. Jean Saulnier. She is inspired by new ideas, good conversation, travel and long walks with her cyprus poodle.



Fred Rosenberg
**New York
Chamber Players**
Concerti

Fred Rosenberg, Clarinetist is currently 1st Clarinet with the New York Chamber Players Orchestra (Giacomo Franci, Music Director). He has held this position since 2006. Mr. Rosenberg has recorded with The New York Chamber Players Orchestra on the label, CRS (Contemporary Record Society) He was a featured clarinet soloist at Merkin Concert Hall with Giacomo Franci, Pianist. He has freelanced in NYC performing in a broad range of classical ensembles as a clarinetist including Empire State Sinfonia, Bleecker Street Opera, New Jersey Pops Orchestra, and the Goldman Band as well as many others. Mr. Rosenberg's freelance performance background includes multiple credits in Orchestras in Broadway Productions of "Les Miserables," "Cats," and "Titanic." Fred Rosenberg has recorded with Dance Clarinets, a jazz ensemble of clarinets with rhythm section. He was a judge for the annual competition for young soloists with the New York Chamber Players Orchestra for over ten years.

Our Team



Anna Ouspenskaya

**Co-Founder, Host,
Scriptwriter
Virtual Concert Halls
&
Sound Espresso**



James Welch

**Co-Founder
Progressive
Musicians**



Igor Zubkovsky

**Co-Founder,
Director of
Productions, Editor
Virtual Concert
Halls**



Frane Rušinović

**Co-Founder &
Technical Director
Virtual Concert
Halls**



Jennifer Wang

**Assistant Director
Virtual Concert
Halls**



Chris Au

**Host, script
writer & social
media manager
Virtual Concert
Halls**



Ante Božić-Kudrić

**Technical
Producer
Virtual Concert
Halls**



Patrick Welch

**Support Staff
Progressive
Musicians**



Cathleen Welch

**Support Staff
Progressive
Musicians**

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Meet the Team

VCHS

Sound Espressivo Global Competition

Anna Ouspenskaya

Progressive Musicians

SEC

The collage features portraits of several individuals, including a man with glasses, a man with a cello, a man in a suit, a woman in a red dress, a man in a white shirt, a man in a black jacket, a woman in a pink top, a man in a white shirt, a man in a black suit, a woman with headphones, a man in a blue shirt, and a man in a grey suit. The background is a vibrant red with musical staff lines.

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