

Twenty-Third Annual DePaul National Concerto Competition for Young Performers

Mark Brandfonbrener, Cello

Mark Brandfonbrener is a member of the orchestras of Lyric Opera of Chicago and the Santa Fe Opera. A graduate of the Juilliard School and the University of Michigan, he is an active chamber musician, performing as a member of Music of the Baroque, Fulcrum Point New Music Project, and the Pintele Piano trio. A former member of the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, he performs frequently with the Chicago Symphony, Chicago Chamber Musicians and Bach Week in Evanston. He has been a guest at many music festivals including Aspen, Montepulciano, and Gstaad. His cello is a 1710 Paolo Testore.

Cheng-Hou Lee, Cello

Cellist Cheng-Hou Lee, a native of Taiwan, received both the bachelor's and master's degrees from the Juilliard School. He also earned a master's degree in chamber music at Rice University, where he was a founding member of the award-winning Gotham Quartet. He was a full-scholarship student at New England Conservatory, where he received his Doctoral of Musical Art. Mr. Lee has worked with world-renowned artists such as Yo-Yo Ma, Harvey Shapiro, Janos Starker, Mstislav Rostropovich, Zora Neumcova, Paul Katz, Steven Isserlis, Raphael Wallfisch, Gary Hoffman, Tim Eddy, and members of the Juilliard, Tokyo, and Alban Berg Quartets. Cheng-Hou has won the Chi-Mei Foundation Award for Outstanding Talents, the concerto competition at the Manhattan School of Music, Tuesday Musical Club Competition in Houston and twice the National Cello Competition in Taiwan, and he has appeared on WQXR radio station in New York City, WFMT radio station in Chicago and many others in the US.

He was a recipient of a career grant from the Quanta Education Foundation, and he has made solo and chamber music appearances throughout the United States, as well as in Germany, Italy, Hong-Kong, and Taiwan. Mr. Lee served as a teaching assistant to Paul Katz for 5 years, and he has taught or conducted master classes at schools such as University of Michigan, University of Connecticut, University of Delaware, East Carolina University, Southern Illinois University, UCLA, Wheaton College, California State University, Northeastern Illinois University, Brigham Young University, University of Tennessee, University of Illinois Chicago, Inje University in South Korea and the Tainan Woman's College of Arts and Technology in Taiwan. He was also a faculty member at the Main Line Chamber Music Seminar in Pennsylvania, the "House of Cello" Festival, as well as the Bay Chamber Concerts "Next Generation" Program.

As a chamber musician, Mr. Lee performed with renowned artists such as cellists Paul Katz and Yehuda Hanani, violinists Don Weilerstein, Shmuel Ashkenasi, Robert Chen, Rachel Barton Pine and Lucy Chapman, violists Kim Kashkashian, Hsin-Yun Huang, Richard Young and Richard O'Neill, Clarinetist Anthony McGill, pianists Ruth Laredo, Meng-Chieh Liu and Christina Dahl, the Boromeo String Quartet, the Miami String Quartet, and American composer William Bolcom. In addition, he has appeared in concerts for the David G. Whitcomb Foundation, Ravinia Festival's Stearns Institute, Jordan Hall's 100th anniversary in Boston, the Omega Ensemble in New York City, the Charles Wadsworth and Friends Series, Robert Kapilow's "What Makes It Great?" Series at Lincoln Center, Cape Cod Chamber Music Festival, and Summermusic at Market Square Concerts. In recent years, Mr. Lee has given solo recitals at the Dame Myra Hess Memorial Concerts Series and

the Susa Marshall Memorial Concert Series, and appeared as a concerto soloist with Chicago Chamber Orchestra, Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra, and NIU Philharmonic. In addition, he has performed regularly with the Chicago Chamber Musicians, and made other solo or chamber appearances in the Chicago area.

Cheng-Hou is currently the cellist of the Avalon Quartet, which previously served as the string faculty at Indiana University at South Bend, and in August 2007 the Avalon Quartet succeeded the world-renowned Vermeer Quartet as the quartet-in-residence at Northern Illinois University. The quartet presents its own series in downtown Chicago at the Art Institute of Chicago, and has previously showcased the complete Beethoven and Bartok cycles. During summers, the quartet has been on faculty at festivals such as the Interlochen Center for the Arts' Advanced String Quartet program, Madeline Island Music Camp, the Icicle Creek Chamber Music Festival, and the Hot Springs Festival.

Andrea Swan, Piano

Andrea Swan is a Chicago-area collaborative pianist, chamber musician, orchestral player, soloist and teacher. She was the principal keyboard player with the Grant Park Music Festival for over 40 years and played regularly with the Lyric Opera orchestra. She also accompanied instrumentalists in their final auditions for positions in these orchestras and was the official collaborator for many competitions around the United States, including 13 years with the Stulberg International String Competition.

As a founding member of the Evanston Chamber Ensemble, she performed over 200 chamber works during their 40-year career. As a champion of new music, she played with the Contemporary Players at the University of Chicago for 25 years and later with the Fulcrum New Music Project. She has always enjoyed collaborating with students of all ages in competitions, recitals and master classes. She maintains a large class of adult students.

Ms. Swan holds degrees from Oberlin College and Indiana University. Her mentors include Jack Radunsky, Gyorgy Sebok, Menahem Pressler, Josef Gingold and Janos Starker.

Susan Tang, Piano

Susan Tang is Professor of Piano at Northeastern Illinois University and artistic director of the Chicago Chamber Music Festival, an intensive summer workshop for young artists. An active professional performer, Susan enjoyed a successful New York solo piano debut at Carnegie-Weill Hall as a Winner of Artist International Management Special Presentation Winners Series. Reviews by the New York Concert Review, described her playing as having "well-grounded technique...fluid, elegant readings...highly effective interpretations." She has also been called a pianist "with an assured playing that sparkled" by the Baltimore Sun and a "fluent pianist" by the Chicago Tribune. Susan Tang has performed and toured with Mabou Mine's Dollhouse, a theater company based in New York City as a pianist/actor, has been featured live on New York City's WQXR and Chicago's WFMT, performed with the Eastman Symphony Orchestra along with receiving the coveted Performer's Certificate. Invitations to perform and teach have taken her throughout Canada, United States, Germany, Japan, Taiwan, Korea and Colombia. She was a top prize winner at the Canadian Federation of Music Teachers' Associations National Piano Competition in Montreal and received the special jury prize at the Thousand Island International Piano Competition. She has studied at the Banff International Keyboard Festival, Van Cliburn Piano Institute and the Leipzig Summer Academy of Music. She is also the co-editor with Marc Ponthus of Elliot Carter: A Centennial Celebration and

has published articles in Clavier Magazine. She has been invited to perform at the Ravinia Festival, Jewel Box Series, Dame Myra Hess, Savannah Music Festival, University of Minnesota-Duluth, McNeese University, Dominican University, Blue Ridge Concert Series, Loyola University, Quest University, and Shriver Hall Concert Series. As an active clinician and adjudicator, Susan was the guest artist for the North Dakota Music Teachers Association state conference and is often invited to present for the local MTNA chapters. She has also presented at both the MTNA and College Music Society's national conferences and is a member of the Royal Conservatory Of Music's college of adjudicators. Susan Tang received her BM and MM from the Eastman School of Music and DMA from Manhattan School of Music. Her principal teachers include Nelita True, Nina Svetlanova, Robin Wood, and Susan Magnusson.

Rose Armbrust Griffin, Viola

Music Educator and Violist Rose Armbrust Griffin received her Bachelor of Music from The Juilliard School, her Artist Diploma from The Curtis Institute of Music, and her Master of Music from Indiana University. During her time at The Curtis Institute of Music, she held the James and Betty Materese Annual Fellowship. Most notably, Rose was awarded a Performers Certificate at the conclusion of her Masters for "recognition of her outstanding musical performance."

Her teachers include Heidi Castleman, Hsin-Yung Huang, Roberto Diaz, Michael Tree, and Atar Arad.

As an active chamber musician, Rose has collaborated with renowned artists such as Itzhak Perlman, Joshua Bell, Pamela Frank, Vadim Gluzman, Peter Wiley and the Amernet String Quartet. Her chamber music performances include concerts at The Kennedy Center, Avery Fischer Hall, Music from Angelfire, Zankel Hall, Ravinia's Steans Institute and The Musica Bella Concert Series. She has been guest artist at The North Shore Music and the Kingston Chamber Music Festivals and has performed with The Chicago Ensemble, The Jupiter Chamber Players, The Pilgrim Chamber Players, The Chicago Chamber Musicians, The Rembrandt Chamber Players and the Chicago Symphony's MusicNOW series.

Rose was the viola teacher for The Juilliard School's summer program in Shanghai, China. Currently, she performs with the Chicago Philharmonic Orchestra, substitutes with the Lyric Opera of Chicago, and enjoys performing chamber music with the Omnibus Quartet.

Rose has performed as soloist with the Bogota Symphony Orchestra, Woodstock's Mozart Festival Orchestra, The Curtis Chamber Orchestra and the Indiana University's Chamber Orchestra. She was awarded first prize in the Chicago Viola Society and Rembrandt Chamber Players Competitions and was a prizewinner at The Fichoff Chamber Music Competition.

She was the conductor of the St. Francis High School Orchestra and served for a season as Midwest Young Artist's conductor and coordinator of their Oakbrook location. Rose has worked under the batons of Christopher Eschenbach, Sir Simon Rattle, James DePriest, Otto-Werner Mueller and Leonard Slatkin. Currently, she is the Associate Conductor of the Naperville Youth Symphony Orchestra.

Rose is currently the viola instructor at Wheaton College and teaches Introduction to Music History, Introduction to Music Theory, and Viola Literature courses. Her private students have attended The Juilliard School, CIM, DePaul University and Wheaton College. They have also been prizewinners in Chicago-area competitions. Rose loves to teach!

Rose has recorded for Albany Records. She plays on a 1989 Marten Cornelissen that was borrowed during her time at Curtis and was subsequently purchased after she realized she couldn't live without it. Rose and her husband have three daughters.

Blaise Magniere, Violin

French violinist Blaise Magnière is a founding member of the Avalon String Quartet. He has appeared at festivals such as Caramoor, Mostly Mozart, La Jolla, Ravinia, Bath and Aldeburgh. His performances and conversation have been heard on BBC, CBC (Canada), ABC (Australia) and France-Musique. He has recorded for the Cedille, New Tangent, Albany and Channel Classics labels, and earned the 2002 Chamber Music America/WQXR Record Award.

Blaise Magnière holds the Richard O. Ryan Endowed Chair in Violin at Northern Illinois University. He studied at the Yehudi Menuhin School in England during his high-school years before going to McGill University in Montreal, where he studied with Mauricio Fuks, and to the Cleveland Institute of Music with Donald Weilerstein. As an assistant to the Juilliard String Quartet, Blaise Magnière coached chamber music at the Juilliard School.

Blaise is a fan of Chinese food, hiking and enjoys wrestling with his children.

Renata Knific, Violin

Professor, Chair of the String Area, Western Michigan University. International career began in London when she joined the English Chamber Orchestra at the age of 21. Tours of Europe, North and South America, and Asia followed, with artists such as Herman Bauman, Barry Tuckwell, Jean-Pierre Rampal, Maurice Andre, Pinchas Zuckerman, Itzhak Perlman, Isaac Stern, Vladimir Ashkenazy, and Murray Perahia. She worked closely with conductors Daniel Barenboim, Simon Rattle, Edo De Waart, and Christoph Eschenbach, and recorded dozens of records for the EMI, Decca, and CBS labels. As violinist of the Merling Trio, Knific performs 20 to 40 concerts annually throughout the world, including appearances at Merkin Hall, Carnegie Hall, St. John's, London, and the Banff Center for the Arts. Released three CDs with the trio and premiered many works written for the group. The Merling Trio was a finalist for the Naumburg Foundation Chamber Music Award in 1994. Numerous appearances in chamber music festivals and as a soloist throughout Europe, the United States, and Canada. Summer engagements include the Encore School for Strings, the Cleveland Institute of Music, the Interlochen Arts Academy, and the Lancut Festival in Poland. Former students perform in the Cavani, Pro Arte, and Cypress quartets and in orchestras throughout the world including the Cleveland, Houston, Honolulu, and Sao Paulo, Brazil symphonies. Founding member of the contemporary ensemble, OPUS 21, and has premiered nearly two dozen works by many leading composers in recent years. In 2003, released "West of Everywhere," a crossover recording featuring her with a variety of jazz greats including Gene Bertoncini, Sir Roland Hanna, John Abercrombie, Jamey Haddad, and Billy Hart. Leonarda Records released her premiere recording of Marga Richter's concerto for piano, violin, cello, and orchestra entitled "Variations and Interludes on Themes from Monteverdi and Bach" in 2004 to critical acclaim. Recent recordings include works for violin and piano by William Bolcom, at the composer's request, for MSR Classics Records.

MingHuan Xu, Violin

Violinist MingHuan Xu is a dedicated performer and educator whose wide-ranging career spans solo, chamber, and contemporary music. She serves as the Program Director of Strings and Assistant Teaching Professor of Violin at Roosevelt University's Chicago College of Performing Arts, where she

has been instrumental in developing a vibrant and competitive string program, drawing exceptional students from around the globe.

Her broad performance career includes appearances at major venues such as the Library of Congress, Merkin Hall, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Symphony Space, and the Smithsonian Institution. Her Carnegie Hall debut was featured on *Voice of America*, reaching millions of viewers in China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong. She has toured extensively throughout China, South America, and Europe, and has appeared at festivals including the Colours of Music Festival, Mammoth Lakes Music Festival, the Manchester Music Festival and the Walla Walla Chamber Music Festival.

A passionate advocate for new music, Ms. Xu has premiered hundreds of works by composers such as Marcos Balter, William Bolcom, Chaya Czernowin, Felipe Lara, George Lewis, Huang Ruo, Augusta Read Thomas and Amy Williams. She has collaborated with major figures including John Corigliano, Gunther Schuller, Bright Sheng, and Chen Yi, and recently received a Classical Commissioning Grant from Chamber Music America for a new work by Huang Ruo. Additional commissions include works by Gilad Cohen (Barlow Endowment Prize) and Huang Ruo (Chamber Music America).

Ms. Xu is a core member of Ensemble Dal Niente, a Chicago-based contemporary music collective praised as “a superb contemporary-music collective” (*The New York Times*) for its immersive productions and commitment to cutting-edge repertoire. With Dal Niente, she has performed in prestigious venues and festivals including the Art Institute of Chicago, Harvard University, and Hong Kong’s Cosmopolis Festival, and has contributed to numerous recordings with the ensemble. She was also the violinist for several years with the Grossman Ensemble at the University of Chicago’s Center for Contemporary Composition, a unique ensemble dedicated exclusively to the creation of new music. Using a collaborative rehearsal model, the ensemble brings composers and performers together throughout the creative process, resulting in refined and deeply integrated premieres.

Ms. Xu performs internationally as one half of Duo Diorama, with pianist Winston Choi. Known for their eclectic mix of musical styles and dynamic interpretations, the duo seamlessly blends classical masterworks with bold contemporary repertoire. She also performs as a member of Trio Diorama, which expands Duo Diorama with cellist Nick Photinos, focusing on adventurous and innovative chamber music projects.

Ms. Xu has appeared as guest concertmaster with numerous orchestras including the Elmhurst Symphony, Illinois Philharmonic, Richmond Symphony, and the Peninsula Music Festival Orchestra, and has performed widely as a concerto soloist with ensembles such as the Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Cheyenne Symphony, Kamloops Symphony, Oak Ridge Symphony, and the Midland-Odesa Symphony, among others. A native of Beijing, she began performing at age six and won first prize in the Beijing Young Artists Competition at eleven. She studied at the Interlochen Arts Academy during high school, and then continued at the Curtis Institute of Music, the Oberlin Conservatory, Northwestern University, and Stony Brook University, where her principal teachers included Julia Bushkova, Almita Vamos, Roland Vamos, Pamela Frank, Ani Kavafian and Philip Setzer.

Jennifer Clippert, Flute

Flutist Jennifer Clippert’s performance career clearly reflects her passionate knowledge of music from Baroque to present day. Equally comfortable as a soloist, chamber musician and orchestral

player, she has performed throughout Chicago with groups such as the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Grant Park Orchestra, Music of the Baroque, Chicago Opera Theater and the Chicago Symphony's MUSICNOW series among others. Through these performances she's had the opportunity to work with today's prominent conductors including Daniel Barenboim, Pierre Boulez, Cliff Colnot, Sir Andrew Davis, William Eddins, Christoph Eschenbach, Carlos Kalmar, Oliver Knussen, Lorin Maazel, Zubin Mehta, Kent Nagano, David Robertson, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Leonard Slatkin, Georg Solti, Robert Spano, Michael Tilson-Thomas, Christopher Wilkins, John Williams and Pinchas Zukerman.

Jennifer Clippert is a member of Quintet Attacca, the second woodwind quintet to have won the Grand Prize in the thirty-nine-year history of the Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition. Since winning both the Senior Wind Division and the Grand Prize at the 2002 Fischhoff National Chamber Music Festival, the group has maintained an active performance schedule including tours of both Italy and the United States. Quintet Attacca is known for its versatile and unique performances, creating diverse programs comprised of music both traditional and cutting-edge. Ms. Clippert is especially interested in exploring and promoting the music of today. Through her performances with the Chicago Symphony's MUSICNOW series, she has had the privilege of premiering works by some of today's leading composers including Oliver Knussen, Shulamit Ran and Augusta Read Thomas. She has also been fortunate to work closely with many composers on performances of their works.

She is the winner of several competitions including the Musicians Club of Women Farwell Award and the Flute Talk Competition. Ms. Clippert has been a finalist and prize winner in several competitions including the National Flute Association Young Artist, Piccolo Masterclass and Performers Masterclass Competitions.

An avid pedagogue, Ms. Clippert began her teaching career as an undergraduate student and has always maintained an active studio. She served on the National Flute Association's Pedagogy committee from 2005-2008 and has presented at several conventions. She is also a frequent guest artist, clinician and adjudicator for various flute festivals. Ms. Clippert was on faculty at DePaul University from 2006-2012.

Ms. Clippert began her studies at an early age in Wisconsin, studying first the piccolo and later the flute. She attended the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee where she received her BFA while studying with Robert Goodberg. While playing two seasons in the Civic Orchestra of Chicago, she had the privilege of studying with Donald Peck. Ms. Clippert is also a graduate of Northwestern University, where she received both her MM and DM under Walfrid Kujala.

Susan Warner, Clarinet

Susan Warner is Assistant Principal Clarinetist of the Lyric Opera of Chicago Orchestra. In addition to her position at the Lyric, Susan is a member of the Prairie Winds, a nationally touring wind quintet with an annual residency at Madeline Island Chamber Music. Also a member of the Sun Valley Music Festival Orchestra, Susan was recently featured as soloist in Bernstein's *Prelude, Fugue, and Riffs*. She has performed as substitute musician with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Montreal Symphony Orchestra, and Grant Park Symphony Orchestra.

Susan has performed at the Tanglewood, Schleswig-Holstein, Heidelberg Castle, Grand Teton, Music Academy of the West, and Aspen festivals. In August 2019 as a member of the Chicago Winds Quintet, Susan, along with her husband CSO hornist David Griffin, toured throughout China where Susan's growing fluency in Mandarin allowed her to deliver spoken introductions during concerts.

Susan and David live in Oak Park; together they have homeschooled their children, allowing for extensive family travels, most recently to Chile, Antarctica, New Zealand, Australia, Indonesia, Panama, and Turkey.