

Acknowledgements

KSO sincerely thanks:

- Julie Pronovici and Ken Gellerman, for organizing the MCAC auditions and concert.
- KSO volunteers at auditions: Ann Bur, Neill Merck, Laura Simonson, and Bradley Urberg-Carlson
- Schmitt Music in Brooklyn Center for providing MCAC audition space.
- Lakeside Floral & Gift for their in-kind donation of flowers.
- All the KSO musicians and fans who give their time, effort, and encouragement to one another in pursuit of musical opportunity, excellence, and joy, as we return from a year of hiatus.

Join KSO for the 2021-2022 season!

Please check kenwoodsymphonyorchestra.org for any concert changes.

The Nutcracker

with the Metropolitan Ballet

Saturday, December 11, 2021, 2 and 7pm, and Sunday, December 12, 2021, 2pm, Ticketed
Visit metroballet.org for ticketing information!

Florence Price's Symphony No. 3, Joel Thompson's Seven Last Words of the Unarmed *with Singers in Accord Chorus, director David Mennicke*

Saturday, March 12, 2022 – 7:30 PM, FREE
Buetow Auditorium at Concordia University, St. Paul

Camille Saint-Saens's Carnival of the Animals, Bela Bartok's Concerto for Orchestra, *William Grant Still's Festive Overture*

with Minneapolis Music Teachers' Forum 2022 winner performing Mozart

Saturday, May 21, 2022 – 7:30 PM, FREE
Sundin Hall at Hamline University, St. Paul

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PLAYING. SHARING. INSPIRING.

Yuri Ivan, Artistic Director and Conductor
Mindy Ratner, Host

Celebration!

Two brand-new pieces by Chinese pipa master Gao Hong

The 22nd Annual Masters Concerto and Aria Competition Winners' Showcase

The 2020 Minneapolis Music Teacher's Forum Mozart Piano Concerto
Competition winner

Saturday, November 6, 2021

7:30 PM

Our Lady of Peace Catholic Church
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Program

Yuri Ivan, conductor

Celebration.....Gao Hong (b. 1964)

"Jewel Song" from *Faust*.....Charles Gounod (1818 – 1893)

Jimin Lee, soprano

Première rhapsodie.....Claude Debussy (1862 – 1918)

Christopher Raddatz, clarinet

"Dich Teure Halle" from *Tannhauser*.....Richard Wagner (1813 – 1883)

Heather Hjelle, soprano

Piano Concerto No. 2 in C Minor.....Sergei Rachmaninov (1873 – 1943)
I. Moderato

Adrienne Johnson, piano

15 Minute Intermission

World Premiere: *Reminiscences of My Hometown*.....Gao Hong (b. 1964)

Gao Hong, pipa and Ye Yu, bassoon

Cello Concerto in D minor.....Édouard Lalo (1823 – 1892)
I. Prelude: Lento - Allegro maestoso

Daniel Keeler, cello

"E lucevan le stelle" from *Tosca*.....Giacomo Puccini (1858 – 1924)

Michael Min, tenor

Piano Concerto No. 12 in A Major, K. 414.....Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1792)
I. Allegro

Danica Scofield, piano

Concerto for the Left Hand.....Maurice Ravel (1875 – 1937)

Amos Lucidi, piano

Support KSO

The Kenwood Symphony Orchestra is a nonprofit organization that relies in great part on patrons' gifts to sustain our music. Join our list of supporters by donating to continue our mission to **play, share, and inspire great music!** Donations are tax-deductible and greatly appreciated.



To donate, visit www.kenwoodsymphonyorchestra.org/contact-us or use the QR code.

Guest Artist (\$750 and above)

Medtronic Foundation (on behalf of Kate Anderson, Bob and Peg Betzold, Bor-Jiin Mao, Julie Pronovici, Narendra Simha, and Sonja Somdahl)

Bob and Peg Betzold
Cy and Paula DeCosse Fund of the Minneapolis Foundation

Anne Cheney
Greg McNeely
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Conductor (\$250 to \$749)

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Phillip Brauer
James Olcott

Lucy Lu (matched by Ameriprise)
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Concertmaster (\$50 to \$249)

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Bor-Jiin Mao
Erika Neely (matched by General Mills)
Bridget Wellhoefer

Dr. Ed Block (in honor of Mary Helen Block)
Ronald and Charlotte House
Barb Lamb
Pat McCarthy
Marilyn Pronovici
Sonja Somdahl
Marlene Wolinski

Section Leader (up to \$49)

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Milinda Nitti

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The Kenwood Symphony Orchestra

Founded as the Kenwood Chamber Orchestra in 1972 as an arts education class at the Kenwood Community Center, KSO is currently in its 50th season. From those humble beginnings, the orchestra has grown in membership, ability, and reputation. Many gifted conductors have graced the podium, including Uri Barnea, Lee Humphries, Jim Riccardo, Jeannine Wager, William Intrilligator, Myles Hernandez, Kenneth Freed, and Jeffrey Sterling. Since 2007, the orchestra has been under the direction of Yuri Ivan. KSO is comprised of over 50 highly accomplished musicians passionate about playing and sharing great music. KSO is a nonprofit organization financed primarily by members' dues, financial gifts from supporters, and performance collaborations with the Metropolitan Ballet.

Violin I

- ◆ Ian Snyder, Concertmaster
Leonard & Ellen Pratt Endowed Chair
- Melissa Hernes Pickerign
- Gail Nelson
- Julie Pronovici
- Megan Hanrahan Petersen

Violin II

- ★ Linda Xayamongkhon
- Patrick Plonski
- Maria Park
- Jeannine Cavender-Bares

Viola

- ◆ Ann Bur
- Phillip Brauer
- Ariel Buehler
- Jenny Bengstrom
- Erika Neely
- Patrick McCarthy

Cello

- ◆ Brita Moore-Kutz
- John Renwick
- Todd Grill
- Cindy Heilman

Bass

- ◆ Conrad Hultquist
- Neill Merck
- Al Albers

Flute/Piccolo

- ◆ Anne Cheney
- ❖ Bianca Najera
- ❖ Milinda Nitti

Oboe

- ◆ Kaia Sand
- ❖ Megan Dvorak
- Tammy Wahlin

English Horn

- Tammy Wahlin

Clarinet

- ◆ Christopher Raddatz
- ★ Ken Gellerman
- Peregrine Hartmark

Bass Clarinet

- Peregrine Hartmark

Bassoon

- ◆ Ellen Maas Pratt
- Martina Rodgers

Contrabassoon

- ❖ Alex Legeros

Horn

- ◆ Angela Gritton
- Bob Meier
- ❖ Karen Holmes
- Nicole Metier

Trumpet

- ◆ Howard Brahmstedt
- Neil Baumgartner
- Leighton Tuenge

Trombone

- ◆ Christopher Caine
- Collin Hough
- Jeff Macomber

Tuba

- ❖ Charles Wazanowski

Harp

- Jim Buxton

Percussion

- ◆ Kelly Grill
- ❖ Katie Fischer
- Rosie Attiyeh

◆ = Principal

★ = Acting Principal

❖ = Guest Musician

The Masters Concerto and Aria Competition

MCAC was created by KSO to serve as a unique opportunity for adult and emerging professional musicians over the age of 25 to compete for the chance to perform with a live orchestra. KSO thanks Herbert Johnson, Steve Ramsey, Obed Floan, and Lawrence Weller for serving as judges for the 22nd annual competition.

Thank you for joining us for the 22nd Annual MCAC concert. The program is now on hiatus as we look for a new program coordinator.

Featured Artist Biographies

Gao Hong, a master of the Chinese lute, the pipa, began her career as a professional musician at age 12. She graduated with honors from China's premier music school, the Central Conservatory, where she studied with Lin Shicheng. In both China and the U.S. Gao has received numerous top awards, including 1st Prize in the Hebei Professional Young Music Performers Competition and an International Art Cup (Beijing). In 2005 Gao became the first traditional musician to be awarded a Bush Artist Fellowship. Other awards include fellowships from the McKnight Foundation and grants from the Minnesota State Arts Board, Sorel Organization (NYC); Mid Atlantic Arts (Baltimore) and others. In 2018 she received a Sally Award from the Ordway for her commitment to the arts. Gao has performed throughout Europe, Australia, Argentina, Asia, and the U.S. in solo concerts and with symphony orchestras, jazz musicians, and musicians from other cultures. She has performed at major venues and festivals worldwide: Lincoln Center Festival; Carnegie Hall; San Francisco Jazz Festival; Smithsonian Institution; the Next Wave Festival; Festival d'Automne a Paris in Paris and Caen, the International Festival of Perth; and the Festival de Teatro d'Europa in Milan. Her performances of pipa concerti include world, U.S., and regional premieres and performances with the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Buenos Aires Philharmonic, China National Traditional Orchestra, Louisville Orchestra, Pasadena Symphony, Heidelberg Philharmonic, and others. As a composer, she has received commissions from the Minnesota Orchestra, Minnesota Sinfonia, Central Conservatory, American Composers Forum, Walker Art Center, Jerome Foundation, Zeitgeist, Ragamala, Theater Mu, Minneapolis Guitar Quartet, TPT-PBS and others.

Gao teaches Chinese musical instruments and directs the Chinese and Global Music Ensembles at Carleton College. She is Guest Professor at the Central China and Tianjin Conservatories of Music and a Recording Academy Voting Member for the Grammys.

Gao Hong is a fiscal year 2020 recipient of an Artist Initiative grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board. This activity is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through a grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund.



MCAC Judge **Stephen J. Ramsey** is the founding music director/conductor of the Dakota Valley Symphony where he conducts the Symphony, the Symphony Chorus, and the Summer Pops Orchestra and Chorale. A well-known conductor in the Twin Cities area, Maestro Ramsey has also been music director and conductor at the Austin Symphony Orchestra (Austin, MN), the University of Minnesota Health Sciences Orchestra, and the Willmar Area Symphony Orchestra. Ramsey holds a Master of Music degree in orchestral conducting from the University of Missouri-Kansas City Conservatory of Music. He has studied with Glenn Block, Lee Humphries, Leonard Slatkin, William McGlaughlin, Max Rudolph, Maurice Jones, Samuel Jones, Harold Farberman, Kirk

Muspratt, Eph Ehly, and James Sample. A well-known conductor in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area, Ramsey has led performances at many area colleges, concert halls and churches. He has served as music director and conductor for the Minneapolis Jewish Community Center's Chamber Orchestra, mixed and women's choruses and their Genesis Theater Company, Chimera Theater, Lakeshore Players, Anoka-Ramsey Community College, and Applause Community Theater. He has also been the director of ensembles for Hamline University and the Conducting Associate of the St. Paul Civic Symphony. As an active guest conductor Ramsey has led the Bloomington Symphony, Health Sciences Orchestra, Minnesota Youth Symphonies, St. Paul Jewish Community Center Orchestra, Kenwood Chamber Orchestra, Linden Hills Chamber Orchestra, and the Central Chamber Orchestra.

MCAC Judge **Obed Floan** is a professional singer/actor, and master voice instructor. For over 20 years, his quest for singing knowledge has brought him all over the world to work with other master teachers and famous opera singers. He firmly believes that it is his duty as a lover of the craft of singing to share his knowledge, expertise, and love of music with the masses. His students go on to perform and work professionally in both national and international opera houses, Broadway national tours, college and university productions, prestigious summer programs and young artist programs, local community theater, and high school theater, as well as on television and the big screen. A few of Mr. Floan's personal successes include being chosen from an international pool of contestants as one of 16 singers considered to be the world's greatest Wagnerian singers selected to participate in the 2010 Lauritz Melchior International Singing Competition, the largest in the world of its kind, under the patronage of Her Majesty Queen Margrethe II held in Aalborg, Denmark. In 2012 and 2013, Floan was a winner of The Wagner Society of New York Encouragement Grant. Floan was also a 2015 finalist of the Classical Singer Magazine International Vocal Competition Emerging Professional Division and the 2015 winner of The Gerda Lissner Foundation International Vocal Competition - Wagner Division which resulted in his Carnegie Hall Debut in April 2015.

MCAC Judge **Herbert Johnson** has served as Professor of Piano and Director of Keyboard Activities at Bethel University since 2008. Previously, he taught applied piano and theory at North Central University for 14 years. Before his arrival in the Twin Cities, he taught at King's College in Briarcliff Manor, NY and Evangel College in Springfield, MO. Dr. Johnson received his Doctoral degree in piano performance from the Manhattan School of Music in New York City. He participates in numerous musical activities in the area including chamber music recitals, worship services and sacred concerts. In the summers of 1997 and 1998, he traveled to Ukraine with the Kairos Chamber Ensemble performing in churches and musical institutions in Kiev and Cherkassy. He has also performed with the Kruspe Horn Trio throughout Minnesota and is a member of the Minnesota Music Teachers Association and Music Teachers National Association. Dr. Johnson is in demand as an adjudicator for state competitions and festivals, has taught masterclasses, and conducts workshops for music teachers.

MCAC judge and conductor laureate **Lawrence Weller**, a Chicago native, received his formal music training at the University of Illinois and Indiana University. He has performed as singer or conductor in concerts and opera throughout North America, in Europe and in South America. Mr. Weller has premiered more than 70 new works and performed 28 principal roles in opera and musical theater. His recordings have included George Crumb's *Songs, Drones and Refrains of Death* for baritone and ensemble, and, as chorus master, Virgil Thomson's opera, *Four Saints in Three Acts*. He has performed regularly with numerous musical organizations in Minnesota, and nationally, and is active as a singer, conductor, teacher, clinician, and adjudicator. As a member of the U of M School of Music faculty for 29 years, he taught singing, vocal literature, lyric diction, and conducted major choral and opera works – including Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress*, and Puccini's *La Boheme* and *Gianni Schicci*. He holds the title of Professor Emeritus from the U of M.

Yuri Ivan, D.M.A., has served as the Artistic Director and Conductor of KSO since 2007. Dr. Ivan completed his formal music training in Ukraine under Jeremy Skybinky and Mykola Kolessa. Dr. Ivan also studied with

piece I express my feelings of nostalgia and happiness from my childhood days. I use the bassoon to represent old memories, and the pipa to represent myself. – Gao Hong

Edouard Lalo's Cello Concerto in D Minor

Composed in 1876, this concerto was among the few known "serious" pieces for solo cello and orchestra, along with concertos by Robert Schumann, Camille Saint-Saens, and Franz Joseph Haydn. Though the Frenchman Lalo was of Spanish descent, the first movement is more reminiscent of Beethoven and Schumann than of Spanish influence. It begins with an orchestral unison and solo recitatives that showcase the wide register of the cello and continues with a somber moderato. Modern cellist Julian Schwarz said that the piece "fits well in the hand" for cellists, thanks to the fact that Lalo himself was a cellist and violinist. The overall serious tone of the first movement contrasts with the more whimsical tunes in the second and third movements, and highlights the rich, passionate sound of the cello we know today, but wasn't well-recognized until the late 19th century by most.

Giacomo Puccini's "E lucevan le stelle" (from the opera *Tosca*)

Tosca was inspired by a French-language play, *La Tosca*, and both are set in June 1800. Napoleon Bonaparte had invaded Rome two years prior, sending the Pope into exile and establishing a new Roman Republic. The French occupied Rome until 1799, after which time soldiers from the Kingdom of Naples occupied the city. By June 1800, Napoleon again was approaching Rome. Political dissidents Cesare Angelotti and Mario Cavaradossi are under the pursuit of Neapolitan Police Chief Scarpia, who manipulate Cavaradossi's lover, Floria Tosca, to find and arrest the men. Scarpia seeks to execute Cavaradossi and take Tosca for himself, his power under the looming threat of Napoleon's invasion. Tosca kills Scarpia in response to his sexual advances, but only after getting a safe-passage document for herself and Cavaradossi. Meanwhile, Cavaradossi awaits execution and sings "E lucevan le stelle," reflecting on his sweet memories with Tosca, before she arrives with the news. Puccini composed *Tosca* between 1895-1899 after contractual disputes with the French playwright and infighting with his librettists. The premiere in January 1900 came with a backdrop of contemporary political unrest in the Kingdom of Italy, but the opera went forward successfully.

Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 12

The fact that Wolfgang Mozart, one of Music's most beloved figures, needed to convince the city of Vienna that he should be regarded both as a virtuoso pianist and a composer tells us something about the city in 1782. Just after he had settled permanently in Vienna and gotten married, Mozart was determined to win the fickle city over with three extremely charming piano concertos, numbers 11, 12 and 13. The Piano Concerto No. 12 in A major is still playful at times but is also a more mature version of mastery. In the Allegro, the first theme in the violins is filled with rhythmic quirks before the transition introduces more straightforward fanfares in the winds. Mozart is not truly breaking the rules of sonata form here, but fulfilling them in subtle or surprising ways.

Ravel's *Piano Concerto for the Left Hand*

The Ravel *Piano Concerto for the Left Hand* was written for concert pianist Paul Wittgenstein, who was wounded in World War II. Ravel's concerto is a masterpiece that quickly entered the central repertory. Ravel establishes the climate in the opening seconds. Cellos and basses send up a dissonant thundercloud, against which the contrabassoon plays a solemn theme, followed by low horns with a melody whose metrical dislocations first suggest the "jazz elements" Ravel said he had included in this work. The suspense of waiting for the soloist to begin playing is a traditional component of the concerto experience. Ravel creates that suspense not only with a crescendo cunningly built over thirty-two slow bars, but also by means of the harmony. In a concerto for left hand we have the additional suspense that grows from the question, "How in the world is this going to work?" Altogether, it gives Ravel manifest pleasure to write for one hand as though it were three. Ravel saves for his cadenza his most eye-popping device, a soprano and tenor duet with an accompaniment in brilliant thirty-second notes sweeping between them.

Charles Gounod's "Jewel Song" (from the opera *Faust*)

Gounod's opera *Faust* was his first great success and established his international reputation, much to the chagrin of the Germans who did not appreciate how Gounod had altered Goethe's literary model, completed fifty years before the March 19, 1859 premiere of Gounod's opera. In Gounod's *Faust*, the aging scholar Faust desperately longs for his youth and agrees to sell his soul to the devil and, in exchange, is transformed into a handsome young man and falls in love with the beautiful young Marguerite. In Act III, set in Marguerite's garden, Faust sends Mephistopheles to find a gift for Marguerite. Mephistopheles returns and leaves a trunk of exquisite jewelry and a hand mirror on Marguerite's doorstep. Marguerite, thinking that the jewels are from an admirer, tries on the jewels. While admiring herself in the mirror, she becomes captivated by how they enhance her beauty, and begins singing her famous aria, the Jewel Song. Mephistopheles and Faust return to the garden and Marguerite allows Faust to kiss her, but then asks him to leave. Faust returns and under the watchful eye and malevolent laughter of Mephistopheles, the tragic results of their liaison will soon follow.

Claude Debussy's *Premiere Rhapsodie*

In 1909, composer Gabriel Faure, Director of the Conservatoire de Paris, named Debussy to its board of directors. Debussy was expected to compose examination pieces for Conservatoire students and serve as an adjudicator for those examinations. Debussy composed the *Rhapsodie* for the clarinet examinations held on July 14, 1910. What started out as a competition solo, accompanied by piano, quickly became recognized as a masterpiece solo work for the clarinet and began appearing in programs on the concert stage. Debussy was so pleased with this work that he composed the orchestral version which premiered in 1911. The soloist, Prosper Mimart, to whom the piece was dedicated, was professor of clarinet at the Conservatoire. As the title implies, the *Rhapsodie* is in free form and offers many challenges for the performer, including significant technical obstacles, breath control, endurance, range, intonation, and nuance. Debussy's *Rhapsodie* is one of the most famous works in the solo clarinet repertoire and is intended to showcase the clarinet's technical and artistic capabilities.

Richard Wagner's "Dich Teure Halle" (from the opera *Tannhauser*)

Tannhauser was Wagner's fifth completed opera, composed from 1842-1845. The central character of the same name, a legendary minnesinger-knight, is torn between his desire for salvation in the Christian sense and his temptation by the pagan goddess Venus, who had been holding him captive for a year after his disagreement with fellow Wartburg minnesinger-knights. Additionally, the Landgrave of Thuringia is holding a singing contest at the Wartburg castle, and his niece Elisabeth is Tannhauser's love interest. Elisabeth sings this aria at the start of Act II as she enters the hall of the minnesingers at Wartburg. She is filled with joy upon entering and hope that Tannhauser will return soon after his year in Venus's custody. Throughout the story, Elisabeth is portrayed as the guiding voice for Tannhauser to achieve Christian salvation despite his entanglement with Venus.

Rachmaninov's Piano Concerto No. 2

Five days before the premiere in November 1901, Rachmaninov suffered a moment of panic and was convinced he had produced a totally incompetent piece of work, but the tempestuous success he enjoyed at the premiere seems to have convinced him otherwise. A quality especially apparent in the Second Piano Concerto is a sense of effortlessness in its unfolding, and that is something new in Rachmaninoff's music. He begins magnificently, and with something so familiar that we come perilously close to taking it for granted—a series of piano chords in crescendo, all based on F. The piano's role as accompanist is also worth noting. Nowhere is the pianist so often an ensemble partner and so rarely a soloist aggressively in the foreground as in this piece.

Reminiscences of My Hometown (world premiere by KSO)

This piece is another response to the pandemic as I thought the best way for me to heal the pain I felt was to compose. Due to all the travel restrictions, I could not visit my family in China, and they could not visit me. This made me extremely homesick, and I began reminiscing about my childhood to calm and comfort me. In this

Yuri Simonov, Adalberto Tonnini and Vjacheslav Blinov. After graduating from The State Conservatory of Music in Lviv, he served from 1996 to 2000 as an Associate Conductor at The State Theatre of Opera and Ballet in Dnepropetrovsk, Ukraine, where he conducted productions including *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Rigoletto*, *La Traviata*, *Carmen*, *Pagliacci*, *Eugene Oneguine*, *Die Fledermaus*, *La Fille Mal Gardee*, *Giselle*, *Don Quixote*, *Swan Lake* and *Sleeping Beauty*. In 2001, Dr. Ivan was named Artistic Director of Trans-Carpathian Philharmonic, co-founded the Uzhgorod Youth Orchestra, and the Young Virtuosi music festival in Ukraine. He also appeared with LVMI Opera, the National Symphony-Pops Orchestra of Ukraine, the National Broadcasting Company Orchestra of Ukraine and the Northern Hungarian Symphony. Dr. Ivan completed his doctoral studies in conducting at the University of Minnesota where he studied with Akira Mori and Craig Kirchhoff. Currently, he is the Music Director at St. Constantine Ukrainian Catholic Church in Minneapolis, MN. He is active in the artistic life of the Twin Cities metro area and beyond, collaborating with artistic and educational organizations including the Learning Through Music, Health Science Orchestra, Bloomington Symphony, MacPhail Center for the Arts' Sonomento Choir, Minnesota Chorale's Voices of Experience, Twin Cities Fringe Opera, Minnesota Concert Opera, MNKINO Film Score Fest, University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point School of Music Composition Contest and Eau Claire Chamber Orchestra. Since 2006, he has served as Music Director of the Linden Hills Chamber Orchestra and since 2007, as the conductor for the Metropolitan Ballet. Dr. Ivan founded the Minnesota Byzantine Choral Festival in 2010.

Ye Yu graduated from Sichuan Conservatory in China in 1982 and subsequently became an instructor at the institute. He then moved to the United States to study for his DMA at the University of Minnesota with John Miller, principal bassoonist of the Minnesota Orchestra. During his studies, he won the University Symphony Orchestra Concerto Competition. Yu has performed in many professional orchestras throughout the Eastern and Midwestern United States, including the Minnesota Orchestra, West Virginia Symphony Orchestra, South Dakota Symphony Orchestra, and community orchestra around the Twin Cities. As a soloist, he has performed bassoon concertos with the Northeast Orchestra and the University of Minnesota Symphony Orchestra. Recent appearances include performances at the Sichuan Conservatory, China Conservatory, Xian Conservatory, and Wuhan Opera. In April 2017, he was invited to Utah State University for a collaborative performance with Professor Dennis Hirst. Other collaborative projects include a performance tour to China with Professor Robyn Jones from the University of Memphis. Yu owns a local double reed business, Golden Bamboo.

Minneapolis Music Teachers' Forum 2020 Mozart Competition winner **Danica Scofield** (11) is a student of Dr. Megan and Dr. Christopher Wallace. She started piano lessons a few weeks before she turned 5 and learned how to play the piano by ear. By the age of six, she had her debut at Carnegie Hall, New York as a second prize winner for the American Protégé Piano and Strings International Competition. When she was 8, she took first place in the Bösendorfer USA Competition in the 10-13 age group. That summer, she had her first fundraising concert at a public university in Bangkok, Thailand where she was one of the two main piano soloists. In 2019, Danica competed in the Minnesota State Fair Amateur Talent Contest for ages 12 and under and performed in front of approximately 8,000 people at the Grandstand. She took first place and won the contest when she was only 9 years old. With her love of performing and sharing the gift of music, her dream of playing with an orchestra came true when she took first place in 2 concerto competitions. When not playing the piano, Danica enjoys playing tennis, cooking, reading, and managing her very own YouTube channel.

Heather Hjelle, spinto soprano, most recently took the stage performing the role of "Gioconda" in *La Gioconda* with Opera MODO. Previously, she made her professional debut as "Santuzza" in *Cavalleria rusticana* with Main Street Opera in 2017. Early that year, she covered Metropolitan Opera soprano Alexandra LoBianco as "Santuzza" with Opera Steamboat. That same year, Heather traveled to Italy to perform the role of "Donna Anna" in *Don Giovanni* with Operafestival di Roma. Previous roles include: "Suor Angelica" (*Suor Angelica*) with Operafestival di Roma, "Erste Dame" (*Die Zauberflöte*), "Clara" (*Signor Deluso*) and "La fata

verde" (*La Bella dormant nel bosco*) with North Park University Opera. Scene credits include: "Countess Almaviva" (*Le nozze di Figaro*), "Violetta" (*La Traviata*), "Mimi" (*La Bohème*), "Fiordiligi" (*Così fan tutte*), "Lucia" (*Lucia di Lammermoor*), "Manon" (*Manon*), "Hanna" (*Die lustige Witwe*), "Vanessa" (*Vanessa*), and "Cio-Cio-San" (*Madama Butterfly*). A Minnesota native, Heather earned a degree in Theatre with a minor in music from Bethany Lutheran College in Mankato. At Bethany, she was a featured performer in numerous plays and choral ensembles. In 2016, she received her Masters of Vocal Performance from North Park University where she won second place in the Graduate Performance Awards. She is looking forward to returning to Opera Steamboat this summer where she will be covering the role of "Ariadne" and performing the role of "Echo" in Strauss's *Ariadne auf Naxos*.

Adrienne Johnson has been an Elementary Teacher and playwright in the Archdiocese of St. Paul for more than 20 years. After graduating with a degree from the Juilliard School she went into the field of education, with an emphasis on writing and producing original plays, one of which earned her a Grammy nomination in the field of education in 2016. Adrienne raised four boys and started seriously practicing again five years ago. Encouraged by friends and mentors, she has participated in amateur competitions held in Boston, Washington D.C., Denver, and Chicago. Adrienne is an advocate of community service and works with local organizations to bring music to retirement and health communities in the Twin Cities area. She continues her own advancement in music by attending festivals such as Piano Texas and the International Keyboard Festival in New York during the summers. Currently, she is writing a musical play about the immense contributions of Fred Rogers, titled *It's a Beautiful Day: celebrating love, joy and friendship*.

Minnesota born cellist **Daniel Keeler**, D.M.A, is a passionate musician, educator, and composer. Praised for his "Lush" and "Energetic" playing, Daniel has performed across the United States as a soloist, orchestral, and collaborative musician. Dr. Keeler is a performing member of Thursday Musical and has received top prizes in several national and regional competitions. As a contemporary musician he has performed a vast array of contemporary works in various solo recitals and with groups such as the Missouri Contemporary Ballet, and Trampled by Turtles. As an orchestral musician, his leadership roles span nearly a dozen orchestras at the community, collegiate, and professional levels. Accolades include appearances as a soloist with several orchestras around the midwest, including concertos by Bloch, Dvorak, Haydn, Lalo, and Popper. As an educator, Daniel is the cello instructor at the University of Minnesota-Duluth, String Ensemble Director for Concordia University-St. Paul, an Orchestra Director for Mounds View Public Schools, and teaches as a private lesson instructor to students of all ages and diverse backgrounds. Additionally, he has been a guest and resident cellist for a wide variety of music festivals around the states of Minnesota and Missouri. Dr. Keeler holds a Doctorate in cello performance and pedagogy from the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, a Masters of Music from the University of Missouri-Columbia in cello performance, and Bachelors in Music Education from the University of Minnesota-Duluth. His primary teachers include Tanya Remenikova, Eli Lara, and Betsy Husby.

Soprano **Jimin Lee** was born in Daejeon, South Korea. She is internationally recognized and has received awards in multiple competitions across the globe. In Korea, Jimin placed second at the Sinye Music Competition in 2011 and also received the 'PADAF' Music award in 2016. Jimin began her concert career in the Young Artist Debut Concert in the Daejeon Philharmonic Orchestra in 2014. In Korea, her roles include "Contessa" in the opera *Le Nozze di Figaro* at Sookmyung Women's University, "Magda" in *La Rondine*, "Zerlina" in *Don Giovanni*, "Marguerite" in *Faust*, and "Nedda" in *I Pagliacci*. In the United States, she performed as "Governess" from *Turn of the Screw* and prepared the role "Blanche" from *Dialogue des Carmelites*. Jimin Lee earned a Bachelor of Music degree in voice from Sookmyung Women's University in Seoul and her Master of Music degree in voice performance from the University of Texas at Austin. Currently, she is pursuing her doctoral studies at the University of Minnesota School of Music in Minneapolis where she studies with Victoria Vargas.

Amos Lucidi is studying a Doctor of Musical Arts program in Piano Performance at the University of Minnesota under the guidance of the Professor Alexander Braginsky. During the past two years he was based mainly in the city of Merida, México, where he developed a remarkable concert career, as soloist and in different chamber formations. He was also Piano Professor and Collaborative Pianist at the Bachelor of Musical Arts of Escuela Superior de Artes de Yucatán (ESAY). Regarded as one of the most outstanding young Mexican musicians, Amos has performed extensively as a soloist and in chamber groups in Mexico, Italy, France, and the United Kingdom, participating in important festivals such as the International Festival of Mayan Culture and Merida Fest. More recent appearances include recitals in venues such as St. James's Piccadilly and the Old Royal Naval College in London, l'Eglise de Saint-Merry in Paris and Teatro Clitunno in Trevi, Italy. In 2011, he obtained a bachelor's degree in Musical Arts with honors at the ESAY, (Escuela Superior de Artes de Yucatan). In 2014, he completed the Diploma di II Livello with mention Cum Laude at the Instituto Superiore di Studi Musicali "P. Mascagni" of Livorno with the Argentinian pianist Daniel Rivera. In September 2017 he obtained a Master of Arts in Piano Performance with Distinction at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance, under the guidance of the internationally renowned pianists Mikhail Kazakevich and Peter Tuite.

Korean-American musician **Michael Min** is currently pursuing his Master of Music degree in Collaborative Piano and Coaching at the University of Minnesota under the guidance of Dr. Timothy Lovelace and has been taking applied voice lessons with Professor John De Haan. He is a music director of the global soloist's ensemble 'MUZIK' formed with singers who graduated from the University of Minnesota that are actively performed worldwide such as in China, Canada, and South Korea. Prior to his study at the University of Minnesota, Michael was formerly a faculty member at Middle Tennessee State University, where he actively performed and coached students in their musical studies. Michael received his B.A from the Sahn-Yook (Korean Seventh-Day Adventist) University in Seoul, Korea, and completed his M.M in Piano Performance at Middle Tennessee State University where he studied with Dr. Eun-byol Ko and Dr. Adam Clark and received D.M.A in Piano Performance at the University of Minnesota under the tutelage of Dr. Kyung Kim. Recent notable honors have included Grand Prize in the Seoul National Symphony Orchestra Competition, prizewinner in the Venusto Music Competition (supported by the Mayor of Seoul, Korea), first place in the 2019 Golden Classical Awards International Competition (New York), American Protégé International Competition (New York), and winner of the University of Minnesota School of Music Concerto Competition. Michael is very thankful to fulfill one of his lifetime dreams of performing as a vocal soloist with an orchestra, in addition to performing as a piano soloist.

Christopher Raddatz currently serves as principal clarinet with the Kenwood Symphony Orchestra. A native of Wisconsin, Chris began playing the clarinet in the fifth grade. He received a B.A in music from the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, as well as a master's degree in music performance from the University of Minnesota. His teachers have included Richard Fletcher, John Anderson, and John Scott. Chris currently lives in Saint Paul with his dogs Rags and Lola where he works as a restaurant manager.

Program Notes

Celebration (second-ever performance, premiered by the Minnesota Sinfonia in Oct. 2021)
During the COVID-19 pandemic and resent incidents of racial injustice, I felt that my entire world was turning upside down. All my performances and international tours were canceled. All I wanted to do was to get back to a normal daily life. So, in this piece celebration has two meanings. The first celebration is when vaccines became available and there was hope that the pandemic would soon end, and we'd be celebrating the return to our normal lives. And secondly, I was hoping to finally celebrate major moves towards racial equality and a time when everybody was appreciated and treated with respect. I was excited to see a glimmer of hope and wanted to celebrate. – Gao Hong