



VIRTUAL
CONCERT
HALLS



LAUREATE GALA WEILL RECITAL HALL AT CARNEGIE HALL



FEBRUARY 19, 2026 @ 7 PM



Anna Ouspenskaya



Igor Zubkovsky



Frane Rušinović

Welcome to the Laureate Gala, presented by Sound Espresso and Virtual Concert Halls. This evening's program features musicians from around the world who participated in our Laureates' Auditions, showcasing a rich diversity of artistic experience.

We are happy to welcome back the **New York Chamber Players Orchestra (NYCPO)** and its maestro **Giacomo Franci**. The orchestra will accompany our soloists and also perform Schubert's Symphony, adding depth and brilliance to tonight's program.

Our mission is to support musicians of all ages in their artistic growth through innovative online competitions and performance initiatives. Since 2020, we have created virtual platforms that enable performers to reach global audiences, receive expert feedback, share their artistry, and gain opportunities to perform in prestigious venues. We celebrate the dedication of teachers, families, and communities, as well as the courage it takes for musicians to share their art.

Music weaves together storytelling, history, mathematics, imagery, and emotion. It reflects cultural heritage, inspires other art forms, and fosters meaningful human connection. Strong musical training — uniting expert instruction, disciplined practice, collaboration, and performance opportunities — allows individual artistic voices to flourish.

We are proud to work with an extraordinary team of professionals who educate, encourage, and recognize musicians at every stage of their artistic journey.

Thank you to our families, supporters, and contributors — this Gala would not be possible without you. We hope you enjoy the celebration!

SOUND ESPRESSIVO
AND
VIRTUAL CONCERT HALLS
proudly presents its

4TH SEASON
LAUREATE GALA

WEILL RECITAL HALL
CARNEGIE HALL

FEBRUARY 19, 2026 | 7PM

FEATURING

OUR SELECTED LAUREATES
THE NEW YORK CHAMBER
PLAYERS ORCHESTRA

Program

February 19, 2026, 7:00 PM
Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall

Étude in G-sharp minor, Op. 25 No. 6 Chopin
Olivia Li, piano

Prelude and Gigue from Suite No. 1 in G Major, BWV 1007
Bach
Igor Zubkovsky, cello

Finale Variation from Don Quixote, Op. 35 Strauss
Igor Zubkovsky, cello
Jennifer Savage, piano

Sonata No. 8, Op. 13, 'Pathétique' (I. Grave – Allegro di molto e con brio) Beethoven
Alexis Min-Gi Perrin, piano

Woman on a Ledge (*excerpt*) Rita Costanzi (adapted by Hershey Felder)
Rita Costanzi, narrator and harp

— Brief Pause for Scene Change —

Meditation, from *Thaïs* Massenet
Edison Barton, violin; Rita Costanzi, harp

Violin Concerto No. 3 in G Major, K. 216 (III. Rondeau: Allegro) Mozart
Edison Barton, violin

Ritorna Vincitor, from *Aida* Verdi
Lydie Pace, soprano

Andante from Piano Concerto No. 2, Op. 83 (abridged) Brahms
Jennifer Savage, piano; Igor Zubkovsky, cello

Symphony No. 5 in B \flat major, D 485 Schubert
I. Allegro
II. Andante con moto
III. Menuetto. Allegro molto
IV. Finale: Allegro vivace

New York Chamber Players Orchestra
Maestro Giacomo Franci

The New York Chamber Players



Violin I

Rachel Zhao (concertmaster)
Francisco Salazar
Susan Mitchell

Violin II

Sivani Srinivasan (principal)
Svetla Kalcheva
France Rovelli

Viola

Hui Wang (principal)
Bo Park

Cello

Igor Zubkovsky (principal)
River Ferrand

Double Bass

Stefano Battaglia

Piano

Jennifer Savage

Flute

Philippe Delage

Oboe I

Elizabeth Perez

Oboe II

Emily Mendez

Clarinet

Fred Rosenberg

Bassoon

Devin DiMauro

Harp

Rita Costanzi

French Horn I

Constance Mulford

French Horn II

John Morgan Bush

Giacomo Franci, Conductor



The Host

Steve Robinson

Steve Robinson is an American radio executive, producer, and media leader whose 50-year career spans some of the nation's most respected public radio stations. He has held senior management roles at WFMT and the WFMT Radio Network/Chicago, WBUR/Boston, WGBH/Boston, WCRB/Boston, KPFA/Berkeley, WBGO/Newark, Vermont Public Radio, and the Nebraska Public Radio Network, where he served as General Manager from 1990–2000. From 2000 to 2016, he was General Manager of WFMT and the WFMT Radio Network.

Robinson has produced an extensive range of programming—from classical music documentaries to public affairs—and directed more than 100 on-air fundraising drives. In 1984, he co-founded AIR: the Association of Independents in Radio, securing its first major grants from NYSCA and the NEA.

His broadcasts have reached audiences worldwide, including live programs from Salzburg for Mozart's 250th birthday, Durban for the premiere of Princess Magogo, Quebec City for Mahler's Symphony of a Thousand, and Jerusalem for the Jerusalem International Chamber Music Festival. He has collaborated with leading composers such as William Schuman, Elliott Carter, Charles Dodge, Roger Reynolds, and Alan Hovhaness.

In 2003, Robinson created the acclaimed daily classical music program Exploring Music with Bill McGlaughlin, now airing on more than 60 U.S. stations and internationally. He also established the first classical music radio exchange between the United States and China.

During his WFMT tenure, he expanded live broadcasting, broadened programming, and launched new series including Introductions and Impromptu. In 2007, the Chicago Tribune named him "Chicagoan of the Year" in the arts.

Robinson also led major charitable broadcast campaigns in 2004 and 2010, each raising over \$3 million for global disaster relief, earning him two Wesbury Awards from the American Red Cross of Greater Chicago.

His work has been recognized with numerous honors, including the ASCAP/Deems Taylor Award, the Champion Award from the Merit School of Music, and the Dushkin Award for Exploring Music.

THE MUSICIANS



Alexis Min-Gi Perrin
piano

Alexis Min-Gi Perrin, age 11, is a French Korean boy, living in Singapore. He began his piano studies at the age of 7 and is currently in his 6th Grade in the International French School of Singapore.

He entered his first competition at the age ten, and earned 1st place in the BTDA (Brilliant Talent Discovery Awards) of Singapore and 2nd place in the International Schubert Competition Vienna.

Outside of music, Alexis enjoys playing in a football league and loves reading and playing Chess. He is also junior black belt in Taekwondo.



Edison Barton
violin

Edison Barton began studying the violin at age eight and currently studies with Katrina Savitski in Houston, Texas. His orchestral experience includes the Opus 99 Youth Orchestra (2022) and the Houston Youth Symphony, which he joined in fall 2024. From 2022 to 2025, he was also a member of the Opus 1 Chamber Music Ensemble.

Edison has participated in several distinguished summer programs, including the American Festival for the Arts (2022), the Philadelphia International Music Festival Junior Division (2023), and Interlochen Arts Camp (2024), where He was a winner of the Junior Honors Recital Competition and performed in the Recital.

In 2025, he continued his training at the Midori Summer Music Lab, the Victoria Conservatory of Music Summer Intensive Program, and the Philadelphia International Music Festival in Italy.

His honors include serving as Concertmaster of the 2025 TMEA Region 27 Orchestra and Assistant Concertmaster of the Houston Youth Symphony Sinfonia Orchestra.

He has earned an “Exceptional with Honors” Level 7 rating from the ASTA Certificate Advancement Program, recognition as an Outstanding Soloist at the National Orchestra Honors, and multiple awards from the National Federation of Music Clubs.

Outside of music, Edison enjoys playing the guitar, singing, drawing, baking, fishing, basketball, and riding his bike and electric scooter.



Rita Costanzi
harp

Rita Costanzi has been hailed as “an artist of immense gifts” (Vancouver Sun). An internationally recognized harp soloist, actor, writer, and teacher, she is known for her depth of expression and artistic integrity.

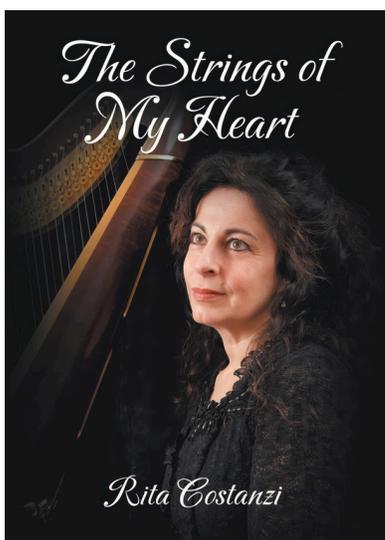
Celtic author Treasa O’Driscoll describes her as “a musician of exceptional accomplishment whose playing touches the souls of listeners in deep and unexpected ways.”

Winner of the 2020 Hershey Felder Presents Arts Prize Competition, Costanzi gained international recognition for her documentary *Moonlight in the Bronx*, a powerful and timely tribute to Ludwig van Beethoven and the victims of the COVID-19 pandemic. Heralded as “A Hymn to New York,” the film was written, directed, and performed by Costanzi and praised for its warmth, conviction, and virtuosity.

In 2021, the Sunflower Festival presented the world premiere of *Woman On A Ledge*, a theatrical work by Hershey Felder, supported by the National Endowment for the Arts. This compelling fusion of solo harp and theater explores the complexities of a female artist’s life and was later reimaged for an Off-Off Broadway run in New York.

Based in New York City since 2007, Costanzi has performed and taught internationally across North and South America, Europe, and Canada, appearing at major festivals including the United Solo Theatre Festival, the Ottawa International Festival, and the World Harp Congress in Sydney. Her recording *Amoroso* (Navona Records, 2023), with oboist Alex Klein, has surpassed one million streams.

Costanzi trained at the Eastman School of Music, graduating with Highest Distinction and the Performer’s Certificate, and pursued further studies with Bernard Zighera and Marcel Grandjany.



Recent release “The Strings of My Heart” from Page Publishing author Rita Costanzi is a compelling memoir of a world-celebrated harpist, composed of forty-seven vignettes, one for each of the forty-seven strings of her concert grand harp.



Lydie Pace
soprano

Dramatic Soprano — The First Opera Singer from the Central African Republic

Born in Bangui, Central African Republic, Lydie Pace is the first opera singer from her country to gain international recognition.

She began her musical training in France and, in 1993, won Second Prize at the International Masters of French Singing Competition. She graduated from the Conservatoire à Rayonnement Régional de Rueil-Malmaison, studying with Élisabeth Vidal, and earned a Higher Diploma in Vocal Studies. Her training was further distinguished by a First Accessit in Lyric Art from the Schola Cantorum and the Young Lyric Talents Trophy of Oise.

Her artistic excellence has been recognized with numerous honors, including appointment as a Knight of the Order of Central African Merit, the Wandara of Honor (Central African Excellence Merit), and the prestigious Barthélemy Boganda Peace Prize. She also serves as an Ambassador for the ISTRIA Association, promoting cultural heritage in Croatia.

From 1999 to 2017, Lydie Pace performed extensively at major festivals and venues, interpreting leading roles in operas by Verdi, Puccini, Massenet, Bizet, and Pergolesi. She was notably featured at the International Touquet Festival and collaborated with prominent ensembles, including the Orchestre Régional d'Île-de-France. In 2017, she participated in the Nelson Mandela Prize Ceremony in Paris.

Alongside her performing career, she has been deeply committed to teaching and artistic leadership. She has taught lyrical singing since 1997, directed choirs, and led numerous artistic projects.

From 2011 to 2019, she served as professor at the Conservatoire of Autun, later becoming Artistic Director of the Château de Sully Festival. In 2023–2024, she was appointed Director of the Tergnier Music Conservatory.

Since 2020, Lydie Pace has appeared on prestigious stages across Europe, Africa, and North America. In 2025, she collaborates with Belcanto Italia Festival and was selected as a Laureate of the Carnegie 2025/26 Auditions, performing at Weill Recital Hall, Carnegie Hall, in New York.

Balancing an international stage career with teaching and artistic direction, Lydie Pace proudly represents the lyrical voice and cultural excellence of the Central African Republic on the world's great stages.



Olivia Li
piano

Olivia has received recognition in numerous international competitions. Her achievements include the Grand Prize at the XVI Chopin International Piano Competition in Hartford, Grand First Prize at the Chicago International Music Competition, Grand Prize at the Ocean Music International Piano Competition, First Prize at the Henle Piano Competition, Gold Prize at the Piano Star International Competition, and Gold Prize at the VIVO International Music Competition.

She was also the Second Prize winner at the Nashville International Chopin Piano Competition earning the Best Nocturne Prize across all age groups. She has performed in major concert venues, including Carnegie Hall and Merkin Hall, bringing her vibrant musicality to audiences locally and internationally.

Outside of piano, Olivia enjoys reading, drawing, painting, crafting, swimming, and ice skating, approaching each pursuit with curiosity and creativity.



Igor Zubkovsky
cello

Igor Zubkovsky is a Russian-born cellist who made his solo debut at age twelve with the Minsk State Philharmonic Orchestra. He studied at the Moscow Conservatory with Natalia Shakhovskaya and later earned a Graduate Performance Diploma from the Peabody Conservatory on full scholarship.

An award-winning musician, he has received top prizes at the International Cello Competition in Minsk and the Tansman Competition in Poland, as well as major chamber music honors with The Brahms Trio. He has performed widely across the U.S. and Europe, with appearances at Merkin Hall, the Newport Music Festival, and chamber series in Paris, Moscow, New York, and Washington, D.C.

Since 2003, Zubkovsky has been a member of the Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra (Washington National Opera). His performances have been broadcast on WETA, and he has appeared as soloist in works including Brahms' Double Concerto and Tchaikovsky's Rococo Variations.

He is also an active arranger and editor, creating original transcriptions for cello ensembles and premiering new works such as Isaac Mikhnovsky's Cello Sonata.



Jennifer Savage
piano

Jennifer Savage is a pianist, professional accompanist, and collaborator based in New York and the DC area. She regularly performs at Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, collaborates with the New York Chamber Players Orchestra and Orchestra Manhattan, and serves as Program Coordinator and Administrative Assistant at the Summit Music Festival.

She received her Master's degree from Manhattan School of Music, New York, studying piano performance with Arkady Aronov and Efrem Briskin under the Elva van Gelder Memorial and Constance Keene Piano Scholarships, and previously studied at the MSM Precollege and at the Levine School of Music with Dr. Anna Ouspenskaya.

Jennifer is also a technical director, producer, broadcast host, scriptwriter, and social media manager for Virtual Concert Halls (VCHs), producing live programs such as the Sound Espresso International Competition.

An avid performer, Jennifer has appeared as a soloist with the Lviv National Philharmonic of Ukraine, New York Chamber Players Orchestra, Virtuosi Brunensis Orchestra, and Czech Bohuslav Martinů Philharmonic, and at prestigious venues including the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC, Carnegie Hall, Merkin Concert Hall at the Kaufman Center, New York, Zlín Congress Center, Czech Republic, Palazzo dei Priori in Perugia, Italy, DiCapo Opera Theater, New York, and the Marian Anderson Hall of the Kimmel Center, Philadelphia.

She has won numerous competitions in both solo and chamber music, performing at venues such as the Kennedy Center, Zlín Congress Center, DiCapo Opera Theater, the Embassy of Italy, Mexican Cultural Institute, Lyceum in Alexandria, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, Netherlands Embassy, Alden Theater, and Palazzo dei Priori in Italy, and gave a lecture-concert in Wuhan, China. She has also been featured on cable TV in A Holiday Recital.

As a recording artist, she appears on the digital album "The Road to Zlín" (Cicerone Music & Art, releasing November 2024), performing Rachmaninov's Piano Concerto No. 2 with the Czech Bohuslav Martinů Philharmonic Orchestra, and Gershwin's Piano Concerto in F with the Lviv National Philharmonic in Ukraine.



www.virtualconcerthalls.com

Special Thanks

to all the teachers and families for their endless nurturing and support of music education and aspiring artists!



Qi Zhang, piano

Qi Zhang is an internationally acclaimed pianist and educator, and the founder and director of Musart Music, one of the leading classical music education institutions in the New York metropolitan area. He received his musical training at The Juilliard School, completing both Pre-College and undergraduate studies, and earned his Master's degree from Yale University. As a pianist, he has won numerous national and international prizes and performed widely in the United States and abroad. His artistry is rooted in the European classical tradition and distinguished by structural clarity, expressive depth, and stylistic integrity.

In 2018, Qi Zhang founded Musart Music, which has grown into a flagship institution serving hundreds of students and supported by a faculty of over thirty distinguished artists and educators, many affiliated with Juilliard, Yale, Curtis Institute of Music, and Manhattan School of Music. Under his leadership, Musart is recognized for its rigorous training, nurturing environment, and exceptional student outcomes.

Musart students have achieved repeated acceptances to Juilliard Pre-College and other elite programs, top prizes at major competitions, and invitations to perform at prominent venues and televised cultural events. Renowned for his ability to cultivate exceptional young talent, Qi Zhang guides students toward technical excellence, artistic maturity, and long-term artistic development. Beyond teaching, he remains deeply engaged in cultural outreach, organizing community performances, charity events, and masterclasses with internationally renowned artists.



Founded in 2023, Ocean Music is a nonprofit organization devoted to nurturing an inclusive community where the transformative power of music is shared and celebrated. Our mission is to champion the intrinsic value of music appreciation and education while harnessing music as a medium to address historical and contemporary social issues.

At Ocean Music, our vision is to inspire the community to embrace the richness of many cultures, and cultivate an enduring passion for music among people from different generations and diverse backgrounds.



Yang Liu
Founder & Director

Pianist Yang Liu attracts worldwide audiences with her profound musicianship and extraordinary virtuosity. “Her performance was incredibly expressive... effortlessly moving from delicate flourishes to pounding intensity...” (Toronto Star).

She has performed extensively throughout the US, Europe, and China at numerous prominent venues, and has won many prestigious competitions, including the first prize at the Toronto International Piano Competition, among others. In 2022, Naxos Records released her album “Schubert: German Dances, Ländler, and Écossaises,” and QQ Music in China released her album “Dancing on the Keys, Volume I.”

Yang Liu earned both her Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees from The Juilliard School under the tutelage of Dr. Yoheved Kaplinsky, a Master of Musical Arts degree from Yale School of Music with Dr. Melvin Chen, and a Doctoral of Musical Arts from Peabody Institute – Johns Hopkins University with Prof. Yong Hi Moon. As a devoted educator. She is on the piano faculty at Smith College while teaching actively in the New York region. Her students have won international competitions and been accepted into top conservatories.

Yang Liu is the founder and director of the Ocean Music Foundation, a nonprofit organization devoted to nurturing an inclusive community where the transformative power of music is shared and celebrated. The 2023-2024 season features a monthly concert series in Brooklyn, New York.





RECORDING OPPORTUNITIES

FOR SOLOISTS AND COMPOSERS WITH BUTLER PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

MARCH 8, 2026.
REHEARSALS AND RECORDING
IN HAMILTON, OHIO, USA



VIRTUAL CONCERT HALLS



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RECORDING OPPORTUNITIES

FOR SOLOISTS AND COMPOSERS WITH ORCHESTRA MANHATTAN

APRIL 28, 2026
GALA AT WEILL RECITAL AT CARNEGIE HALL

APRIL 29, 2026
RECORDING
MANHATTAN, NEW YORK, USA



VIRTUAL CONCERT HALLS



[HTTPS://WWW.SOUNDESPRESSIVOCOMPETITION.COM/RECORDING-OPPORTUNITIES/ORCHESTRA-MANHATTAN](https://www.soundesspressivocompetition.com/recording-opportunities/orchestra-manhattan)

2025-2026 CONCERT SEASON

07.28.25 Tahoe Philharmonic Orchestra and Chorus. Kevin Matheson, violin. James Rawe, conductor

09.11.25 Paducah Symphony Orchestra. Jennifer Savage, piano. Raffaele Livio Ponti, conductor

09.12.25 Tahoe Philharmonic Orchestra and Chorus. Jennifer Choi, violin. James Rawe, conductor

09.25.25 Magnificent Nine. Beethoven Symphonies. Internet TV Season 3

09.27.25 Barge Music. Recital by Misha Dichter, piano

10.11.25 Paducah Symphony Orchestra. Dina Nesterenko, violin. Raffaele Livio Ponti, conductor

11.07.25 Orquesta Filarmónica Municipal de Guayaquil. Kaiden Griggs, piano. Gevorg Sargsyan, conductor

11.15.25 Paducah Symphony Orchestra. Ayla Moreno, piano. Raffaele Livio Ponti, conductor

11.24.25 Laureate Gala - Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall

11.25.25 Laureate Gala - Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall

02.16.26 Laureate Gala - Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall

02.19.26 Laureate Gala - Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall

03.07.26 Butler Philharmonic Orchestra. Kate Lee, piano. Calliope Smith, violin. Scott Woodard, conductor

04.18.26 Paducah Symphony Orchestra. Anna Maria Medietta, harp

04.28.26 Laureate Gala - Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall

04.29.26 Recording session with Orchestra Manhattan. David Wroe, conductor

06.28.26 Laureate Gala - Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall

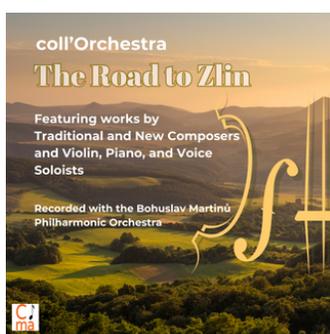
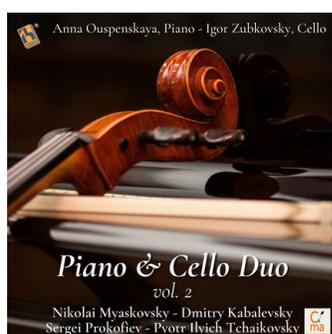
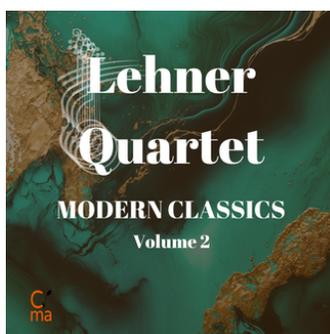
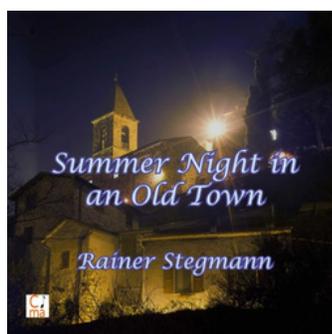
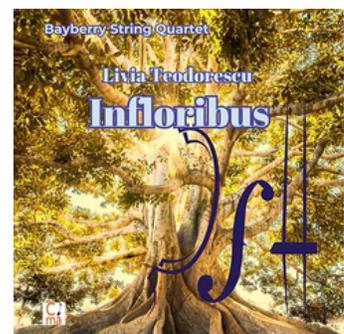
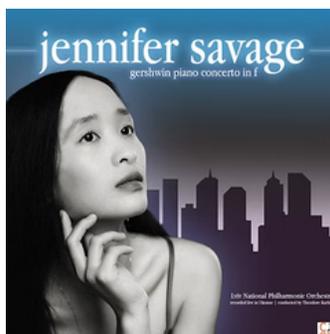
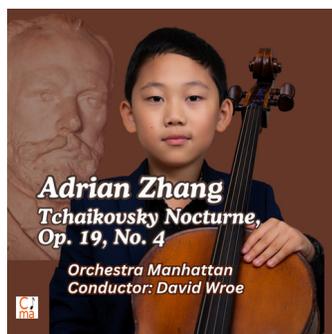
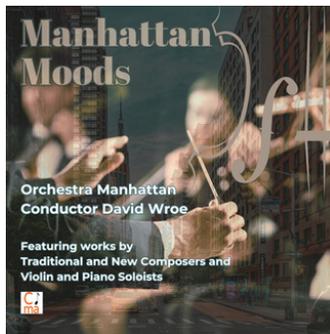
06.30.26 Laureate Gala - Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall



VIRTUAL
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HALLS



ALBUM RELEASES



Cicerone Music & Art

Music First!

Since 1998



**AT WEILL RECITAL HALL AT
CARNEGIE HALL**

**iClassical Academy
Recognition Awards**



iClassical
ACADEMY

THANK YOU CONSULTANTS



Giacomo Franci
The New York Chamber Players



David Wroe
New Jersey Festival Orchestra



Raffaele Livio Ponti
Paducah Symphony



Scott E. Woodard
West Virginia State Philharmonic



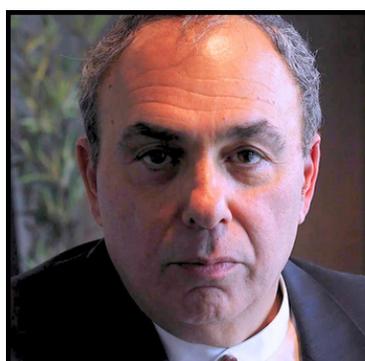
**James
Greening-Valenzuela**
Vocal Arts Management



Nvart Andreassian
Armenian Nation Opera



Gevorg Sargsyan
*Ministry of Culture Kingdom
of Saudi Arabia*



Dickran Atamian
Price Attractions



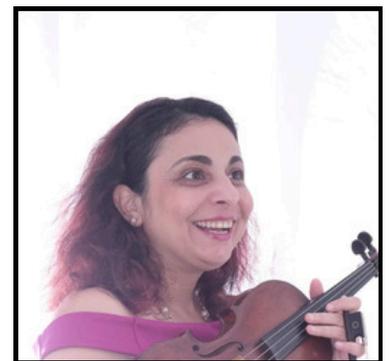
Raymond Fawzy
Clarinetist, Cairo Opera House



Avguste Antonov



Ivan Viočić



Ani Umedyan

OUR TEAM



Anna Ouspenskaya
Sound Espresso &
Virtual Concert Halls
Co-Founder



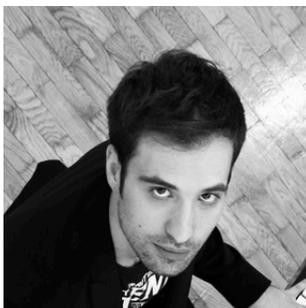
Igor Zubkovsky
Sound Espresso &
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Co-Founder



Frane Rušinović
Sound Espresso &
Virtual Concert Halls
Co-Founder/Tech Director



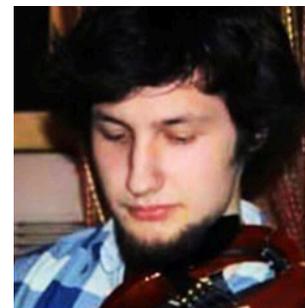
Fedor Ouspensky
Sound Espresso &
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Co-Founder



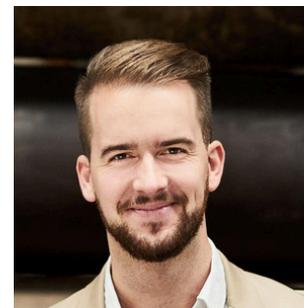
Ante Božić-Kudrić
Virtual Concert Halls
Technical Producer



Jennifer Savage
Virtual Concert Halls
Assistant Director, Host



Marko Torre
Virtual Concert Halls
Assistant Director



Krisztian Palagyi
Virtual Concert Halls
Assistant Director, Host



Kateryna Li Khemmett
Virtual Concert Halls
PR/Social Media, Graphic & Photo Design



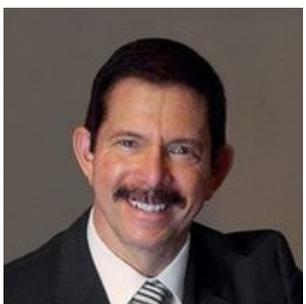
Miro Dobrovic
Virtual Concert Halls
Videographer, Filmmaker



Ann Lathan Kerzner
Price Attractions
Special Projects



Chris Au
Virtual Concert Halls
Host



James Adler
AdlerOaks Library
Audience Awards Founder



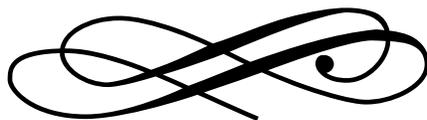
Jack Price
Price Attractions
Artist Manager, Host



Gianriccardo Pera
Cicerone Music & Art
Audio Producer



Irma de Jong
iClassical Academy
Publishing Coordinator



Thank You for Joining Us!

We are delighted to have you with us for today's performance.

*Your presence supports the dedication, passion,
and hard work of our talented musicians and composers.*

*We hope you enjoy the music and feel inspired
by the creativity on stage.*

*We invite you to stay connected with us through our programs,
social media, and upcoming events.*

*Your encouragement helps us continue to nurture artistic growth and share
extraordinary music with the world.*

*With gratitude,
The Sound Espresso Team*



Visit our Websites

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www.colorchestra.com

*Program Booklet Created and Designed by:
Kateryna Li Khemmett*