

Nineteenth Annual DePaul Concerto Festival for Young Performers January 29-30, 2022

Stephen Balderston, cello

Stephen Balderston is a master chamber musician and coach of the highest caliber. Professor of Cello at DePaul University School of Music, Balderston maintains a robust performance and teaching schedule in a variety of venues, presents master classes, and adjudicates around the United States. He has performed solo works and chamber music with Daniel Barenboim, Pierre Boulez, Christoph Eschenbach, Lynn Harrell, Yo-Yo Ma, Menahem Pressler, Gil Shaham, Joseph Silverstein and Pinchas Zukerman, and has appeared as featured artist at the Ravinia Festival, the International Festival-Institute at Round Top, the American String Project, and Bargemusic, as well as many other national and international festivals over his long career.

Balderston was the cello coach for the first five years of Daniel Barenboim's "West-Eastern Divan" workshops in Weimar, Germany; Chicago, IL; and Seville, Spain. He has also been featured in both Shanghai, China's international music festival and the International String Music Festival in Taiwan. He has been a regular participant, coach, and soloist at many prestigious summer venues, including the International Festival – Institute at Round Top, the Grand Teton Music Festival, the ARIA International Summer Academy, and Marrowstone Music Festival. Balderston is a member of the American Chamber Players.

Balderston was Assistant Principal Cello with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra for 10 years, and prior to that, a member of the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra for 10 years. He performed as soloist with both orchestras. Balderston began his studies on the cello with Gabor Rejto in his native southern California and earned both Bachelor and Master of Music degrees from The Juilliard School, where he studied with Lynn Harrell.

Mark Brandfonbrenner, 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.

Linc Smelser, cello

A native of Arizona, Linc Smelser received his bachelor's degree in Cello Performance from the University of Arizona where he studied with Dr. Gordon Epperson, and received his Master of Music degree and Performer's Certificate in Cello Performance and Pedagogy at Northern Illinois University having studied with renowned cellist and pedagogue Raya Garbousova. Advanced study included work with cellists Marc Johnson, Ron Leonard, Gabor and Peter Rejto, Heinrich Schiff, the Vermeer Quartet, and pianists Richard Faith and Jerome Lowenthal.

In 2003, Mr. Smelser was appointed conductor/music director of the Kishwaukee Symphony Orchestra in DeKalb, IL. In 2009 he was named Conductor of the Year (Small Orchestra) by the Illinois Council of Orchestras. He has most recently been appointed conductor/music director of the Rockford Symphony Youth Orchestra. He has guest-conducted the Northern Illinois University Philharmonic, the Harper Symphony Orchestra, the Fox Valley Orchestra (Aurora) and the Skokie Valley Community Orchestra. He is also conductor of the NIU Sinfonia and Symphonette, two youth symphonies that attract students from the Northern Illinois area.

Mr. Smelser has appeared as a soloist with Camerata Chicago, the Kishwaukee Symphony Orchestra, the Illinois Valley Symphony Orchestra, and the Rockford Symphony Orchestra, and has twice appeared in recital on the Dame Myra Hess Memorial Concerts Series in Chicago, which is broadcast live on over 44 stations across the United States. He has won several awards including first prize of the National Society of Arts and Letters Chapter Competition, top prize of the National Federation of Music Clubs Regional Competition, and first prize of the International Lili Boulanger Memorial Fund Competition.

Mr. Smelser has been a member of the Grant Park Symphony Orchestra cello section since 1992 and has been an active substitute with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra since 1997. He is also principal cellist of Camerata Chicago, a chamber orchestra based in Chicago. He continues to perform in The Three Celli, a chamber ensemble with Stephen Balderston and Brant Taylor, throughout the Northern Illinois Area.

Mr. Smelser has most recently been appointed a faculty member of the Music Institute of Chicago in Winnetka. He is also a faculty member in the Northern Illinois University School of Music and has been teaching private cello lessons through the NIU Community School of the Arts since 1988. He served as guest lecturer of cello at the Wheaton College Conservatory of Music from 2006 to 2016. He is also on the faculty of the Chicago Suzuki Institute and the Intermountain Suzuki Strings Institute in Utah and is pianist/accompanist for the Northern Illinois University Suzuki program.

Andrea Swan, piano

Andrea Swan is a well-known chamber musician, collaborative pianist, orchestral keyboard player, soloist and teacher in the Chicago area. She is the principal keyboard player with the Grant Park Music Festival and plays regularly with the Lyric Opera of Chicago Orchestra. She is a founding member of the Evanston Chamber Ensemble and the Pressenda Trio. As a collaborator and chamber music player, she has appeared frequently on the Chicago Symphony chamber music series, on live WFMT radio broadcasts, and in recitals throughout the United States and the Far East.

Throughout her career, she has performed in several contemporary groups, including a 20 year stint with the Contemporary Chamber Players of the U. of Chicago, the Fulcrum Point New Music Project and the Chicago Chamber Musician's Music Toward the Millennium Project. She regularly plays for instrumentalists in their final auditions for the Chicago Symphony and the Lyric Opera Orchestras, and has served as the official pianist for local and national competitions, including the Stulberg International String Competition, held annually in Kalamazoo, Michigan each May.

Ms. Swan received her undergraduate degree from Oberlin College, where she studied with Jack Radunsky and was awarded the prestigious Bezazium scholarship. She continued her studies with Gyorgy Sebok and Menahem Pressler at Indiana University, where she earned a Master of Music degree with highest distinction and was awarded the Performer's Certificate.

Susan Tang, piano

Susan Tang is Associate 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 principle teachers include Nelita True, Nina Svetlanova, Robin Wood, and Susan Magnusson.

Sylvia Wang, piano

A native of Penang, Malaysia, Sylvia Wang has presented solo and collaborative performances throughout the Americas, Europe, and the Far East. She has recorded for the Newport Classic label and Boston Records, and contemporary American music for Northeastern and CRI labels. She has been the winner and finalist in various competitions, including the Royal Overseas League Festival in London, an AVANTI award leading to a debut in London's Purcell Room, the Yellow Springs Chamber Music Competition, and the J.S. Bach International Piano Competition. Recent activities include guest classes at the Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts and Hong Kong Baptist University, the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory in Singapore, guest judging at the University of Michigan and the Peabody Conservatory and a six-city concert tour of China. She has also been a guest at the Chautauqua Institution, Sydney Conservatorium of Music, and the University of Western Australia in Perth. She acknowledges her debt to David Burge at the Eastman School of Music and Hamish Milne and Dennis Murdoch at the Royal Academy of Music, which she attended as an Associated Board scholar. In recognition of "distinction in the field", the Academy awarded her an honorary Associate of the Royal Academy of Music.

Blaise Magniere, violin

Praised for his “virtuosic skill” (Stage and Cinema), “poised expression”, and “sweet, refined tone” (Chicago Classical Review), French violinist Blaise Magniere is a highly acclaimed chamber musician, active both in the U.S and abroad. He has toured extensively, including venues such as Wigmore Hall in London, Herkulessaal in Munich, the Schneider Series at Carnegie Hall, Ravinia Festival, Mostly Mozart, La Jolla Festival and the Caramoor Festival. As the first violinist of the Avalon String Quartet, he was the top prizewinner of the Munich ARD Competition and Grand Prize winner at the Concert Artists Guild Competition.

His performances and conversation have been heard on BBC, CBC (Canada), ABC (Australia) and France-Musique. He has recorded for the Channel Classics, Cedille, New Tangle and Albany labels, and earned the 2002 Chamber Music America/WQXR Record Award. A highly dedicated teacher, he has successfully prepared students for orchestral auditions and top graduate programs.

As an assistant to the Juilliard String Quartet, he coached chamber music at the Juilliard School. He was on faculty at Indiana University South Bend before arriving at Northern Illinois University.

Gerardo Ribeiro, violin

Co-Chair, Department of Music Performance. Coordinator, strings program. Gerardo Ribeiro has enjoyed a distinguished solo and chamber music career and is the winner of numerous worldwide prizes, including a 2001 Presidential Excellence in Teaching Award. He has been a soloist with Philadelphia Orchestra, Montreal Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre Radio-Télévision Française, Radio Orchestra Berlin and can be heard on the EMI and RCA labels. Ribeiro was also artistic director of the International Institute for Chamber Music, Munich and a member of the Meadowmount Piano Trio. Formerly affiliated with the Eastman School of Music at the University of Rochester, he currently serves on the faculty of the Meadowmount School of Music. Ribeiro studied at the Juilliard School with Ivan Galamian, Felix Galimir, and Paul Mekanowitzky. He will serve on the jury of the Elmar Oliveira International Violin Competition in January 2020.

Yin Shen, violin

Principle second violin of Lyric Opera Orchestra

Stephen Boe, violin/viola

Stephen Boe, the Orion Ensemble’s regular guest violist, received his bachelor’s and master’s degrees from Indiana University School of Music, where he later served as assistant professor of violin. He has also been on faculty at DePauw University and Ohio University. As a chamber musician, Boe has performed in Avery Fisher Hall in Lincoln Center, as well as in venues throughout Europe, China, South America and the United States. In 1991, he was awarded a prize in the Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition and was an Artist in Residence for the National Endowment for the Arts from 1993 to 1995. He was also a founding member of the New Artists String Quartet and first violinist with the Brooks Unstrung Quartet. He has served as concertmaster for the Joffrey Ballet, the Chicagoland Pops, the Chicago Chamber Orchestra, the Muncie Symphony Orchestra, the Evansville Philharmonic and the Indiana University Festival Orchestra and has appeared as soloist with several of these ensembles.

Carla Trynchuk, violin/viola

Violinist Carla Trynchuk has performed as soloist with orchestras across North America and Europe, including the Calgary Philharmonic in Canada, and the Banatul and Iasi Philharmonic Orchestras.

Ms. Trynchuk, an advocate of contemporary composers, has recorded the premier recording of the Tibor Serly Violin Concerto with the Czech National Symphony Orchestra, gave the premiere recording of Kittyhawk by U.S. composer Randall Davidson in April 2001, and has performed the Arizona premiere of Robert McBride's Violin Concerto ("Variety Day"), and Hartmann's Concerto Funebre. As a recitalist, she has performed throughout Europe, Asia, and North America, including New York City at Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall.

A graduate of the Juilliard School, Ms. Trynchuk studied under Dorothy DeLay and Hyo Kang. She is Professor of Music and Director of the String Program at Andrews University where she was the recipient of the 2000 Faculty Award for Excellence in Research and Creative Activity. She has served as Faculty-Artist at numerous summer festivals, given master classes worldwide, and served as adjudicator for string and chamber music competitions and festivals throughout the United States and Canada.

Minhuan Xu, violin/viola

A multi-faceted performer with unique communicative abilities, MingHuan Xu has delighted audiences with her passion, effortless technique, sensitivity and charisma. Her versatility allows her to perform an eclectic mix of musical styles ranging from the standard works to avant-garde contemporary repertoire. She has performed extensively as a concerto soloist, duo-recitalist and chamber musician throughout five continents.

Ms. Xu's latest recital and chamber music performances have brought her to prominent American venues including Carnegie-Weill Recital Hall, Merkin Hall, Symphony Space, the Library of Congress and the Smithsonian Institute in Washington D.C. Her Carnegie Hall debut was featured on Voice of America, a weekly television show viewed by millions of people in China, Taiwan and Hong Kong. In 2010 she performed recitals and taught master classes in China: at the Shenyang Conservatory of Music, the Sichuan Conservatory of Music, and the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing. Her South American debut in 2006 brought her to the Festival Musica Nova in Brazil and the Festival Encuentros in Argentina. Her numerous performances have included live radio broadcasts on National Public Radio (NPR), WFMT (Chicago) and CBC (Canada) Radio.

Recent festival and concert series appearances also include Chamber Music North (MI), the Colours of Music Festival (ON), Dame Myra Hess Memorial Concerts (Chicago), Hawaii's Ebb & Flow Arts Concert Series, the Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber Music Society, the Mammoth Lakes Music Festival (CA), the SoundaXis Festival (ON), the X-Avant Festival (ON), and the Walla Walla Chamber Music Festival (WA). She has performed with such chamber musicians as Colin Carr, Eugene Drucker, Ilya Kaler, Ani Kavafian, the Pacific String Quartet and the St. Petersburg String Quartet. She also tours extensively and internationally as a part of Duo Diorama (with her husband, pianist Winston Choi) and as a member of Pivot Chamber Soloists.

As a dedicated champion of contemporary music Ms. Xu believes fervently in the importance and relevance of the music of our times. She has closely collaborated with William Bolcom, John Corigliano,

Gunther Schuller and Bright Sheng on performances of their music. She was recently awarded a Classical Commissioning Grant from Chamber Music America for a new work by Huang Ruo for her to premiere in late 2012 and beyond. She has also commissioned and premiered over 40 works by composers such as Marcos Balter, Burton Beerman, George Flynn, M. William Karlins, Felipe Lara, Jacques Lenot, John Melby, Robert Morris, Daniel Weymouth, Amy Williams, Jay Alan Yim, and Mischa Zupko. Her passions involve multi-disciplinary projects, which also include collaborations with dance, electronic media, poetry and visual arts. She is a member of Chicago-based Ensemble Dal Niente, one of the most original and important new music groups active today. Other new music series and groups she has appeared with include Contempo, Eighth Blackbird, MusicNOW and the Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble.

At the age of 18, she made her New York debut as a soloist with the New York Youth Symphony Orchestra, and since then has soloed with orchestras such as the Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, the Cathedral Bluffs Symphony Orchestra, the Cheyenne Symphony Orchestra, the Manchester Symphony Orchestra, the Midland-Odesa Symphony Orchestra, the Northwestern University Symphony Orchestra, the Kamloops Symphony Orchestra, the Oak Ridge Symphony Orchestra, and the Peninsula Music Festival Orchestra. Her recent guest concertmaster stints include the Elmhurst Symphony Orchestra, the Richmond Symphony in Virginia, the Peninsula Music Festival Orchestra in Wisconsin and the Wintergreen Festival Orchestra.

At the age of six, Ms. Xu made her recital debut in Beijing and at the age of eleven, she won the 1st Prize at the Beijing Young Artists Competition. Her many competition successes also include being winner of Artists International Presentations Auditions, grand prize winner of the International Young Artist Competition of Midland-Odesa, and finalist of the Concert Artist Guild competition in New York. She was also one of the inaugural recipients of the Banff Centre's Rolston Fellowships in Music.

Ms. Xu's studies were at the prestigious Curtis Institute of Music, the Interlochen Arts Academy, Northwestern University and Stony Brook University. Her principal teachers were Julia Bushkova, Victor Danchenko, Almita Vamos, Pamela Frank and Ani Kavafian. Now an accomplished and devoted teacher, Ms. Xu taught at Grand Valley State University before moving to Chicago, where she is now an Artist-Faculty member at Roosevelt University's Chicago College of Performing Arts. She also coaches chamber music for the Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestra. Ms. Xu plays on a 1758 Nicolas Gagliano violin.

Alyce Johnson, flute

Alyce Johnson is a member of the Chicago Lyric Opera Orchestra, the Grant Park Symphony, Music of the Baroque Orchestra and the Chicago Philharmonic. She joined the DePaul School of Music flute faculty in 2012 and the faculty of the Bienen School of Music in 2019 as part-time lecturer in piccolo studies.

Ms. Johnson began her professional career as the principal flutist of the Shanghai Philharmonic Orchestra, a position which she won at the age of 23. After four years in the orchestra, she left Shanghai to become a member of the New World Symphony Orchestra for one season which included tours to Rome and Carnegie Hall. Ms. Johnson was a winner of the New World Symphony concerto competition and performed Mozart's Concerto for Flute and Harp. Other solo appearances have been with the Chicago Philharmonic, Bach Week Festival, Shanghai Philharmonic, Shanghai Symphony, and the New Eastman Symphony Orchestra.

Alyce Johnson received both her Master's Degree and a Performer's Certificate from the Eastman School of Music and earned her Bachelor of Music degree with distinction at UNC-Chapel Hill. She has

participated in various summer festivals including the Tanglewood Music Festival, Music Academy of the West and the Aspen Music Festival. Ms. Johnson has adjudicated various National Flute Association competitions and has been featured in recital at the NFA's annual flute conventions.

Marie Tachouet, flute

Marie Tachouet is the Principal Flute of the Lyric Opera of Chicago. She has performed as principal flute with the Seattle Symphony, San Diego Symphony, Milwaukee Symphony, Santa Fe Opera, Sarasota Opera, Joffrey Ballet, and Pittsburgh Opera orchestras and has also performed with the Pittsburgh and Oregon Symphony orchestras. Marie is on the flute faculty at Roosevelt University's Chicago College of Performing Arts and recently presented masterclasses at Depaul University, University of Arkansas Fort Smith, and Western Illinois University.

A passionate advocate of contemporary music, Marie has worked closely with composers including Charles Wuorinen, Elliot Carter, and John Zorn in varied venues such as the Library of Congress, Carnegie Hall, and the Guggenheim. Praised by the New York Times for her "extraordinary agile" solo playing, she has also been a featured soloist with the Artosphere Festival Orchestra, Olympia (WA) Symphony, Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra, and Akron Symphony. Marie graduated summa cum laude from the University of Michigan and Carnegie Mellon University as a student of Jeanne Baxtresser, Alberto Almarza, and Amy Porter.