



## Young Artist Competition Past Winners

### 2006-2007 Season

#### Clark Ikezu, violin

Clark won while in the sixth grade at Alice Buffett Middle School in Omaha. He began studying the violin at age 5, and is currently a student of Anne Nagosky. He has participated in numerous Suzuki camps and workshops in Omaha, Lincoln, and Madison, WI. Clark is a member of the OAYO Youth Philharmonic, where he serves as the Concertmaster. In addition to violin, Clark also plays piano and french horn. Clark performed the first movement of the *Symphonie Espagnole, Op. 21* by Edouard Lalo.



#### Yasmeen Bora, violin

Yasmeen won while in the sixth grade at Millard North Middle School in Omaha. She began studying the violin at age 3, and studies with William Wolcott at the Omaha Conservatory of Music. Yasmeen participated in the Lincoln Suzuki Institute for several years, and has performed solos at three of their workshops. She is also a member of the OAYO Youth Philharmonic. Yasmeen performed the second movement of the *Concerto in D Minor, Op. 22* by Henryk Wieniawski.



### 2007-2008 Season

#### Arthur Masyuk, violin

Arthur was selected as a winner while a freshman at Milard West High School in Omaha. He studies violin with Ms. Anne Nagosky of the Omaha Symphony. Arthur participated in the UNO String Olympics, and attended the Rocky Mountain Summer Conservatory for four years. Arthur participates in the OAYO Youth Symphony, where he is a member of the first violin section. He has also been involved in a number of community theatre productions in both Omaha and Papillion. Arthur performed the first movement of the *Violin Concerto, Op. 48* by Dmitri Kabalevsky.

As of 2017, Arthur is pursuing a Master's in Violin Performance at DePaul University in Chicago.



#### Izayah Dutcher, violin

Izayah was selected as a winner while a sixth grader at Rosehill Elementary School in Omaha. He studies violin with William Wolcott at the Omaha Conservatory of Music. Izayah is a member of the Frontier String Ensemble, and has performed solos in recitals at the Omaha Conservatory of Music. He also plays violin in the OAYO Youth Philharmonic. Outside of the playing violin, Izayah enjoys video games and appreciates a good game of chess. Izayah performed the first movement of the *Violin Concerto in D Major, K. 418* by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.



## O! What a Sound!

## 2008-2009 Season



### **Junior Division: Jennifer Ahn, violin**

Jennifer is the daughter of Jongsam and Jiyoun Ahn of Omaha. She won while a sixth grader at Swanson Elementary School in Omaha. Jennifer started playing violin at age six, and currently studies with Ruth Meints at the Omaha Conservatory of Music. She is a member of the Frontier String Ensemble and participates in the Omaha Area Youth Orchestra program. When she is not playing the violin, Jennifer enjoys ballet, playing the flute in her school band, reading, and spending time with her family. When Jennifer was asked about her future career plans, she stated that she hopes to become a concert violinist or a doctor. Jennifer performed the 3<sup>rd</sup> movement of the *Violin Concerto No. 2 in D Minor, Op. 22* by Henryk Wieniawski.

### **Senior Division: Yuechen Zhao, piano**

Yuechen is the son of Yingchun Zhao and Lina Jin of Omaha. A sophomore at Westside High School, Yuechen started playing piano at age ten. He studies with Dr. James Johnson at the University of Nebraska-Omaha. Yuechen participates in Math, Chess, French and Writers Clubs at Westside, and is also a member of the Student Leadership Council. In addition to playing piano, he is a percussionist in the Westside Band. In his spare time, Yuechen enjoys programming, web design, working with computers, reading, and spending time with his family. He would like to attend college at either Harvard or the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and plans to major in computer science or engineering. Yuechen performed the 1<sup>st</sup> movement of the *Concerto No. 3 in C Minor, Op. 37* by Ludwig van Beethoven. Yuechen graduated from Harvard with a degree in Computer Science, and currently lives in Beijing, China.



## 2009-2010 Season



### **Junior Division: Nadia Maudhoo, violin**

Nadia is the daughter of Subash and Megumi Maudhoo of Omaha. She began studying the violin at age seven and has performed with a variety of musical groups throughout the Omaha area – the Omaha Symphony, Blue Barn Music Festival, and the OAYO Youth Philharmonic, just to name a few. In 2008, Nadia was selected as the winner of both the OAYO Youth Concerto Competition and the Lucy Weed String Competition. An eighth grader at Russell Middle School in Millard, Nadia studies violin with Anne Nagosky. In addition to music, Nadia is active in Omaha's Japanese and Indian communities, learning and performing traditional Indian dances. Nadia performed the *Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso* by Camille Saint-Saens. She is currently a student at New York University (NYU).

### **Senior Division: Luke Witchger, violin**

Luke Witchger is the son of John Witchger and Maria Teresa Gaston of Omaha. Music has always been a passion for Luke since he began taking violin lessons at the age of three. He is a senior at Creighton Prep, and studies violin with Anne Nagosky. He was the 2007 winner of the OAYO Youth Concerto Competition. He has attended several summer music institutes, including the Rocky Mountain Summer Conservatory, the National High School Music Institute at Northwestern University, and the Meadowmount School of Music. In 2008-2009, Luke was an exchange student in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Luke performed the first movement of the *Concerto No. 2 in D Minor* by Henryk Wieniawski. Luke graduated from the Juilliard School with a degree in Violin Performance and now lives in Jacksonville, FL.



## 2010-2011 Season



### Junior Division: Arjun Maudhoo, violin

Arjun is the son of Subash and Megumi Maudhoo of Omaha. He began studying the violin at age five and has won several medals in the UNO String Olympics. Arjun is a current participant in the Omaha Area Youth Orchestra program, and currently serves as principal second violin in the Youth Philharmonic. He has performed with the Omaha Symphony in its “Symphony Spooktacular” and “Christmas with the Symphony” concerts. A fifth grader at Rohwer Elementary School, Arjun studies violin with Anne Nagosky and piano with Dr. Momoro Ono. Arjun is active in the Omaha Japanese School and enjoys reading books from the *Ranger Apprentice* series by John Flanagan. Arjun performed the first movement of the *Violin Concerto, Op. 48*, by Dmitri Kabalevsky. Arjun began attending New York University (NYU) in the fall of 2018.

### Senior Division: Jehong (Daniel) Ahn, viola

Jehong is the son of Jongsam and Jiyoun Ahn of Omaha. Music has always been a part his life since taking violin/viola lessons at the age nine. A sophomore at Westside High School, Jehong studies viola with Ruth Meints. He was the winner of the 2010 Lucy Weed String Competition, and was also chosen as a semi-finalist in the 2010 ASTA National Solo Competition. He is a member of the Omaha Area Youth Orchestra’s Youth Symphony and plays viola in the Frontier String Ensemble. Outside of music, Jehong is a member of the Math Club and participates on the Track and Cross Country teams at Westside High School. Jehong performed the first movement of *Der Schwanendreher* by Paul Hindemith. After graduating from the University of Rochester in Rochester, NY, he is now pursuing a Doctor of Pharmacy degree at the University of Nebraska-Omaha Medical Center.



## 2011-2012 Season

### Junior Division: Isabella Amador, violin



Isabella is an eighth grader at Kiewit Middle School. She began her studies at age 4, following in the footsteps of her musical parents, Ricardo and Mary Amador of Omaha. She currently studies violin with Ruth Meints at the Omaha Conservatory of Music (OCM). Isabella has participated in the OCM Institute sessions for the past five years, and recently attended the Sound Encounters workshops in Ottawa, KS. Isabella is currently a member of the Kiewit Middle School Orchestra, OAYO Youth Philharmonic, the Frontier String Ensemble, and the OCM Camerata. Isabella’s hobbies include ballet and jazz dance classes, and playing video games with her younger sister.

### Senior Division: Yasmeen Bora, violin

A violin student of William Wolcott at the Omaha Conservatory of Music, Yasmeen has performed in many recitals, chamber groups, summer institutes, and orchestras. Yasmeen currently serves as the concertmaster of the OAYO Youth Symphony, and was selected as concertmaster of the 2011 All-State Orchestra. She has won several competitions, including those sponsored by OAYO and the Lincoln Symphony. Yasmeen was also invited to solo with the Omaha Symphony Chamber Orchestra during their Celebrate Creativity series. Yasmeen received her Bachelor’s degree in Psychology from Columbia University in 2018.



## 2012-2013 Season

### Junior Division: Richard Cho, violin



Richard is the son of Seungyeon Hwang of Omaha, and is a sixth grader at Elkhorn Ridge Middle School in Omaha. Richard started playing violin at age six, and currently studies with William Wolcott at the University of Nebraska-Omaha. He is a member of the OAYO Youth Philharmonic Orchestra, and was recently recognized as a junior division finalist in the 2012 MTA Young Artist Competition, as well as an Honorable Mention in the 2012 OAYO Youth Concerto Competition. In addition to playing the violin, Richard enjoys playing percussion in his school band, reading books and playing golf. He and his family now reside in Alpharetta, GA.

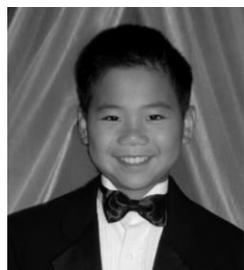
### Senior Division: Jennifer Ahn, violin

Jennifer is the daughter of Jongsam and Jiyoun Ahn of Omaha, and is a sophomore at Westside High School. Jennifer started playing violin at age six, and currently studies with Ruth Meints at the Omaha Conservatory of Music. She is a member of the Frontier String Ensemble and participates in the Omaha Area Youth Orchestra program, where she was selected as the winner of their 2011 Youth Concerto Competition. In 2012, Jennifer was selected as the winner of the Max and Lillie Larsen Young Artist Award. Outside of playing violin, Jennifer enjoys ballet, playing the flute, reading and spending time with her family. As of 2019, she graduated from the Manhattan School of Music (MSM) with a degree in Violin Performance and will begin working on her Master's degree at MSM in the fall.



## 2013-2014 Season

### Junior Division: Derek Hwang, cello



Derek Hwang is a ten year old cellist who is a sixth grader at Sacred Heart School in Sioux City, Iowa. He began playing the cello at age 5, and now studies cello with Dr. Marie-Elaine Gagnon at the University of South Dakota in Vermillion. Derek is currently a member of the Sioux City Youth Symphony's cello section. Derek also enjoys traveling and participating in the Philadelphia International Music Festival each summer. This past year, he was honored to be selected as one of the festival's Concerto Competition finalists.

### Senior Division: Rebecca Chouinard, violin

Rebecca held her first violin at the young age of 3. For the next 11 years, she learned how to play the violin under the instruction of Erin Cosby. Now, with Anne Nagosky as her private teacher, she is continuing her studies on the violin. She has been a member of Frontier String Ensemble, under the direction of Ruth Meints, since its inception. Throughout grade school, Rebecca has also participated in the Omaha Area Youth Orchestras including Youth Chamber Strings, Youth Philharmonic and Youth Symphony. Although violin is her primary instrument, she takes piano lessons from Carol Novak and, this past year, has started playing the viola. Besides her musical interests, Rebecca has also trained in classical ballet since the age of 4. She is currently a student at Benedictine College in Kansas.



**Orchestral Division: Lukas McIlhaney, flute**



Lukas McIlhaney is a 17 year old flutist from Wahoo. Primarily self-taught the first couple of years, he has studied with Leslie Fagan for the last three years. Lukas also spent the last two summers studying flute performance at the Rocky Ridge Music Center in Estes Park, CO and has participated in masterclasses at UNL, Florida State, and with professional recording duo IN STERIO. Lukas has performed in the OAYO program for the last five years and is in his third year with the Youth Symphony. Other performances include the 2012 Nebraska All-State Band and 2013 Nebraska All-State Orchestra. In early 2012, Lukas was invited to perform with the Omaha Conservatory of Music's Winter Festival Orchestra on the world premiere of two commissioned works by Danny Sabra. Lukas has also studied piano and violin and enjoys composing music. He studies composition with Danny Sabra (OCM). His composition, *Shatter* (for flute and piano) was performed by the Omaha Chamber Music Society in May of 2012. His latest work, *Far* (for solo piano), is currently receiving much acclaim. He is currently a student at Vanderbilt University in Nashville.

**2014-2015 Season**

**Junior Division: Alisha Stafford, violin**



Alicia Stafford is a 13 year old violinist and student at Papillion Junior High in Papillion, NE. She began playing the violin at age eight, and now studies with Ruth Meints at the Omaha Conservatory of Music. Alisha is currently a member of the OAYO Youth Philharmonic, and also plays with the Frontier String Ensemble. In July, she participated in the Omaha Conservatory's Summer Institute program. Alicia and her family now reside in Virginia.

**Senior Division: Isabella Amador, violin**

Isabella (Izzi) Amador is a junior at Millard North High School in Omaha. She began her studies at age 4, following in the footsteps of her musical parents, Rico and Mary Amador, of Omaha. She currently studies violin with Ruth Meints at the Omaha Conservatory of Music (OCM). Isabella has participated in the OCM Institute sessions since 2006, as well as the Sound Encounters workshops in Ottawa, KS from 2011-2013. Isabella currently participates in the Millard North High School Orchestra, OAYO Youth Symphony, the Frontier String Ensemble, as well as many other OCM ensembles. Isabella is currently attending the University of Michigan.



**Orchestral Division: Jonathan Herman, piano**



Jonathan Herman is a 17 year old pianist from Cambridge, IA. A homeschooled student, he has studied with Dr. Paul Barnes for the last five years. Jonathan also spent the last two summers studying piano at the Interlochen Arts Camp in Michigan, and has participated in masterclasses at UNO and the University of Northern Iowa. He has performed in numerous piano competitions throughout the midwest, and was selected as the Nebraska MTNA competition winner in 2013.

## 2015-2016 Season

### Junior Division: Renee Santos, violin



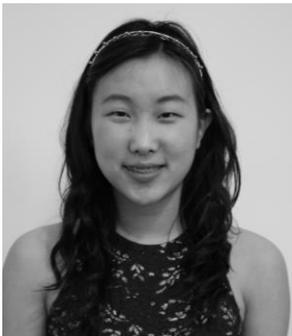
A homeschooled student, Renee currently studies violin with Erin Cosby and has participated in the Omaha Conservatory of Music's Winter Festival Orchestra Program for the last three years. In addition to playing violin, Renee also studies piano with Dr. James Johnson at the University of Nebraska-Omaha. She has received MTNA performance awards on both violin and piano, and enjoys performing with her sister, Nicole, as the musical duo *Forte*, which performed with the Cherokee Symphony in 2015. Renee plans to attend college and major in English and Violin Performance.

### Senior Division: Robert Hwang, violin

Robert is a sophomore at North High School in Sioux City, IA. He began studying violin at age 5, and currently studies with Kimberly Fisher, principal second violinist of the Philadelphia Orchestra. Robert has served as the concertmaster of the Siouxland Youth Symphony, Northwest Iowa Honor Orchestra, and the Iowa All-State Orchestra. He has participated in competitions sponsored by the Cherokee Symphony, South Dakota MTNA, and the Philadelphia International Music Festival. In addition to music, Robert also excels in math and science. He designed a scientific experiment based on peanut allergies, which has been selected for testing by NASA astronauts on the International Space Station this year. Robert is now attending college at Columbia University in New York City.



### Orchestral Division: Christina Youn, piano



Christina is a junior at Millard North High School. She currently studies piano with Yulia Kalashnikova at the Omaha Conservatory of Music, and is a previous student of Dr. Momoro Ono. Christina is the choir accompanist for St. Andrew Kim Church, and accompanied for the fall musicals *Young Frankenstein* and *Hairspray* at Millard North. She has also participated in numerous festivals in Nebraska, receiving superior ratings for her performances. In addition to piano, Christina is also an accomplished violinist, having performed with the Millard North High School Orchestra and OAYO. She is a member of the Millard North Varsity tennis team, and enjoys reading in her spare time. As of 2017, Christina is now attending the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, IN.

## 2016-2017 Season

### Junior Division: Pranay Neelakanta, violin



Pranay Neelakanta is a seventh grader at Elkhorn Valley View Middle School. He started playing violin at age 8, and studies with Ruth Meints at the Omaha Conservatory of Music. In addition to violin, Pranay also plays the piano. He is currently a member of the OAYO Youth Philharmonic, and also plays with the Frontier String Ensemble. In July, Pranay participated in the Omaha Conservatory of Music's Summer Institute program, and has also attended several violin masterclasses. Pranay is an avid reader and likes to read realistic

fiction. He volunteers at the Omaha Public Library during summer. Pranay likes playing basketball, as well as video games on his XBox. He is a member of the Elkhorn Soccer Club and also enjoys hiking, bird watching, and creating canvas paintings of birds. Pranay's favorite subjects in School are Math and World History, and he will be participating in the Regional History Bee this spring.

**Senior Division: Sarah Tindall, cello**

Sarah is a freshman at South Sioux City High School in South Sioux City, NE. Her passion for music began when she was five and continues to develop as she grows in her knowledge and understanding of the cello. She currently studies with Dr. Marie-Elaine Gagnon, professor of cello at the University of South Dakota. Sarah has won competitions in Cherokee, IA, Omaha, NE and Philadelphia, PA. As the 2015 and 2016 South Dakota representative to the MTNA regional string competition, Sarah placed second and third respectively. This past fall, she traveled to Lincoln, Nebraska to join the Nebraska All-State Orchestra under the direction of Anthony Elliott. Sarah participates in the South Dakota Youth Orchestra and Quartet, and also enjoys running and science.



**Orchestral Division: Alina Hatfield, piano**



Alina is a freshman at Elkhorn South High School. Her adventures in music began at age 6 while living in Ireland. Upon returning to the United States at age 7, she began studying piano with Anne Madison at the Omaha Conservatory of Music (OCM). At age 11, Alina won the first prize as a Junior Virtuoso at the 2013 Nebraska Summer Music Olympics. She also won the 2013 and 2014 MTNA State Junior Competitions, and took second place in the 2015 and 2016 MTNA State Junior Competitions. She also placed second at the 2016 Kearney Symphony Orchestra Young Artist Competition. Alina has attended several summer music institutes, such as the OCM Institute, the Tyrolean International Piano Academy in Austria, and the International Institute for Young Musicians in Kansas. She was selected as the 2016 Nebraska

Rising Stars at the University of Nebraska at Omaha and performed during the program. Besides playing piano, she plays video and strategy games and participates in the Robotic club at her school. Most of all, she enjoys playing with her dog, Jade.

## **2017-2018 Season**

**Junior Division: Pauline Lee, violin**



Pauline Lee, a fifth grader at Spring Ridge Elementary, began studying violin at age 6 with Ruth Meints at the Omaha Conservatory of Music (OCM). Pauline has attended the Conservatory's OCMI Institute, the Texas Strings Festival (led by Dr. Pasha Sabouri) each summer, and participated in masterclasses with the Amernet String Quartet, Dr. Sabouri, Jinjoo Cho, and Amy Schwartz Moretti. She was awarded OCM's Dr. David Jasper Scholarship for the 2016 and 2017 academic years, was selected as KVNO's January 2017 Classical Kid, and was a contestant for the 2017 Nebraska Celebration of Music program.

Pauline is an auditioned member of the OAYO Youth Philharmonic and Frontier Strings. Outside of music, Pauline is a member of Egg-cellent, Nebraska's representing team for the 2017 Global Destination Imagination competition, which turns student ideas into reality.

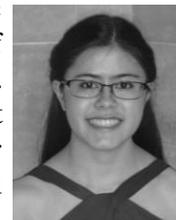
**Senior Division: Derek Hwang, cello**



Derek Hwang is a sophomore at North High School in Sioux City, IA. He started cello lessons at the age of 5, and is currently a student of Mr. Peter Howard, the retired Principal Cellist of the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra. Derek has won numerous competitions and has performed as a soloist with Siouxland Youth Symphony, the Fort Dodge Symphony, Cherokee Symphony, the Central Iowa Symphony, and with Orchestra Omaha as Junior Division winner in 2014. Derek was a finalist in the 2017 National MTNA Competition. As a high school freshman, Derek won first chair of the cello section in the Iowa All-State Orchestra; the performance was broadcast statewide on Iowa Public Television. Besides cello, Derek is dedicated to scientific research. His research paper about bird flu was recognized by the World Food Prize Foundation, and as a Borlaug scholar, he will be attending the Global Youth Institute, where he will be discussing animal biology and food security issues with international experts.

**Orchestral Division: Nicole Santos, piano**

Nicole Santos is a freshman at the University of South Dakota (USD), studying music performance with an emphasis in piano under Dr. Susan Keith Gray. She began studying of piano at the age of six - her past teachers include Pamela Eyerly of Metamora, IL, and Dr. James Johnson, former Professor of Piano at the University of Nebraska-Omaha. Most recently, Nicole was awarded first alternate at the MTNA competition at the state level for South Dakota for the Senior Piano division. She also received third place in the instrumental division of the Glenn Miller Scholarship Competition in June 2017. In addition to piano, Nicole is also an accomplished violinist. She is currently a member of both the USD Symphony and Chamber Orchestras, and played violin with Orchestra Omaha during the 2016-17 season. Nicole and her younger sister, Renee, performed Sarasate's *Navarra* as a violin duo with the Cherokee Symphony in April 2017.



**2018-2019 Season**

**Junior Division: Jasmine Palikhya, violin**

**Senior Division (tie): Steven Pruss, violin**

**Senior Division (tie): Ilana McNamara, viola**