

# Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Young Artist  
Program

CACTUS PEAR MUSIC FESTIVAL

## Young Artist Program Students

### WHO

#### The Saguaro Six —

Cactus Pear Music Festival's 2026 full-scholarship ensemble of young classical music students.

### WHAT

The 22nd Annual Young Artist Program (YAP) students are announced:

After competitive auditions, Education Director Craig Sorgi and Artistic Director Jeffrey Sykes are pleased to announce that they have chosen six student musicians as Young Artists in Cactus Pear Music Festival's (CPMF) 22nd Young Artist Program, CPMF's flagship summer chamber music mentoring program. This full-scholarship program is led by Education Director Craig Sorgi and Education Assistant Karen Stiles, and is based at the Music School at the University of the Incarnate Word.

**The six students selected** (photos available on our media/press page)

Milly Carlisle: clarinet

Keira Schmal: viola

Hana Sinha: violin

Ivan Perez: cello

Ella Spivey: violin

Kate Oehlke: piano

### WHEN

The Young Artist Program runs for 3 weeks during the festival, starting on June 29 and ending on the evening of their final performance, July 17, 2026, titled *The Shape of Things to Come*.

### WHERE

#### San Antonio

University of the Incarnate Word | Diane Bennack Hall

The program is based at CPMF's San Antonio concert home, Univ. of the Incarnate Word. The Young Artists are organized into a variety of large and small ensembles to study and perform chamber music. The curriculum will include private instruction and chamber music coachings with Education Director Craig Sorgi, Education Assistant Karen Stiles, and Festival Artists, lecture classes on aspects of music performance/careers, as well as several community engagement concerts. The Young Artists, who are calling their ensemble **The Saguaro Six**, will be presented in their own final concert on Friday, July 17, 7 pm, showcasing the exceptional work they have put in during their 3-week residency under the guidance of seasoned, world-class teachers. The young artists' summer schedule is on our [website](#).

### WHY

A vibrant music festival organization commissions new works, showcases the talent of its musicians and the fruits of its collaborations, and serves the community in which it is based with the highest level of musical artistry and education. The Young Artist Program is the keystone of Cactus Pear Music Festival's educational mission, offering to serious young musicians in the San Antonio area a **tuition-free** opportunity to study with, and be mentored by, some of the nation's top chamber musicians. The program also gives these young artists an opportunity to share their talents with the community in free concerts around greater San Antonio.

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# Young Artist Program

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For more information on the Young Artist Program, please visit our [website](http://cpmf.us). For Young Artist headshots, please go to our media page at: [cpmf.us/media-press](http://cpmf.us/media-press)

## Young Artist Bios



### **Milly Carlisle**, clarinet

Hi! My name is Milly Carlisle, and I am a rising junior at Churchill High School. I also have the great privilege of playing with the YOSA Philharmonic. My favorite composers are probably Tchaikovsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, and Shostakovich. Outside of band and orchestra, I enjoy reading and writing poetry, hanging out with my friends, and of course, listening to music! I am so excited for this opportunity and to share this music with San Antonio!



### **Kate Oehlke**, piano

My name is Kate Oehlke, and I am a pianist. I graduated from Grace Preparatory Academy of New Braunfels, and will be attending UT Austin majoring in piano performance in the fall. I have been a part of YOSA for 4 years, playing the violin/piano. My favorite composers are Mozart and Rachmaninoff!



### **Ivan Perez**, cello

My name is Ivan Perez, and I am a cellist and aspiring music educator! As a junior at Harlan High school I play in the orchestra and mariachi where I perform on various instruments from cello and violin to vihuela, guitarra de golpe, and guitar. My musical influence stems from Dvořák and Shostakovich to contemporary alternative rock and mariachi. My goal is to spend my life making music, sharing it with others, and inspiring as many people as possible along the way.



### **Keira Schmal**, viola

My name is Keira, and I am an 18 year old violist! I attended Brennan High School this past year, and will be majoring in music at LSU this fall. My favorite composer is Shostakovich, which also leads me to my favorite piece that I've played: Shostakovich 5! I also really enjoy doing theatre, and was Vice President of my school's theatre department. Over the past 4 years, I have been involved in over 20 productions, ranging from Shakespeare to Guys and Dolls! I am so excited to be a part of this program and can't wait to share this performance!



### **Hana Sinha**, violin

Hi, my name is Hana Sinha. I am a sophomore at Clark High School, and I've been playing the violin for 12 years now! I am in my school's varsity orchestra and YOSA Philharmonic, and I was a part of TMEA '26. Outside of my "orchestral life," I have also been on my school's varsity swim team for 2 years. Some of my hobbies include reading books (my favorite is The Song of Achilles by Madeline Miller), and my favorite school subject is mathematics.



### **Ella Spivey**, violin

Ella Spivey is a 15-year-old Mexican and Native American Christian violinist. She attends Pieper High School in San Antonio and is concertmaster of the Varsity Orchestra. She has been playing for almost seven years and is currently studying with Matthew Zerweck. Ella is a member of the YOSA Symphony and has recently competed with her school orchestra in New York's National Orchestra Cup. Ella served concertmaster of the TMEA Region 12 Philharmonic Orchestra. Her favorite composer is Bach because his music promotes a musician's creativity. In her free time, she loves to travel and swim, and after trying it once, fell in love with surfing.

## Mailing Address

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