

50<sup>TH</sup>

INTERNATIONAL  
VIOLA  
CONGRESS



**Artist  
Biographies**

# Artist Biographies



## **JACOB ADAMS**

Lauded for his “expressive and intense” playing (American Record Guide) which “packs an emotional punch,” (The Strad), Jacob Adams is Associate Professor of Viola at the University of Alabama. Since making his solo debut with the Cincinnati Symphony at age 17, he has performed in major venues throughout the United States and across four continents.

Jacob is a regular performer with orchestras, chamber ensembles, and festival series, appearing with A Far Cry, Camerata Pacifica, Brevard Music Center, and the Alabama Symphony Orchestra. He serves as principal violist for the Mobile and Tuscaloosa Symphony Orchestras. Jacob has recorded albums on the Centaur and Blue Griffin labels and has been published in the Journal for the American Viola Society and Strad magazine. His degrees are from Oberlin, Yale, and University of California – Santa Barbara, and his principal teachers include Helen Callus, Jesse Levine, Roger Chase, Roland Vamos, and Catharine Carroll Lees. Jacob lives with his wife, Shannon McCue, and their three children, Isaac, Jesse, and Maya, in Tuscaloosa, Alabama.



## **NEHIR AKANSU**

Nehir Akansu is a violist / composer of crossover styles, she has PhD in interdisciplinary art. Her field of research is on improvisation focusing on the fusion of folk music and jazz, in collaboration with audiovisual and contemporary dance. Her musical trajectory expands on the international musical journey from classical/contemporary music to jazz and world music styles, focusing on improvisation since 2016, when the turning point was in Santiago de Compostela.

In the meantime, she was a violist intern at the Real Filharmonía de Galicia. She had the opportunity to discover Galician folk music, the Foliada nights, where musicians gather to improvise all night long. This image of joy and freedom made her change her mind to become a versatile violist in the world of music. She is currently dedicated to jazz performance in Jazz Big Bands, creating artistic projects with fellow musicians, dancers, visual artists and also teaching jazz improvisation workshops under the title Improviola Jazz. She teaches at Yamaha music school and Sedajazz in Valencia, Spain. She is a member of International Viola Society since 2022 as young generation ambassador.



### JOSEPH ALFRED

Joseph Alfred is a Middle Eastern violinist and a visionary in the artistic world. He is best known as the founder of the CANTOS Foundation for Arts and Development, based in Alexandria, Egypt. A lifelong advocate for music and cultural exchange, Joseph began his musical journey in choral singing in 2015, later founding the CANTOS Vocal Ensemble in 2020—an initial step toward his broader dream of building a vibrant artistic community.

In 2024, after years of planning and international collaboration, Joseph officially launched the CANTOS Foundation, an inclusive non-profit organization dedicated to nurturing artistic talent across disciplines. Under his leadership, CANTOS has grown into a dynamic hub offering workshops, seminars, and performances that highlight both emerging and established artists. Joseph's mission is to build cultural bridges and foster creativity without borders. Through CANTOS, he champions diversity, accessibility, and the integration of both Arab and international art forms. His work emphasizes the importance of education, the inclusion of artists with disabilities, and intercultural partnerships that connect Alexandria to Mediterranean and global artistic scenes. With bold vision and unwavering dedication, Joseph Alfred continues to inspire a new generation of artists to dream, create, and connect through the transformative power of the arts.



### FÜSÜN NAZ ALTINEL

Born in 1990, Füsün Naz Altinel graduated from the Istanbul University State Conservatory Bachelor's Degree (BMUS) with highest honours in 2011. 2013-2014 she was accepted to Royal Northern College of Music to continue her music education in "Post Graduate Diploma in Solo Performance" with Asdis Valdimarsdottir. 2014-2016 RNCM, she was offered to do "Master of Music" degree in the class of Garth Knox and David Aspin. 2016-2020 Proficiency in Arts under the guidance of Prof. Beste Tknaz Modiri at the Istanbul University State Conservatory. Since 2022, she has been a judge at the World Online Music Competitions Federation. She has won numerous awards in international competitions such as the "Golden Prize" at Cambridge Music Competition, Vivaldi International Music Competition «Excellent Technique Special Prize" and "First Prize Duo Performance", International Mozart Competition Vienna "Special Mention" and London International Music Competition "Second Prize". As of 2023, she continues her work as an associate professor in the Istanbul Nisantasi University Conservatory Music Department.

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## AMES ASBELL

Violist Ames Asbell is a dynamic and versatile artist-educator who performs in nearly 40 countries, in venues ranging from rock clubs to Carnegie Hall. She has shared the stage and recording studio with artists such as David Byrne, Stevie Wonder, Willie Nelson, The Chicks, Andrea Bocelli, Harry Connick Jr., Roseanne Cash, and other musical luminaries across genres. Her screen appearances include Richard Linklater's acclaimed experimental film *Waking Life*, the *Late Show* with David Letterman, and nine episodes of PBS's *Austin City Limits*. Her performances have been released on labels including Nonesuch, Harmonia Mundi, Sony, Centaur, Naxos, and Blue Note. Recent solo and chamber appearances include International Viola Congresses in Brazil, Thailand, Poland, and New Zealand, as well as recitals in Scotland, Japan, Mexico, and South Africa. A passionate pedagogue, Ames is Professor of Viola at Texas State University, where she is the founding director of the Texas State University String Project, a community outreach program providing teaching opportunities for aspiring string students. In 2023, she founded the Texas State ViolaFest, an annual viola celebration bringing together national artist-educators and local students. She is the founding violist of the Tosca String Quartet, principal violist of Austin Opera, and a member of the Austin Symphony Orchestra. She also regularly performs with Grammy-winning ensemble *Conspirare*, the Arizona Musicfest Orchestra, the Austin Philharmonic (period-instrument performances), and the Victoria Bach Festival. A committed advocate for the viola community, Ames currently serves a three-year term as President of the American Viola Society.



## LESLIE ASHWORTH

Canadian violinist and violist Leslie Ashworth is praised for her versatility and imaginative artistry as a performer, educator, and composer. She was a live competitor in the 2025 Tokyo International Viola Competition and a quarter finalist in the 2024 Primrose International Viola Competition. Named one of CBC's 2021 "Hot 30 Under 30" Classical Musicians, she is also a prize winner of the 2022 Stepping Stone International Competition. Leslie has performed in venues including Carnegie Hall and Koerner Hall, and at festivals such as the Perlman Music Program Chamber Music Workshop, Thy Chamber Music Festival, European American Musical Alliance (Paris), Music Academy of the West, and the Lunenburg Academy with Barbara Hannigan. Currently pursuing her Doctor of Musical Arts with Misha Amory at The Juilliard School, Leslie is on faculty in Juilliard's College, Pre-College, and Extension Divisions, where she teaches Ear Training and Fundamentals of Violin. She performs on an 1854 Joseph Rocca viola on loan from Juilliard.



### LECH BALABAN

Lech Balaban (alto) – he began learning the violin at the age of 5 with his father Henryk Bałaban, who supervised his musical development until the 2nd year of his academic studies. Later he studied with Prof. P. Radziński and Prof. Jadwiga Kaliszewska, from whose class in Poznań's Music Academy he graduated in 1988. He later graduated in viola playing from the same academy (1994). He developed his skills at master classes with Professors E. Feltz, Z. Bron, O. Kagan, W. Pikajzen, M. Frischenschlager and R. Ricci. He received a special prize of the 4th National Festival of Young Violinists in Lublin (1980), an honourable mention in the 4th National Jahnke Violinist Competition in Poznań (1984), and the 1st prize in the 5th National J. Rakowski Competition for Viola Players in Poznań (1993). He was a member of the Polish team for the 9th International H. Wieniawski Violin Competition in Poznań (1986).

He made his debut as a viola player in the solo part of A. Schoenberg's string sextet *Verklärte Nacht*, as the leader of Amadeus Chamber Orchestra of the Polish Radio, of which he has been a member since 1988. As a soloist, he has given concerts in many Polish cities, as well as in Denmark, Slovakia, Germany, Austria, France and the former Soviet Union. With Amadeus Chamber Orchestra he has recorded viola concertos by J. Ch. Bach, G. F. Handel, K. Penderecki, as well as Sinfonia Concertante by W. A. Mozart.

At the prestigious „Bravo Maestro” Festival, he performed with Wanda Wilkomirska, Ewa Pobłocka, Vadim Brodsky, Konstanty Andrzej Kulka, Krzysztof Jakowicz, Kuba Jakowicz, Waldemar Malicki, Tomasz Strahl, and others. He is also a member of the Wieniawski Quartet. He has given concerts with Piotr Plawner. He teaches classes at Bydgoszcz Music Academy, where he holds the post of reader. As a teacher at Poznań's School of Talents, he succeeded in preparing several winners of musical competitions. Vice President of the Polish Viola Society. Host of the 46th International Viola Congress in Poznań in 2019.



### RUBEN BALBOA

Ruben Balboa is a violist, educator, and conductor in the United States, recognized by the American Viola Society as an Emerging Artist (2021) and Emerging Teacher (2022). He is an Assistant Professor of Viola and String Music Education at Wichita State University in Kansas, where he also performs with the Fairmount String Trio. He serves on the Board of the American Viola Society.

Balboa's career spans orchestral, solo, and chamber music. He has performed with The Dallas Opera, Austin Symphony, Amarillo Symphony, and Austin Opera, and appears regularly with Austin Camerata, the Beethoven Concert Series, and Candlelight Concerts. In 2020, his ensemble won both the Grand Prize and First Prize at the Coltman Chamber Music Competition. With his wife, soprano Samantha Balboa, he presents programs that highlight the expressive blend of voice, viola, and piano.

Dedicated to string education, he has presented at major national conferences and worked with the UT String Project, Austin Chamber Music Center, Austin Youth Orchestra, and Wichita Symphony Youth Orchestras.

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## **AYN BALIJA**

Ayn Balija is a dynamic violist dedicated to expanding the viola's expressive range through innovative performance and collaboration. She actively champions new works by commissioning and premiering pieces that push the boundaries of the instrument, especially as the violist of Piedmont Duo, a percussion and viola duo. She performs nationally and internationally for festivals and conferences in places like Hungary, New Zealand, Brazil, and Canada. Some of her national collaborations include the Early Music Access Project, Staunton Music Festival, the Richmond Symphony, Pittsburgh Symphony, and various viola festivals and congresses. As an educator, she fosters creativity through initiatives like Violapalooza, serves as summer faculty at the Tennessee Governor's School for the Arts and presents masterclasses at the college level. Dr. Balija is the Associate Professor of Viola at the University of Virginia and holds the position of Principal Violist with the Charlottesville Symphony.



## **GIULIO BARALDI**

Born in 1974, Giulio Baraldi graduated in Viola from the Conservatory of Padua in 1998. He is the founding member of the AltoContraltoTrio (voice–viola–piano), created with the aim of bringing to light many little-known or unpublished works for this ensemble, far beyond Brahms' Op. 91. With the AltoContraltoTrio, he participated in the International Viola Congress in Cremona in 2016, presenting a lecture-recital on the voice–viola–piano repertoire drawn from the archive of the Lore-Fischer Trio, active in Germany during the 1950s and 1960s. A member of the Italian Viola Society since 2015, he is fluent in both English and French.



### ALEKSANDRA BATOG

Viola player; educator, born May 8, 1974, Katowice, Poland. Doctorate on masterpieces, 2023.

Graduated from the Karol Szymanowski Academy of Music in Katowice in the viola class of Prof. Zygmunt Jochemczyk in 1998. At the same academy she also completed postgraduate studies in the chamber music class of Marek Moś. She has honed her skills at master classes in music interpretation, including in Lancut, Gorlice and New York. Aleksandra Batog's passion is chamber music. The artist has been performing since 1997 as part of the "Akademos" quartet, with which she has performed more than five hundred concerts at home and abroad, and has taken part in national and international music festivals and competitions, winning prizes and awards. Together with this ensemble, she has given concerts in music centers in Austria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Lithuania, Slovakia, Romania, the United Kingdom, Italy, Finland and the USA, including a performance at Carnegie Hall in New York as part of the "Emerson String Quartet Young Artists Concerts" series. She has recorded several CDs with the quartet.

Since 2004, she has co-founded the Lorien Trio with flutist Alicja Lizer-Molitoris and harpist Agnieszka Kaczmarek-Bialic. The original ensemble, consisting of viola, flute and harp, is active in concert activity, commissioning works, presenting premieres of contemporary Polish music at various festivals home and abroad (Lithuania, Turkey, China).



### JOHANNA BEAVER

Johanna Beaver is an acting member of the viola section of the Richmond Symphony, the Wintergreen Festival Orchestra, and is a founding member of the Afton String Quartet.

Johanna has served on the faculties of the University of Virginia, University of Mary Washington, Interlochen Arts Camp, Ann Arbor Summer Arts Camp, Opus 118 Harlem School of Music, and Stony Brook Pre-college. Currently, she teaches at Charlottesville Day School and Mary Baldwin University. Johanna holds a Doctor of Musical Arts in viola performance from the State University of New York at Stony Brook, where her mentors were Mitchell Stern, Katherine Murdock, and the Emerson String Quartet.

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## VINCIANE BÉRANGER

Vinciane Béranger's years with the Quatuor Manfred brought her to some of the world's most prestigious stages, including Salle Gaveau and Chopin-Pleyel in Paris, Victoria Hall in Geneva, Suntory Hall in Tokyo, the Mozarteum in Salzburg, and the Kennedy Center in Washington. Her recent recording Rebecca Clarke, *Works for Viola* received warm praise from the press. As part of a research program at HEMU, she initiated work on Clarke's manuscripts. Her discography also features sonatas and chamber works by Mozart, Schumann, Werg/Webern/Schönberg, as well as improvisations on Bach and Coltrane. She is equally sought after as an interpreter of contemporary composers such as Kurtág, Stockhausen, Pécou, Jolas, Giraud, Matalon, and Bacri. A highly regarded teacher, she is on the faculty of HEMU in Lausanne (Switzerland) and the CRR in Paris. Vinciane studied at the CNSMP, where she was unanimously awarded First Prizes in viola and chamber music. After working with Kim Kashkashian in Germany, she furthered her training at the Curtis Institute of Philadelphia as a Fulbright scholar. Winner of the Washington International Competition, the Valentino-Bucchi International Competition, the Lyceum Competition in Bern, and the Illzach International Competition, she was also awarded the Natexis Foundation Prize. She plays a 1770 Mantegazza viola.



## CECILIA BERCOVICH

Cecilia Bercovich (Madrid, 1986) performs as a teacher, soloist, principal violinist, and chamber musician. A dedicated advocate of contemporary music, she designs inventive concert programs often featuring world premieres—particularly of Spanish music—as well as her own arrangements. She has had the opportunity to perform under renowned conductors such as P. Boulez, K. Penderecki, P. Eötvös, and M. Pintscher at prestigious festivals including Lucerne, Salzburg, and Bayreuth. In addition to two upcoming recording projects, Cecilia collaborates with the Utopia Orchestra under Teodor Currentzis, performing in iconic venues such as the Berlin Philharmonie and the Athens Megaron. Her recordings, covering both solo and chamber repertoire, are released by Naxos, Deutsche Grammophon, and IBS. Currently a full professor at the Conservatorio Superior de Música de Murcia, Cecilia is deeply involved in orchestral education projects.



### JEAN-CHRISTOPHE BERNARD

Jean-Christophe Bernard is a versatile violist. He earned a master's degree in musical writing (écriture) in 2021 from the Conservatoire de Paris (CNSMDP), and obtained his pedagogy diploma (DE) and his modern viola master's degree in the class of Sabine Toutain and Françoise Gnéri in 2024. He is currently pursuing advanced studies in baroque viola with François Fernandez at the CNSMDP. His passion for historically informed performance has led him to perform with renowned artists such as William Christie, Hervé Niquet, Leonardo García Alarcón, Emmanuelle Haïm, Julien Chauvin, Stéphanie-Marie Degand, and Andres Gabetta. Co-founder of a trio combining historical viola, cello, and double bass selected by the Young Talents program, Jean-Christophe thrives in diverse repertoires and ensembles, from chamber music to orchestral settings. He has developed his musical personality through professional experiences with orchestras such as the Orchestre Français des Jeunes, the Orchestre National d'Île-de-France, the Ensemble Intercontemporain, the Orchestre de l'Opéra Royal de Versailles, Cappella Mediterranea, Les Arts Florissants, La Diane Française, Le Concert de la Loge and Le Concert d'Astrée.



### AUSTIN BOOTHROYD

Having dedicated his working life to music education, as a composer and editor Austin Boothroyd aims to engage with and inspire live music making among students, teachers and established performers alike. His published compositions include *Up We Go* (Wise/Novello) for trumpet and piano and *Up and Away* (Wise/Novello) for French horn and piano while published editions include *Ten Sonatas* (Schott) and *Five Capricci* (Schott) for trumpet and Basso continuo by Girolamo Fantini. Many of his recent compositions and arrangements featuring viola are published by ViolaViva. Studies in music took him to the University of Sheffield, the Royal Northern College of Music and University College London. Austin Boothroyd loves to play viola with Eastbourne Symphony Orchestra, he plays viola, piano and harpsichord with chamber groups and sings as often as possible with the Philharmonischer Chor Baden-Baden. In his post as Head of Gütersloh Music Centre he taught children and students aged 5 to 19 years.

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## ANDREW BRADDOCK

Violist Andrew Braddock's teaching and performing career has recently taken him to the Sejong Center in Seoul, South Korea, the National Concert Hall in Taipei, Taiwan, and a solo appearance with the Paducah Symphony Orchestra. He teaches at Western Kentucky University, where he co-directs the WKU String Academy. He also teaches at the Indiana University Summer String Academy and directs the Hilltop String Festival and the WKU Summer String Institute. His writings have appeared in publications such as *The Strad* and the *Journal of the British Music Society*. He is the editor of the *American Suzuki Journal*, and was previously the editor of the *Journal of the American Viola Society* and served on the board of the *American Viola Society*. He is the principal violist of the Paducah Symphony Orchestra, and he regularly plays with the Nashville Symphony. His principal teachers are Atar Arad, Kathryn Plummer, and John Graham.



## BRIAN BUCKSTEAD

Brian Buckstead is a versatile violinist, violist, conductor, and educator with an international career spanning performances and teaching across North America, Europe, and Asia. A champion of underrepresented composers, he has released two solo albums: *Forgotten Bériot: Virtuoso Opera Fantasies* and a recent recording of works by Ignaz Brüll on MSR Classics. Buckstead premiered *Latent Emotions* for solo violin and wind ensemble by Oscar Navarro and performed Stephen Andrew Taylor's *Pulse Aria* and *Achoo Lullaby* for solo viola and electronics at the 2023 College Music Society Conference.

A frequent presenter at ASTA national conferences, he shares expertise on topics ranging from Arabic violin technique to the legacy of John Kendall. Buckstead holds degrees from St. Olaf College and the University of Wisconsin–Madison, where he studied with Beatrix Lien, Charles Gray, Jennifer John, and David Perry. He currently serves as Associate Professor of Violin and Viola at Fort Hays State University.



**TONYA BURTON**

Tonya Burton is a dynamic violist, educator, and chamber musician based in Houston, Texas. She is a core member and curator for Kinetic Ensemble and Monarch Chamber Players, and a Grammy-voting member of the Recording Academy.

Known for her expressive artistry and dedication to new music, she regularly performs with cutting-edge ensembles including Caroga Arts Collective, Apollo Chamber Players, and Aperio. Her performances have taken her to Carnegie Hall, Rothko Chapel, and Miller Outdoor Theatre, and she appears on several acclaimed recordings, including *Kinetic*, which debuted at #1 on the Billboard Traditional Classical Chart. Internationally, she is an artist-in-residence at the Talis Festival and Academy in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Burton holds degrees from the University of Maryland (DMA), Rice University (MM), and the Cleveland Institute of Music (BM). She serves as Adjunct Professor of Viola at Sam Houston State University and maintains an active private studio.

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## BRENTON CALDWELL

Brenton Caldwell is the newly appointed violist of the Harrington String Quartet and Instructor of Viola at West Texas A&M University. Praised for his "attractive and memorable sound" and "fluid command of the fingerboard," he has appeared as soloist, chamber musician, and pedagogue on five continents. He has performed with the Dallas Symphony, Santa Fe Opera, National Symphony Orchestra, and the New York Philharmonic, and has taught at Dallas College, the University of North Texas, and the Curtis Institute of Music's Summerfest. Mr. Caldwell was one of legendary violist and pedagogue Karen Tuttle's last pupils. An inaugural fellow of Carnegie Hall and the Juilliard School's Ensemble Connect, he balanced chamber music performances with interactive educational work in New York City schools. A graduate of the Cleveland Institute of Music, Lynn University, and the Curtis Institute, he is completing his doctorate at UNT, researching the legacy of violist Karen Phillips.



## ANNE CALOUSTIAN

Anne loves to mix sounds, colors, scents, words, and things...Creative cocktails — of every kind. She studied music in Paris, then in the United States. A violist, holder of the French Certificat d'Aptitude, chamber music professor, and founding member of the Trio Nausicaa and the Opale Quartett. Over time, she discovered the world of clowning, storytelling, and musical burlesque theatre. She toured with Jean-Paul Farré in *Les animaux malades de la piste*, created children's shows — *Musique mon amour*, *Alto Bel Canto*, *Le secret de Grand-Père* — and performed with the Hope Ensemble, playing Cristal Baschet and an acoustic-electric MIDI quinton. Then she began to dance, to sing, to improvise — freely and simply. And between two artistic adventures, Anne created *Graine de Perle*. Born one day in January... or perhaps February... sometime when it's not too warm. Since then, between two melodies, Anne often sets out for the desert — to breathe, to find inspiration.



### **FEDERICA CARDINALI**

Federica Cardinali is an accomplished Italian violist who began violin studies at age 8 with Professor Giovanni Garavini. She earned her viola diploma with top honors at G. Verdi Conservatory in Ravenna under Professor Luciano Bertoni and completed her Master's degree with highest marks at A. Peri Conservatory in Reggio Emilia, studying with Professor Pietro Scalvini. She has performed with leading ensembles, including the Orchestra della Toscana and the Orchestra Giovanile Luigi Cherubini, founded and conducted by Maestro Riccardo Muti. Her discography includes recordings for Da Vinci Classics, Stradivarius and Tactus, notably premiering works for solo viola by Alessandro and Antonio Rolla. An active author and pedagogue, she has written music theory books, a volume on Arcangelo Corelli and his hometown, and the first viola transcription of the fifth part of Nicolas Laoureux's renowned violin method. She currently teaches music theory at the Istituto Musicale Sammarinese in San Marino.



### **RICHARD AULDON CLARK (MANHATTAN CONTEMPORARY CHAMBER ENSEMBLE)**

Composer, conductor, violinist, and violist Richard Auldon Clark is Artistic Director and Conductor of the Manhattan Chamber Orchestra, Manhattan Contemporary Chamber Ensemble, and the Finger Lakes Chamber Music Festival. A strong proponent of American music, Mr. Clark has performed and/or recorded hundreds of world premieres, and his work has received extraordinary praise in the New York Times, Fanfare, American Record Guide, Washington Post, and dozens of others. Mr. Clark has recorded the music of David Amram, Henry Cowell, Seymour Barab, Lukas Foss, Alan Hovhaness, Otto Leuning, Osvaldo Lacerda, Dave Soldier, Alec Wilder, and many more. An active studio musician as well, Mr. Clark has performed and recorded for Broadway, television, commercial, and film music, including several films for Philip Glass. Mr. Clark's compositions have been praised in the New York Times and broadcast on NPR stations around the country. With more than twenty chamber works to his credit, Mr. Clark has premiered six new compositions in the past three years at Zankel Hall at Carnegie Hall, and in September 2016, his opera *Happy Birthday*, Wanda June with a Libretto by Kurt Vonnegut was premiered by Indianapolis Opera. A frequent collaborator, Mr. Clark works with dancers, choreographers, and visual artists in the creation of new works. Currently, Mr. Clark is Professor of Music at Butler University where he conducts the Butler Symphony Orchestra and Butler Ballet.



## **MATTHEW DANE (VIOLA) & CHRISTINA JENNINGS (FLUTE)**

Matthew Dane is a founding member of the River Oaks Chamber Orchestra in Houston, solo violist of Opera Colorado, and a member of the Boulder Piano Quartet. A committed educator, he has taught at several university in Colorado and at the University of Oklahoma, where he earned tenure. In recent years, the viola d'amore has become a central passion. Since commissioning an instrument from luthier Martin Biller in 2013, Matt has performed both Baroque and contemporary works and collaborated with numerous composers to create new repertoire for the instrument. In addition to his Biller he performs on the 1731 J. U. Eberle viola d'amore featured in Grove Dictionary of Musical Instruments.

Flutist Christina Jennings leads a vibrant artistic life devoted to connecting with audiences and inspiring students. A winner of several major competitions—including the Concert Artists Guild and National Flute Association competitions—she has appeared as concerto soloist with more than fifty orchestras. She serves on the faculty of the University of Colorado.

Longtime collaborators, Matt and Christina recently premiered *Ok, Goodbye*, a double concerto by Marcus Maroney about the demise of an Icelandic glacier, with the River Oaks Chamber Orchestra. Their program today features commissioned and arranged solo and duo works by acclaimed American composers—a celebration of color, voice, and resonance that they are thrilled to share at this Congress.



#### EMERSON DE BIAGGI

Dr. Emerson De Biaggi earned his Bachelors' degree at University of São Paulo in 1988 and was a member of the São Paulo City Orchestra from 1988 to 1990. He studied with Raphael Hillyer and Steven Ansell at Boston University, finishing his Masters' degree in 1992, and completed the DMA program at UC Santa Barbara in 1995, studying with Heiichiro Ohyama, Donald McInnes and Ronald Copes. Biaggi returned to Brazil in 1997, joining the São Paulo State Symphony Orchestra from 1997 to 1999. Since 1998, he has been teaching viola and chamber music at Unicamp, São Paulo State University. Takes part in various chamber ensembles and teaches at the main Music Festivals in Brazil. As soloist, Biaggi has performed with orchestras all over Brazil, mostly presenting contemporary Brazilian viola repertoire. Founding member of the Brazilian Viola Society, he was recently reelected as its president for the 2024-2026 mandate.



#### ANTHONY DEVROYE

Known for his bold, colorful, and nuanced playing and clear communicative style, violist Anthony Devroye has guided audiences in connecting with great music for over twenty years. A member of the Avalon String Quartet, he has performed at Carnegie Hall, Paris's Auditorium du Louvre, Bogotá's Luis Ángel Arango Library, and Juneau's Sanctuary of Saint Teresa, with recordings on Cedille, Bridge, and Albany labels spanning Beethoven, Bartók, Brahms, Berg, and contemporary composers like Stacy Garrop, Harold Meltzer, Leo Sowerby, and Florence Price. Devroye has frequently appeared in Chicago's free summer Rush Hour Concerts, where he also served as Artistic Director for five years, creating accessible programs ranging from Baroque interpretation to contemporary works and interdisciplinary collaborations with poetry and dance. He is a regular substitute with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, touring with the ensemble to New York, Vienna, Warsaw, and Mexico. An innovative and inspiring teacher, he is Professor of Viola at Northern Illinois University and has given masterclasses at more than a dozen universities, including Northwestern and UCLA, as well as summer programs at Interlochen, Madeline Island, and the Icicle Creek Center for the Arts. He plays a 2001 viola by Gabrielle Kundert of Olney, Maryland.



## **BLANDINA DIMANDE**

Blandina Dimande (b. 2002, Maputo, Mozambique) is a violist whose musical journey began in 2012 at the National School of Music (Maputo), where she initially studied saxophone alongside piano, choir, and Timbila (traditional Mozambican instrument). In 2016, she joined the Xiquitsi Project (Maputo), studying viola with Maya Egashira and attending masterclasses with Pedro Muñoz, earning an honorable mention in 2018 and becoming a monitor in 2019. She participated in the Stellenbosch International Chamber Music Festival in South Africa (2019, 2022, 2024), working with musicians such as Juan-Miguel Hernandez, Jennifer Stumm, Peter Martens and David Cohen. In 2021, she appeared as soloist with the Xiquitsi String Orchestra in Christian Bach's Viola Concerto in C Minor. In 2024, Blandina participated in World Orchestra Week at Carnegie Hall (USA) with the Africa United Youth Orchestra conducted by William Eddins, and in the closing concert with Gustavo Dudamel and other participating orchestras. In 2025, she worked with Marc Sabbah, performed with the Basque Youth Orchestra (Spain), and completed an Erasmus exchange at Codarts (Netherlands) with Karin Dolman. She is currently finishing her Bachelor studies with Macarena Pešutić at the Conservatorio Superior de Canarias (Spain).



## **KARIN DOLMAN**

Karin Dolman studied violin and viola at Codarts University of the Arts Rotterdam, where she now teaches viola with great dedication and inspires a new generation of players. She is co-founder of the Dutch Viola Society and serves on the board of the International Viola Society, actively contributing to the strength and connectivity of the global viola community.

For 27 years, she was the violist of the Doelen Quartet, performing throughout Europe and beyond, and collaborating closely with composers on the creation and performance of new works. Today, Karin devotes much of her energy to solo projects that blend music and theatre, bringing the expressive voice of the viola to a wider audience in imaginative ways.

As a passionate chamber musician, she has a special love for rediscovering forgotten repertoire. Her work focuses on uncovering lesser-known compositions for viola, both solo and with piano, and giving them new life on the concert stage.

Alongside performing and teaching, Karin is increasingly active as a composer, writing new music inspired by her love of narrative, character, and sound.



**DANIEL DOÑA**

Violist Daniel Doña has distinguished himself as both an international performer and pedagogue. His collaborations across diverse musical traditions have led him to explore polystylistic soundscapes, earning praise for being “particularly at ease in this harmonic universe” (San Francisco Classical Voice). He teaches viola at Boston University School of Music, where he also serves as Director of Undergraduate Studies and String Chamber Music Coordinator, and co-directs the Tanglewood Institute String Quartet Workshop. Dr. Doña directs the chamber music program of the Boston Youth Symphony Orchestras and teaches in its intensive community program. A scholar as well as performer, he has written program notes for the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Tanglewood, Caramoor Center for the Arts, and others, noted for their “clarity and erudition” (Boston Musical Intelligencer). A dedicated chamber musician, he performs with TriChrome, BiND Ensemble, and the critically acclaimed Arneis Quartet.



## LENA ECKELS

Lena Eckels was born in Detmold / Germany and began to play the viola at the age of ten. She studied with Prof. Barbara Westphal and Prof. Lars-Anders Tomter. As a soloist she has won the GWK Förderpreis and 1st prize at the Brahms Competition (Pörtlachschach/ Austria). Lena attended master classes with Kim Kashkashian, Yuri Bashmet and Nobuko Imai among others. Together with her Pianist Simone Wolff, she was a scholarship holder at the "Yehudi Menuhin - Live music now" society. Lena Eckels has been a member of the Swiss-German Amaryllis Quartet for 10 years. The quartet has won the Melbourne International Chamber Music Competition in 2011 and appeared regularly in concert series and festivals including the Lucerne Festival, Heidelberger Frühling, The Chelsea Music Festival NYC, The Huntington Estate Music Festival Australia, Schwetzingen Festspiele and has performed in Viennas Musikverein, Alte Oper Frankfurt, Wigmore Hall and the Melbourne Recital Centre. The group won the Jürgen Ponto Kammermusikpreis 2012, the highest endowed award for chamber music in Germany and was awarded with an ECHO Klassik for the recording „White“. She is a member of the German-Israeli „Else Ensemble“ – a young ensemble that collaborates regularly with diplomatic and multi-cultural institutions and initiates innovative, cross-disciplinary concerts. ([www.else-ensemble.com](http://www.else-ensemble.com)) In 2018 Lena Eckels was appointed professor of viola at the Musikhochschule Lübeck /Germany and is regularly performing in festivals and concerts all over Europe.



## EIRA DUO

Celia Cortes Manzanares and Iryna Neporozhnyia first met in Rotterdam in 2018 and have collaborated since 2023 as members of Olga Trio. With this ensemble, they debuted at the IV Concurso Nacional de Interpretación de Obras de Mujeres Compositoras (CIMCO), where they were finalists. Since then, they have been actively working with female composers based in the Netherlands. Both are also student members of NSKA (Dutch String Quartet Academy), further enriching their artistic development within a supportive and innovative environment. In May 2025, they launched a new project: Eira Duo, for piano, viola, and electronics. Eira Duo is a collaborative initiative dedicated to amplifying the voices of contemporary female composers while honoring the overlooked legacies of women throughout history. Blending live performance with storytelling, the duo presents music alongside narratives that illuminate composers' inspirations and cultural contexts while sharing their own creative journey. Their original composition serves as a bridge between past and present—connecting traditions with innovation and embedding their artistic voice within the continuum of classical music.



#### ANDREW FILMER

Malaysian violist and musicologist Dr Andrew Filmer is an associate professor at the Institute of Music at UCSI University in Malaysia. Andrew was a Festival Artist at the 48th International Viola Congress in Thailand and performed and presented at Congresses in Brazil, New Zealand, Germany, and Poland. He was Editor of the Journal of the American Viola Society and has been an advisor for the Australia and New Zealand Viola Society for over a decade.

Andrew's interests have included scordatura for viola, editorial approaches, collaborations with composers, and the use of technology in education. Andrew's research has been published in the United States, United Kingdom, France, Australia, and New Zealand. He has presented research twice at Cambridge University, and he was a scholar-in-residence there in early 2023.

Andrew has facilitated masterclasses and guest lectures at the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory in Singapore, the Royal Northern College of Music and the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire in the UK, the Elder Conservatorium in Australia, and the New Zealand School of Music. Andrew has a wide range of interests: he was part of a three-person team that constructed the first two harpsichords built in Malaysia, and was a member of the New Zealand jazz band The Troubles, whose inaugural recording was released by Rattle Records.

Andrew completed his PhD at the University of Otago in New Zealand in 2013 with violist Donald Maurice and composer Anthony Ritchie as supervisors, and previously studied in the United States with Anthony Devroye of the Avalon Quartet.



#### GABRIEL FORERO VILLAMIZAR

Originally from Bogotá, Colombia, Gabriel is an active soloist, chamber musician, orchestral player, and Baroque interpreter. He has performed concerts and recitals in the United States, Colombia, Peru, Brazil, Spain, Germany, Austria, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Croatia, and England. He regularly collaborates with various orchestras and chamber ensembles in the United States. In recent years, he has devoted much of his time to researching the music of Heinrich Biber, his Rosary Sonatas, and their historically informed performance. As part of this research, he has created a complete transcription of these sonatas for viola and basso continuo, which he now performs in its entirety in recital. Beyond the classical sphere, Gabriel has shared the stage with the Trans-Siberian Orchestra, Celtic Woman, Danny Elfman, Rachel Barton Pine, Sandy Cameron, and Ezinma, among others.

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## **CHRISTIANA FORTUNE-READER**

Christiana Fortune-Reader is a versatile musician, passionate about connecting teaching, performance, community engagement, and arts advocacy. An Assistant Professor of Music at SUNY New Paltz in the Hudson Valley, she teaches violin and viola. Her research focuses on music as a tool for social change and community development. She works with audiences of all ages, from early childhood to college students, as well as with larger community and professional ensembles. As a soloist and chamber musician, she has performed at international festivals and venues across Europe, Asia, and North America. She has also given national lectures and performed internationally, studying with Jeff Irvine, Lynne Ramsey, Donald McInnes, Karen Ritscher, and Carol Rodland.



## **HELLA FRANK**

Hella Frank holds the position of Professor of Violin and Viola at the Federal University (UFRGS) in Porto Alegre, Brazil, where she also leads the String Department and directed the Preparatory Division for 18 years. Her teaching extends beyond the university through masterclasses and lectures at festivals throughout Brazil and abroad. Frank's academic credentials include a Master's degree from the New England Conservatory under Eric Rosenblith and a Bachelor's from UFRGS with Marcello Guerchfeld. Her chamber music studies encompass work with acclaimed musicians including Jean-Jacques Pagnot, Eugene Lehner, Louis Krasner, and Walter Trampler. Her performance practice spans solo, chamber, and orchestral repertoires across multiple continents—Brazil, Uruguay, the United States, Germany, Switzerland, Russia, and the Netherlands. Frank's scholarly engagement includes founding membership with ABRAV (the Brazilian Viola Society) and current doctoral studies at UFRGS, researching self-regulated learning methodologies, representing a synthesis of her extensive performance and pedagogical experience with contemporary educational theory.



## HENRIK FRENDIN & FREDRIK EMILSON

Henrik Frendin is professor of viola and chamber music at the Academy of Music in Malmö, alongside his work as a soloist, chamber musician, and film music conductor. Through a long international career, he has established himself as his country's foremost ambassador for his instrument, known for his versatility and progressive approach. With the Western classical music tradition as his foundation, he moves freely between genres and is a pioneer in exploring the viola in the electroacoustic sound world. Through a 20-year collaboration with instrument maker Richard Rolf, he has contributed to the creation of a new design for electrified string instruments, resulting in two custom-built violas with unparalleled tonal qualities. In 2011, the latter instrument was premiered in the electric viola concerto «Music Noir» by composer Daniel Nelson with the Radio Symphony Orchestra and conductor Enrique Mazzola, broadcast live in 35 countries. These unique instruments form the sonic backbone of the work «Sandhamn – Suite for electric violas, electronics and moving images».

Fredrik Emilson is a composer, director and artist who initiates projects where music interacts with visual and narrative elements. He composes across a broad spectrum: from enormous land-art sound installations in national parks to film music and contemporary classical music including the Grammy-nominated CD «Viola con forza» with Henrik Frendin. Fredrik Emilson directed and composed the music to the animated opera film «Love and War» with the Radio Symphony Orchestra and Royal Opera Chorus, which won Best Animated/Experimental Short Film at the Los Angeles Film Festival and Best Short Film at Nordic Panorama. He is one of the originators of the «Für Alle collective» – an artist group that has created TV series, radio programs, records, and theatre plays. As a film music composer, he has recently written music for the feature film «As Long as the Heart Beats» and composed music for 24 films in the drama series «The Sandhamn Murders».



## MURILO FRIAS

Murilo Frias is a Brazilian violist with international experience. He has performed with the Orchestre National de Cannes (2024–2025) and has been invited to play with the Orchestre des Solistes de Monte-Carlo and at the Conservatoire National de Nice. In Brazil, he was a member of the Camerata Paulistana, principal violist of the Orquestra Sinfônica de Santos, and solo violist of the Orquestra Jovem Municipal de Guarulhos. In chamber music, he is a member of the Quatuor Andrea in France. A graduate of the Conservatoire de Nice and holder of a bachelor's degree from Faculdade Cantareira in São Paulo, he studied with Sílvia Peneva, Tania Campos, and Emerson De Biaggi. He is also co-founder of the Duo Frias Tavares, dedicated to Brazilian and contemporary repertoire.



## MARÍA JOSÉ FUEYO MUÑIZ

María José Fueyo Muñiz was born in Asturias in 1971 and completed her viola studies under the guidance of Slawomir Arszynski, Emilio Navidad, and Rivka Golani.

She has taught in Aragon, Galicia, and at various summer courses, and currently teaches viola and string orchestra at the Conservatory of Alcalá de Henares (Madrid), where she serves as vice-director. She has performed with prominent soloists and conductors in major orchestras, including the RTVE Symphony Orchestra and the National Orchestra.

Passionate about her instrument and the sharing of knowledge, María José re-founded the Spanish branch of ESTA as secretary in 2021 and completed a doctoral thesis on the original viola repertoire and its relevance for viola teaching at the Autónoma University of Madrid in 2024. She will attend her third International Viola Congress and, on this occasion, will present the fascinating Spanish classical and Romantic repertoire.



## MISHA GALAGANOV

Dr. Misha Galaganov is Professor of Viola and the String Chair at Texas Christian University (TCU) in Fort Worth, Texas. He has premiered over thirty works written for him by composers from the United States, Israel, Russia, Mexico, Peru, Belgium, Italy, and Uruguay. He was the first violist in the world to perform all twelve of Telemann's 12 Fantasias for Viola da Gamba Bass (1735) on the viola in a single concert. As principal viola of the Dallas Chamber Symphony, Galaganov has premiered numerous works for small symphony orchestras and string chamber ensembles. In addition to teaching and performing, Galaganov has written articles for major string publications, including *Strad*, served as a reviewer for the American String Teachers Association magazine, and given lectures and presentations at professional conferences. His albums, *Viola Fantasies and Charm*, *Passion*, and *Acrobatics*, have received critical acclaim. Bärenreiter will publish his transcription of Telemann's Fantasias for viola in 2026. Galaganov's teaching has taken him to leading conservatories worldwide, and he has taught and performed at numerous European and American festivals. His former viola and violin students have become orchestral soloists, university professors, and accomplished soloists and chamber musicians. Galaganov performs on an antique French Mansuy viola from Paris and uses gut strings for all his modern solo and chamber music performances.



**EVA GARNET**

Curious and eclectic, Eva is a passionate performer of contemporary viola repertoire. She began her studies at the CNSM in Paris, earning her bachelor's degree in 2023 in the class of Pierre-Henri Xuereb, before pursuing her master's with John Stulz at the CNSM in Lyon, whom she met through several collaborations with the Ensemble Intercontemporain. Eva has also performed with national orchestras such as the Orchestre National de Lille and the Orchestre National de Lorraine, as well as with various chamber ensembles as a chamber musician, orchestral player, or soloist. In June 2024, she joined the ensemble Ulysses at the ManiFest Festival in Paris, and in August 2024 at the Lucerne Festival. She won 3rd prize at the 2019 National Young Violists Competition and is a laureate of the Société Générale Foundation's "C'est vous l'avenir" program.



**DANIEL GEE CORDOVA**

Daniel Gee Cordova is an active presenter, clinician, and conductor from the United States of America. He is Orchestra Director at Chisholm Trail Middle School, Round Rock, TX USA, Director of the Austin Suzuki Music School, and a Teacher Trainer for the Suzuki Association of the Americas. He has shared his work at the American String Teachers Association, Texas Music Educators Association, Texas Orchestra Directors Association, and Suzuki Association of the Americas Conferences. Daniel is also an active performer, serving as Assistant Principal Violist with the Austin Opera Orchestra.

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## DAPHNÉ GERLING

Daphné Gerling has an active career as a teacher, performer, and author on the viola. Praised by *The Strad* for her bold programming, her debut recording *Encircling* was released by Acis in 2024 and broadcast on public radio stations in Chicago, Iowa, and Minnesota. From Amsterdam to Vietnam, New Zealand to Costa Rica, she has toured and performed at 38 U.S. universities and in 14 countries. Recently, she was a summer fellow at Lincoln Center Education, New York, and performed Baroque viola with the Washington Bach Consort. With pianist Tomoko Kashiwagi, she toured Texas, Georgia, Arkansas, Alabama, and Canada, and presented recitals at the International Viola Congresses in Thailand and Brazil. She is Associate Professor of Viola at the University of North Texas and President-Elect of the American Viola Society.



## CAROL GIMBEL

Carol Gimbel is a visionary violist, educator, and producer. Her acclaimed projects include *Music in the Barns* and the award-winning #1000Strings, reimagining how classical music is performed, presented and taught. Ms. Gimbel is the co-host for *Why Do We Only Listen to Dead People?* on WFMU 91.9FM in NYC and NJ, the oldest freeform radio station in the U.S., where she explores the future of classical music with artists and thinkers. A passionate educator, she is the Artist-in-Residence and Program Facilitator of the Viola Intensive Program (VIP) at the Philadelphia International Music Festival and creator of *Violin Quest*, a game-based learning tool that fuses classical technique with immersive play. Ms. Gimbel performs on the Ex-Emmanuel Vardi viola c.1725 and is pioneering interdisciplinary research in speculative design and classical music at New York University's Gallatin School.



### ELIAS GOLDSTEIN

Praised by the Chicago Tribune for his « incredible performance» violist Elias Goldstein has distinguished himself as one of the great instrumentalists of his generation. Prize winner in the leading viola competitions of the world, including the 2011 International Primrose Competition, the 2010 Lionel Tertis Competition, and the Bashmet International Competition in Moscow in 2010. He has achieved recognition and critical acclaim as a champion of his instrument, as the first violist invited to Carnegie Hall to perform all 24 Caprices by Paganini, a program that later toured the United States and Europe. As a solo recitalist he has performed in many of the greatest halls of the world including Carnegie, Seattle Symphony's Benaroya Hall, George Enescu Philharmonic, Musiikitalo Helsinki. As a pedagogue and coach, his students have won positions in major orchestras including the Dusseldorf, San Diego, North Carolina, Alabama Symphonies, and the Sasasota Orchestra. Under his mentorship, he has guided students to success and recognition of prizes in the ARD, Primrose, Tertis and Aronowitz International Viola competitions.

Elias Goldstein is currently professor of viola at University of Delaware. He is also principal viola of the Delaware Symphony, ProMusica Chamber Orchestra in Ohio, and is also serving as the solo violist of the Kristiansand Symphony Orchestra in Norway, under the director of Julian Rachlin in 2026.



### LAURI HAMALAINEN

Lauri Hämäläinen has been playing and teaching viola and violin in Finland and Greece for nearly 30 years. He is the author of the pedagogical series Violin Friends and Viola Friends, and has created numerous arrangements for string orchestra as well as original compositions for violin, viola, string trio, and string quartet. He also composed the music for the multimedia show Instrumental Impressions of Helsinki. Since 2013, all his original works have been published by Universal Edition. An active member of the Finnish String Teachers Association (SJO), the Finnish Viola Society (SAVS), the American String Teachers Association, the European String Teachers Association, and the European Chamber Music Teachers Association, Hämäläinen is deeply involved in the international pedagogy community. His Violin and Viola Friends series is designed to make learning and teaching more playful and effective, bringing joy through music-making with friends. His book The Amazing Violin Comics – Practice Tips and Mental Images for String Learning is the world's first publication to combine visualization, mental imagery, and string pedagogy through comic art. He has led workshops at string teacher conferences in Finland, Sweden, Estonia, the UK, Spain, Turkey, Portugal, and Brazil. Currently based in Greece, he performs as a violist with the Lefka Ori String Duo, the Melos String Quartet of Chania, and the Vamos Orchestra.



## **JAN-HENDRIK HARLEY**

Violist, composer, arranger, editor, multi-instrumentalist, teacher, and researcher, Jan-Hendrik Harley began his musical journey at the age of six with violin and piano lessons. During his formative years, he balanced sports, academics, and cultural activities, cultivating a broad range of interests that would later enrich his musical studies. As an undergraduate at Stellenbosch University, Jan-Hendrik recognized the importance of interconnectivity and relationships between different areas of music studies. He also developed a keen interest in early music (1500–1750), an aspect of his professional palette he refined under the guidance of world-renowned early music specialist Paul Leenhouts at the University of North Texas. He performs on mandolin, modern violin and viola, as well as baroque violin, viola, and guitar. As a composer, Jan-Hendrik's works have been premiered on four continents by student and professional ensembles, ranging from intimate chamber pieces to large-scale electroacoustic and orchestral works. He has produced numerous soundtracks and albums, focusing mainly on composition, orchestration, and score preparation. To date, he has composed and produced the complete scores for three feature films and three short films, the latest of which won first prize at the Cape Town 48h Film Project in 2021. He currently lives in Gqeberha with his wife, where he works as a performer, composer, arranger, and teacher.



## **MARCUS HELD**

Marcus Held is a violist and musicologist specializing in 17th- and 18th-century music. He earned his PhD and Master's in Musicology from the University of São Paulo (USP), where he also completed a postdoctoral fellowship, and is currently a FAPESP postdoctoral researcher at the Faculty of Philosophy, Sciences and Letters of Ribeirão Preto (USP). He has studied with Luis Otavio Santos, Emilio Moreno, and Manfredo Kraemer, and has translated into Portuguese the complete treatises of Francesco Geminiani. Held has collaborated with ensembles such as the São Paulo Municipal Symphony Orchestra, the Campinas Symphony Orchestra, and Coral Paulistano, and has appeared as guest concertmaster, soloist, and director in historically informed performance projects throughout Brazil. His research and performances focus on the reception of early modern English and Italian repertoire, the history of musical taste, and the role of string instruments in both European and colonial Latin American contexts.



### ELLEN HERLER

Ellen Herler, born in 2011, began violin at the age of four and switched to viola at seven. A 2025 graduate of the East Helsinki Music Institute, she performs in several string quartets and orchestras. She has achieved remarkable success in international competitions, appeared as a soloist with the Helsinki City Orchestra and the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra, and gave a recital at Carnegie Hall in 2024.



### HILLARY HERNDON

Violist Hillary Herndon has been lauded for her brilliant playing, "sweetly soaring tone" (Time Out New York), creative programming and insightful teaching. She has been heard on NPR and PBS and has collaborated with some of the world's foremost artists, including Itzhak Perlman, who described Hillary as "having it all... a gifted teacher and an excellent musician." Passionate about teaching, Ms. Herndon teaches at the University of Tennessee, where she has received the Thomas Jefferson Prize and a faculty Creative/Scholarly Achievement Award. Herndon co-founded Mosaic Music Publications, which publishes graded anthologies for string students by composers from underrepresented demographics.

Herndon holds degrees from the Eastman and Juilliard Schools of Music and is Past President of the American Viola Society. She serves as the Executive Director for the Sewanee Summer Music Festival. Her recordings *La Viola*, *American Voices* and *1919: Hidden Treasures* from an Epoch Year are available on MSR Classics.

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## EMILY HIEMSTRA

Emily Hiemstra (b. 1991) is a violinist, composer, and mother of four young sons. A JUNO-nominated composer praised for her “vivid” and “captivating” music (George Elliott Clarke), her works have been performed internationally, including at the Impulse New Music Festival (Los Angeles) and the Kirby Laing Centre for Public Theology (Cambridge, UK). Drawing on her orchestral and operatic experience, she creates compositions with rich color and texture, aiming to engage contemporary audiences and future generations. An active community member, Emily initiates projects such as New Works for Solo Viola, presents family-friendly chamber concerts, and serves on the board of the Canadian Composers Association as outreach and publicity director. As a violinist, she has performed with ensembles including the Charis Collective, Canadian Opera Company, and Magisterra Soloists, and appeared on CBC Radio’s About Time with Tom Allen. Emily balances her international performing and composing career with raising her children in London, Ontario.



## JOANNA HOOD

Violist Joanna Hood served as the founding violinist of Canada’s Lafayette String Quartet for thirty-seven years. An associate professor at the University of Victoria, British Columbia, she teaches viola and chamber music and directs the university’s baroque ensemble. Hood performs with the Pacific Baroque Orchestra, was principal viola of the Seattle Baroque Orchestra, and co-founded the contemporary music ensemble Tsilumos in Victoria. She has also performed with the Loma Mar Quartet, the DNA Quintet, frequently with St. Luke’s Orchestra in New York, and was a founding member of the Los Angeles-based new music quartet Eclipse.



### ANDREA PRIESTER HOUDE

Andrea Priester Houde is an American violist whose deep love and dedication to her art are reflected in performances around the world and in the unique environment of her teaching studio. An Associate Professor at West Virginia University, instructor at Interlochen Arts Camp, and board member of the American Viola Society, she has performed as a soloist, chamber musician, and orchestral player across North and South America, Europe, and Asia. She has recorded for Delos, Parma, and Albany, and her solo album *The American Viola* features American viola works from the earliest compositions to contemporary pieces, including the historic world premiere of the first American composition for viola.

Houde's passion for teaching and pedagogy matches her performance excellence. She has given masterclasses in the U.S. and abroad, including at the 47th International Viola Congress in New Zealand and as a guest faculty member for the 2025 American String Teachers National Conference. She has taught at the University of Delaware, Emerald Coast Chamber Music Festival, Orfeo Music Festival (Italy), Endless Mountain Music Festival, Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp, and Master Players Festival. She has performed and presented repeatedly at International Viola Congresses and American Viola Society festivals. Houde integrates performance and teaching in workshops and presentations, including Viola Days and intensive viola camps. She has served as a national and international juror for MTNA regional and national competitions and was a first-round judge for the Primrose International Viola Competition.



### SHU-CHING HSU

Shu-Ching is a Taiwanese violist who earned her Bachelor of Arts in Viola at National Taiwan Normal University under Ting-Hui Chen. She continued advanced studies at the Conservatoire National de Région de Boulogne-Billancourt in France and the Université de Montréal in Canada, studying with Simone Feyrabend, Stéphanie Marcel, and Jutta Puchhammer.

She has performed as a violist in the National Symphony Orchestra and Chimei Philharmonic Orchestra in Taiwan, and the Ensemble Instrumental de Nice in France. Currently, she is an adjunct assistant professor at the National Taiwan University of Arts and the founder/director of Taiwan Radiant Ensemble, a chamber group established in 2021 to commission and premiere new works for viola. She is also a research assistant at the Research Center for Music, Technology and Health at National Tsing Hua University.

In June 2023, Shu-Ching performed at the 48th International Viola Congress in Salaya, Thailand, presenting contemporary works reflecting her interest in expanding the expressive voice of the viola. For the upcoming 50th Congress, she proposes the world premieres of these two new chamber works that explore cultural multiplicity and spiritual nuance through collaborative performance.

Since 2021, Shu-Ching has collaborated with flutist Sabina Shu-Chun and harpist Chao-Pei in exploring and performing new chamber music in both educational and professional contexts.



## BOGUSŁAWA HUBISZ-SIELSKA

She studied at the Krzysztof Penderecki Academy of Music in Krakow (then PWSM), making her first public appearance as a violist at 16. During her studies, she performed in the USA at the Juilliard School, New England Conservatory, Eastman School of Music, and Yale University. She graduated with honors, also from the State High School of Music in Krakow. She continued studies with prof. Stefan Kamasa and twice received scholarships for courses in Lausanne with prof. Kim Kashkashian, with whom she later studied in Munich (1988–1990).

Her collaboration with American composer Rachel Knobler (1924–2017) inspired performances and recordings of Knobler's works, broadcast by Classical Discoveries and archived in the US Library of Congress. She also recorded pieces by Johann Baptist Vanhal, Robert Fuchs, and contemporary composers, including duos with Lech Balaban. She has performed across Europe and the US, appearing on Polish, Austrian, and German TV and radio.

She premiered numerous works, including Anna Zawadzka-Gólosz's *Poco a poco più...* and viola arrangements of Chopin's Sonata in G minor, Lutosławski's *Dance Preludes*, and *Vieuxtemps' Romance* (PWM). She authored *Scales and Arpeggios* (PWM, 2013).

A dedicated pedagogue, she teaches viola at her alma mater as a titular professor, with students active across Europe. Active in the International Viola Society since 2011, she co-founded the Polish Viola Society (2013) and co-organized its congresses in Krakow (2013) and Poznań (2019). She also serves on juries of national and international competitions.

Honors include the National Education Commission Medal (2017), the Gloria Artis Medal (2021), and the Silver Cross of Merit (2021).



## NITYA ISOARD

Born in Clermont-Ferrand, Nitya grew up in a musical family: her father is a contemporary guitarist, and she danced to Bollywood films played on the television by her Indian mother. She began studying the viola at age five, inspired by her teacher Claire Saillard, who guided her for twelve years. She later studied with Dominique Miton at the CRR of Besançon before entering the CNSMD of Lyon in 2020, where she studied with Françoise Gnéri, Jean-Baptiste Magnon, and Emmanuel François. In June 2025, she earned a performer's master's degree from CNSMD Lyon and also completed a master's in musicology at Lyon 2 University. Nitya currently performs as an extra musician in various orchestras and is a full member of the Orchestre des Lauréats du Conservatoire in Paris.



### **ASTRID LUCÍA JEREZ RODRÍGUEZ**

Astrid Lucía Jerez Rodríguez is a Colombian violist and educator passionate about string pedagogy and cultural connection through music. She holds a Master's in Viola Performance from the University of Southern Mississippi (USA), a degree in Violin from the Universidad Autónoma de Bucaramanga (Colombia), and a postgraduate specialization from the Escuela Soto Mesa in Madrid, supported by a Fundación Carolina scholarship. Her career spans Colombia, Spain, the United States, and Mexico as a chamber and orchestral musician. She currently performs with the Orquesta Sinfónica de la Universidad de Guanajuato (OSUG) and teaches viola and string pedagogy in community and institutional programs, including the Sistema Nacional de Fomento Musical. Certified in Paul Rolland String Pedagogy, her work emphasizes ensemble training, early instruction, and culturally informed repertoire. She recently led a Central American workshop for string teachers, promoting Latin American rhythms in classical training. Her viola festival in Puebla and projects across Latin America aim to enhance technique, musicality, and cultural identity, connecting students deeply with Colombian and Latin American music.



### **MATTHEW JONES**

Described by 'Fanfare' Magazine as 'the finest violist since William Primrose', Matthew was born in Wales and studied with Rivka Golani. He has recorded 27 solo and chamber CDs, including multi award-winning 'Britten: Reflections' with pianist Annabel Thwaite, streamed more than 4.5 million times, the only complete recording of Prokofiev's 'Romeo and Juliet' excerpts as transcribed by Borisovsky, a critically lauded recording of the York Bowen Sonatas and a disc of his own chamber compositions.

Matthew is Professor of Viola and Head of Chamber Music at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. His unique approach to teaching (inspired by his studies of mathematics, Alexander Technique and Yoga/Meditation and performance psychology) has led to one of the most sought after teaching studios in Europe. His performances, masterclasses and workshops on enhancing performance have reached tens of thousands of musicians.

He is also a composer and passionate chamber music teacher. In the last four years alone, groups he has mentored have won the Trondheim, Banff, Bordeaux and Borciani International Competitions.

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## ANNA JURRIAANSE

Anna Jurriaanse is a Dutch violist currently completing her Master's degree in Berlin with Julia Brembeck-Adler while holding an academy with the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester. She previously studied at the Royal Conservatoire in The Hague with Ásdís Valdimarsdóttir and in Tilburg with Emlyn Stam. From the very beginning, chamber music has been central to her path: with Pelargos Quartet, a highlight was performing Stockhausen's Helicopter String Quartet, which sparked her passion for contemporary music. In Berlin, she co-founded Ensemble Utak (flute, harp, viola), focusing on modern repertoire. After doing a course with Ensemble Modern she was invited to join the International Ensemble Modern Academy for several projects and took part in the Lucerne Festival Contemporary Orchestra Academy. Anna has also held academies with the Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra and the Netherlands Chamber Orchestra. Balancing orchestral, chamber, and contemporary work, she thrives at balancing the good old classics and the contemporary world.

Honors include the National Education Commission Medal (2017), the Gloria Artis Medal (2021), and the Silver Cross of Merit (2021).



## DANNY KEASLER

Dr. Danny Keasler is the Assistant Professor of Viola at Mahidol University College of Music in Salaya, Thailand, is also the Co-Principal of the Thailand Philharmonic Orchestra, and is the founder of the Thailand Viola Society. He also teaches string literature and pedagogy at Mahidol University. Dr. Keasler, with the help of TVS and Mahidol University, hosted the 48<sup>th</sup> International Viola Congress at Mahidol University with over 60 performances involving 150 international violists. In 2016, he founded the first ever Thailand International Viola Conference which hosted 13 events including a concerto performance by Dr. Pamela Ryan with the Thailand Philharmonic Orchestras. The first annual Thailand International Viola Conference followed in 2016 and featured American violist Jennifer Stumm as well as 20 other Thai and International violists. His orchestral experience includes Thailand Philharmonic Orchestra, Tallahassee Symphony Orchestra, Augusta Symphony Orchestra, Columbus Symphony Orchestra, Mobile Symphony Orchestra, Pensacola Symphony Orchestra, Sinfonia Gulf Coast, Northwest Florida Symphony Orchestra, Albany Symphony Orchestra, Orlando Philharmonic, Ocala Symphony Orchestra, Space Coast Pops Orchestra, and Brevard Symphony Orchestra. Danny has also performed in chamber concerts in New Zealand, Laos, Thailand, United States, Poland, and Italy.



### NIGEL KEAY

Nigel Keay is a violist and composer based in Paris. Born in New Zealand, he began violin at the age of seven and earned a Diploma in Instrumental Music from Wellington Polytechnic in 1978. He then studied for a year with Franco Domaneschi, violinist of the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra. From 1980 to 1982, alongside studies in composition and orchestration at Victoria University of Wellington, he pursued violin studies with Gavin Saunders. In 1994, Nigel Keay became associate violist with the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra. Between 2001 and 2006, he served as principal viola of the Paris Choral Society Orchestra. In 2005, he played viola with the Idoménée String Orchestra in Paris, and in 2006 he was violist of the Orchestre 2021, which he founded. In 2013, he was featured on Radio France Musique's *Tapage Nocturne* with Bruno Letort, performing his *Trio for Clarinet, Viola and Piano* with Jean-Marc Fessard (cl.) and Dora Cantella (pno). His recording of *Quo non ascendet?* for solo viola by Isabelle Fraisse was broadcast on the web-radio *La Contemporaine*. During the pandemic (2020–22), he recorded several works for solo viola: David Victor Feldman's *Viola Sonata* (1974), Ewan Mackay's *Monologue for Solo Viola* (2019), and Ross James Carey's *Air and Gigue for Solo Viola*. Since 2022, he has been performing with the Parisian contemporary music ensemble *Traces d'Aujourd'hui*, both in a flute–viola duo with François Veilhan and in a clarinet–viola–piano trio with Frédérique Moine and Isabelle Dutel.



### LINDA KLINE

Linda Kline is the Professor of Viola at Boise State University. In the summer, she teaches and performs at the Interlochen Summer Arts Camp in Michigan. Kline holds viola performance degrees from Northwestern University, the Cleveland Institute of Music, and the University of Memphis. Significant performances include the *Virtuosi Festival* in Recife, Brazil, solo recitals in Seattle and Memphis, and collaborations with the Kandinsky Trio, the Rothko Trio, and the Blakemore Trio. She is a member of the IRIS Orchestra and the Boise Philharmonic, and has performed with the Hawai'i Symphony, Boise Baroque Orchestra, the Strings Festival, the Memphis Symphony, the Civic Orchestra of Chicago, the Erie Philharmonic, the Youngstown Symphony, the Spoleto Festival Orchestra, the Aspen Festival Orchestra, and the Garth Newel Chamber Orchestra. Kline presented her research on Tartini's *The Art of Bowing* at the American Viola Society Festival in Los Angeles in 2018 and at the Tartini Symposium in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada in 2022. A book chapter on the subject is forthcoming by acclaimed publishing firm Brill–Böhlau in fall 2025. In 2024 Kline received an award for Best Sound/Music in the i48 Film Festival featuring a solo viola film score.



## EDWARD KLORMAN

Edward Klorman is a violist and scholar concentrating on the intersection of music analysis, historical musicology, and music performance. His first book, *Mozart's Music of Friends*, explores metaphors of sociability and «conversation» in the performance of Mozart's chamber music. It received major awards from ASCAP, the Mozart Society of America, and the Society for Music Theory. His new book, *Bach: The Cello Suites* explores how these suites — once dismissed as historical curiosities — have come to occupy such a prominent place in both concert life and popular culture. An accomplished modern and baroque violist, he is presently Professor of Music at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, having previously taught music analysis and coached chamber music at The Juilliard School, Manhattan School of Music, McGill University, the Aaron Copland School of Music, and the Music@Menlo festival.



## WOJCIECH KOŁACZYK

Wojciech Kołaczzyk – polish violinist and violist. He graduated Academy of Music in Bydgoszcz in the violin class of prof. Henryk Keszowski, and in the viola class of prof. Zbigniew Frieman. He conducts a rich concert activity as a soloist, chamber musician and orchestral musician. He was associated with the Academy of Music in Bydgoszcz until 2012. Currently, professor at the Academy of Art in Szczecin . As a member of the Barock Quartet, he is the originator and co-organizer of the Chamber Music Festival «Muzyka u Źródeł», which has been taking place since 2009 in Bydgoszcz. On his initiative, an annual scientific and artistic conference is organized at the Academy of Art. «Polish Chamber Music». He is invited to participate in scientific conferences, jury works, and doctoral and postdoctoral commissions. Member of the Polish Viola Society and the «Violaarte» Association. Head of the Department of String Instruments and chamber music Academy of Art.



### KRZYSZTOF KOMENDAREK-TYMENDORF

Krzysztof Komendarek-Tymendorf a renowned viola soloist and professor of the Academies of Music in Gdańsk and Bydgoszcz (habilitated PhD, MBA), is celebrated for his artistry and contributions to contemporary music. A graduate with honors of the Academy of Music in Gdańsk in the viola class of Professor I. Albrecht, he further perfected his skills at the Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst Wien under Professor W. Klos. As a soloist, he has performed with the most important orchestras in Poland. A member of Bydgoszcz Barok Ensemble, Duo del Gesù, and MonoTony Ensemble, he has collaborated with artists such as D. Sitkovetsky, Ch. Hartmann, A. Levitan, W. Klos, E. and J. Kropfitch. His acclaimed albums, including *ReVIOLation* (Naxos), *Quantum of Silence*, *North Waves - Gdansk Contemporary Music* (Odradek Records, USA), *AtomoGenus* (Requiem Records), *VIOLAND* (Polish Radio Music Agency), *ALTOTRONICA* (Centaur Records, USA) have won international awards. He has premiered 100 world premieres including the premieres of Tadeusz Dixa's *Concerto for Viola and Chamber Orchestra*, Anna Roclawska-Musialczyk's *Concerto In Hoc Signo Vincas for Solo Viola and String Orchestra*, and Marek Sewen's *Concerto Passione op. 44 per Viola e Orchestra* dedicated to Prof. Stefan Kamasa. Contemporary composers dedicate their works to him. His articles are published, among others in the *Journal of the American Viola Society* (USA) and on *Meakultura*. pl, he edits notes and is a juror for competitions like the J. Brahms International Competition in Pörtlach (Austria). He plays a viola made by Wojciech Topa in 2020 and a bow by Marcin Krupa.



### MICHELLE LACOURSE

Violist Michelle LaCourse, an active soloist and chamber musician, has appeared on four continents, including performances in France, Italy, Spain, Luxembourg, Brazil, China, and South Korea, and in many parts of the USA. Her playing has been described by critics in such terms as "a miraculous blend of intense passion and artistic elegance" and "has a mastery of the instrument like a sixth sense, and with it reveals to us the most profound secrets." An enthusiastic advocate for new viola repertoire, she has also commissioned and premiered many new pieces for the instrument. Her two albums of new music for viola and piano, *"Chocolates"* and *"An American Menagerie"* were released on MSR Classics to rave reviews. Currently viola professor at Boston University's School of Music, where she was awarded BU's highest honor for excellence in teaching, many of her former students enjoy playing and teaching positions around the globe.

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## **FRÉDÉRIC LAINÉ**

Frédéric Lainé pursues a threefold career as violist, teacher, and musicologist. Trained at the CNSMs of Lyon and Paris, he furthered his studies in Italy with the Trio di Trieste and in London with the Amadeus Quartet. A Doctor of Musicology and collection director at Billaudot Editions, he has published several books and articles on the history of the violin and viola (PUF, Fayard, Mardaga, Symétrie). Violist of the Enesco Quartet, he teaches chamber music at the Conservatoires of central and 13th arrondissement of Paris, and chamber music pedagogy at the CNSM of Paris.



## **LOUISE LANSDOWN**

Violist, teacher, philanthropist, and researcher, Louise Lansdown is Deputy Head of Strings at the RNCM and Professor of Viola at the YMS. She is President of the British Viola Society and Executive Artistic Director of the newly merged Tertis and Aronowitz International Viola Competitions.



### HSIAOPEI LEE

Hsiaopei Lee, Taiwanese-American violist, is Professor of Viola at the University of Southern Mississippi, where her teaching excellence has been recognized with numerous university awards. A dedicated and inspiring pedagogue, Dr. Lee has mentored many talented violists who have excelled in competitions, research, and gone on to positions in orchestras and universities. An accomplished performer, she has appeared as soloist, recitalist, and orchestral musician across three continents. Recent highlights include solo appearances with the Meridian Symphony Orchestra, the USM Symphony Orchestra, and the NTNU Symphony Orchestra in Taiwan. She serves as principal violist of the Meridian Symphony Orchestra and is a passionate chamber musician, frequently collaborating in cities such as New York, Paris, and Taipei. A longtime member of the Impromptu Piano Quartet, she demonstrates a deep commitment to chamber music. Hsiaopei Lee is also a strong advocate for contemporary viola repertoire. Her acclaimed album *ODYSSEY: New Music for Viola by American Women Composers* was released on Centaur Records in 2014 and reflects her dedication to promoting new and underrepresented works. Dr. Lee is a three-time recipient of the prestigious Artist Fellowship from the Mississippi Arts Commission (2011, 2017, 2023), honoring her contributions to the arts. She currently serves on the board of the American Viola Society and was competition coordinator for the 2024 American Viola Society Festival.



### ANTONIN LE FAURE

Antonin Le Faure began playing the viola at the age of seven, drawn to its wide expressive range. He studied at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse de Paris (CNSMDP) with Pierre-Henri Xuereb and Jean Sulem, then at the Haute École de Musique Vaud-Valais-Fribourg in Sion with Tatjana Masurenko and Timothy Ridout. He also received guidance from Nobuko Imai, Gérard Caussé, Garth Knox, and Samuel Rhodes.

A prizewinner at several international competitions, he received the First Prize of the Jeunes Solistes de la Sorbonne and the Grand Prix CIO–Michel Lucas, with support from the Fondation Meyer, Fondation Société Générale, the Maurice Ravel Foundation, and AMOPA.

As a soloist and chamber musician, Antonin has performed at major festivals including Messiaen au Pays de la Meije, Encuentro de Santander, Salon-de-Provence, and Stellenbosch. He collaborates with the Trio Pantom, Trio Metral, the Tana and Elmiere Quartets, François Salque, and the Fouchenneret brothers. In 2020, he founded the Stendhal Quartet and became artistic director of the Corde à Anima Festival in Cap Corse.

Committed to contemporary music, he has worked with Kaija Saariaho, Olga Neuwirth, Philippe Hersant, and Heinz Holliger. Supported by the Fondation Givel, his debut album devoted to Swiss composers of the 20th and 21st centuries will be released in 2025. His projects explore the dialogue between music, literature, and visual arts.



## PIERRE LENERT

Principal Viola of the Orchestre de l'Opéra National de Paris, Pierre Lenert has established himself as one of the leading violists in Europe. Winner of international competitions including Markneukirchen, Lionel Tertis, Maurice Vieux, and the Autumn Festival for Young Performers, he combines virtuosity, rich tonal depth, and artistic curiosity. To date, he is the only European violist to have undertaken the challenge of recording the complete 24 Caprices of Niccolò Paganini on the viola, since Emmanuel Vardi's historic recording in 1965. A sought-after soloist and chamber musician, Pierre Lenert is invited to the world's most prestigious festivals, from the BBC Proms to the Schubertiades, from Kuhmo to Gubbio, and the Marlboro Festival. His critically acclaimed discography includes the complete works for viola and piano by Henry Vieuxtemps, as well as several recital albums devoted to Carl Reinecke, Niccolò Paganini, Felix Mendelssohn, Georges Enesco, Jean Françaix, and Darius Milhaud. An engaged pedagogue, he teaches at the École Normale de Musique de Paris and the CRR of Créteil. As Artistic Director of the International Chamber Music Festival "SERENADE," he works with Éditions Billaudot to expand the repertoire, particularly around Paganini's Caprices and a practice method designed for future generations.



## GUILLAUME LEROY

Guillaume Leroy is a violist, accordionist, and conductor. As a soloist, he has appeared with the Orchestre Prométhée, Orchestre Hélios, the Geneva Haute École de Musique Orchestra, and the Hochschule Orchestra of Bern, while also performing in recital and chamber music at Salle Cortot, the Opéra d'Avignon, the Flâneries Musicales de Reims, and the Schubertiades of Sion, among others. He studied viola with Yuri Bashmet and Roman Balashov at the Moscow Tchaikovsky Conservatory, then with Nobuko Imai, Miguel da Silva, and Gabor Takacs-Nagy in Geneva. On the accordion, his mentors included Max Bonnay, Wlatcheslav Semionov, and Teodoro Anzellotti. He further refined his artistry through masterclasses with Antoine Tamestit, Veronika Hagen, Marc Lubotsky, Michel Beroff, and members of the Emerson, Jerusalem, and Berg quartets. A passionate chamber musician, he performs with the Hadès Quartet and has collaborated with Régis Pasquier, Aurélien Pascal, Victor Metral, Théo Ould, Alexis Cárdenas, Giorgi Kharadze, Yardani Torres-Maiani, and Julie Sévilla-Fraysse. As a conductor, following studies in Metz, Lille, and at the École Normale de Musique de Paris, he has led the Orchestre National d'Île-de-France, the Orchestre National de Metz, the Moravian Philharmonic, and the Vilnius State Orchestra. His recording career began with the ensemble Astéria (Harmonia Mundi, 2019). In 2024, he released his first album on NoMadMusic with pianist Victor Metral and cellist Aurélien Pascal, featuring contemporary works alongside Romantic repertoire. Since 2017, he has been a member of the Orchestre National d'Île-de-France and serves as No. 4 viola of the London Philharmonic Orchestra. He performs on a Cremonese viola (c.1780) and a Russian "Jupiter" accordion.



### KARINE LETHIEC

Karine Lethiec is a French musician, concert violist, researcher, and artistic director, known for designing interdisciplinary programs that interweave Music, Fine Arts, History, Archaeology, and Science. Since 1999, she has been Artistic Director of Ensemble Calliopée, a flexible chamber group often described as both a “musical laboratory” and an “agora of encounters.” With this ensemble, she creates cultural projects in partnership with institutions, using musical interpretation to shed light on key societal questions, later disseminated through concerts, recordings, and video productions. For several years, she has pursued an ambitious project around the viola today, commissioning composers of diverse generations, aesthetics, and cultures to expand the instrument’s repertoire, in resonance with humanity’s earliest artistic expressions. She is an Associate Doctoral Researcher at Université Lumière Lyon 2 (School of Letters, Language Sciences, and Arts) / CNSM of Lyon, and regularly presents lecture-recitals and masterclasses. Karine Lethiec graduated from the Conservatoires Nationaux Supérieurs de Musique of Lyon and Paris, the Haute École de Musique in Geneva, and the Hochschule in Bern. Her principal viola teachers were Hatto Beyerle (founder of the Alban Berg Quartet) and Hartmut Rohde, and she furthered her studies in the United States at the Ravinia Steans Music Institute for Young Artists in Chicago. She has been awarded prizes at the Greensboro Competition (USA), the 2000 Lionel Tertis International Viola Competition (Special Penderecki Prize), and the Fondation Natexis–Banque Populaire. She performs on a Sympertus Niggel viola dating from 1777.



### KATHERINE LEWIS

Katherine Lewis is Professor of Viola at Illinois State University, where she leads a vibrant studio, teaches string pedagogy, and directs the ISU String Project. A dedicated advocate for string education, she has earned multiple university awards for excellence in teaching, service, and creative scholarship. A longtime leader in the American String Teachers Association (ASTA), Dr. Lewis served over a decade on the Illinois ASTA board, including a term as president, and received a national leadership award for her contributions.

As a performer, she served more than 15 years as principal violist of the Peoria Symphony Orchestra and continues to appear in solo and chamber performances nationwide. She is also a sought-after clinician, presenting at the American Viola Society Festival and ASTA National Conference. Her current research centers on ViolaXR, an innovative virtual reality app enhancing bow technique. She holds degrees from Rice University, the Cleveland Institute of Music, and Lawrence University.

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## **ALICE LINDSAY**

Alice Lindsay is a distinguished violist and pedagogue whose career spans symphonic, solo, and chamber music performance, as well as decades of influential teaching across several continents. The former associate principal violist of the New Jersey Symphony, she has taught at institutions including Rutgers, Southern Methodist, Virginia Commonwealth, and Loyola Universities, and at numerous ASTA conferences across the U.S. She has been a key figure in developing youth and festival programs nationwide and is currently the director of the Viola Intensive Program (VIP) at the Philadelphia International Music Festival. Her approach to teaching synthesizes the techniques of her mentors Paul Doktor, Joseph DePasquale, and Samuel Applebaum, with an ongoing dedication to practical innovation.



## **LUIS CLAUDIO MANFIO**

Luis Claudio Manfio is an Italian-Brazilian luthier exclusively dedicated to viola making. His instruments are played by around twenty principal violists and numerous soloists across six continents. Ensembles such as the Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra in London, the Kammerphilharmonie Bremen, and the Korean Chamber Orchestra have included MANFIO violas in their ranks. Renowned for their generous dynamic range, powerful C strings, focused yet warm and dark timbre, quick response, and clarity across all registers, MANFIO violas are designed as practical and reliable tools for musicians. Light in weight and crafted with thin, comfortable necks, they are built to combine ease of playability with high-level expressive potential.



#### MANHATTAN CONTEMPORARY CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

The Manhattan Contemporary Chamber Ensemble is a chamber ensemble based in New York City specializing in American music. MCCE performs in venues including Carnegie's Weill & Zankel Halls, New York's Symphony Space, the Liederkrantz Club and the Church of Christ & St. Stephens. They have been featured several times on WXXI's live radio show "Backstage Pass" with host Julia Figueras on Rochester Public Radio, WCNY radio, performed at the San Diego and Orlando National Flute Conventions and have been the resident ensemble at the annual Finger Lakes Chamber Music Festival each summer. MCCE can be heard on the Keuka Classical recording label.



#### KENNETH MARTINSON

Kenneth Martinson, former president of the International Viola Society, is the founder of Gems Music Publications, dedicated to publishing rare and out-of-print viola music, which has won four Paul Revere Awards. He holds a DMA from Stony Brook University, a Master's in Viola Performance from Eastman, and degrees from UC Berkeley and the University of Michigan. Martinson has taught at the University of Florida, Western Illinois, Crane School of Music, and Viterbo College. He was founding president of the Florida Viola Society and has served as secretary of the American and International Viola Societies. An accomplished performer, he has played as principal viola with orchestras including Brevard, Orlando, Toledo, Peoria, Lansing, Dubuque, Northern New York, and Santa Cruz, and performed major concertos by Mozart, Milhaud, Bartók, and Martinu. He has recorded the complete solo viola sonatas of Hindemith and Milhaud, as well as chamber works by Clarke and Martinu. Internationally active, he has performed across North America, Europe, Brazil, South Africa, and Iceland, and appeared at multiple International Viola Congresses, premiering Alessandro Rolla's Viola Concerto in D Major, 542.

# 50<sup>TH</sup> INTERNATIONAL VIOLA CONGRESS



## KATRIN MEIDELL

D.M.A. violist Katrin Meidell maintains a prolific career as a performer, pedagogue, and lecturer. Her versatile expertise has taken her to the U.S., Canada, Finland, Austria, Poland, Brazil, the Netherlands, Thailand, and New Zealand. Her articles have been published in *American String Teacher* and the *Journal of the American Viola Society (AVS)*.

Deeply involved with the AVS for eight years, first as a volunteer and later as a board member, she has organized and directed the AVS Festival and the 47th International Viola Congress in 2022. In July 2024, she became AVS Secretary. A music critic for *American String Teacher*, she is also a nationally recognized specialist in string players' health and serves on the Health & Wellness Committee of the American String Teachers Association (ASTA). A Karen Tuttle pedagogy coordinator, she has recently given masterclasses at International Viola Congresses (Thailand and the Netherlands), the International Viola Forum in Poznań (Poland), University of North Texas, Florida State University, University of Alabama, Boston University, and more. Dr. Meidell is Associate Professor of Viola at the Schwob School of Music, Columbus State University, Georgia. She holds degrees from Boston University, New England Conservatory, and University of North Texas, where her principal teachers were Michelle LaCourse, Carol Rodland, and Susan Dubois. Outside of music, she enjoys traveling, outdoor activities, and knitting.



## MELISSA MELENDEZ

Melissa Meléndez, Venezuelan-American violist, teacher, clinician and string specialist; is currently the Adjunct Viola Professor at the Austin Community College. Dr. Meléndez holds the Principal Viola position with the Victoria Symphony Orchestra (TX), and she is member of the Central Texas Symphony viola section. As a soloist, she has performed with the Austin Civic Orchestra, Corpus Christi, Victoria, Kingsville Symphonies and Sinfónica de Carabobo. Passionate about contemporary music, she premiered the Castellanos-Yumar Viola Concerto, Miguel del Aguila's *Concierto en Tango* (piano and viola version), and Alexandre Ouzounof's *Nuages de Feu* for Viola and Bassoon.

She holds degrees in music performance from Louisiana State University, The Cleveland Institute of Music, Duquesne University, and The University of Arizona. She is an active member of the American Viola Society and the Texas Music Educators Association where she frequently lectures on topics about new viola repertoire and teaching strings.



### AMAURY MEZA-PÉREZ

Amaury Meza-Pérez is a Mexican engineer and researcher currently in the final year of his PhD in Acoustical Engineering at Sorbonne Université. He holds a degree in mechatronics and a master's in robotics, where he developed a robotic violinist hand. His current research focuses on the numerical modeling of string instruments using finite element methods. He combines scientific rigor with practical experience as a trained luthier and violinist. Amaury has published in *Acta Acustica* and collaborates on interdisciplinary projects that explore the physical behavior of violins through simulation, experimentation, and instrument making.



### JULIE MICHAEL

Julie Michael, violinist, brings sincerity and expressiveness to music of all periods for audiences of all ages. Passionate about contemporary music, she collaborates with composers and premieres new works for solo viola and chamber music.

Former member of the Tana and Amaranth Quartets, she performs with leading ensembles in Europe and North America, including Ensemble Intercontemporain, Ensemble Cairn, Ictus, and Alarm Will Sound. Highlights include performances at the Venice Biennale, Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, ManiFeste – IRCAM, Aldeburgh Festival, and the Banff Centre. She is a founding member of Duo 42, specializing in contemporary chamber music, and regularly gives concerts and workshops for young audiences. Born in Detroit and based in Brussels, Julie holds degrees from McGill University and the University of Michigan and is pursuing a doctorate at KU Leuven, focusing on the creative process of contemporary performer-composers. As a composer, her works combine rhythmic gestures with engagement with text and found objects. A dedicated teacher, she has given masterclasses worldwide and taught in youth programs, including Harmony Project Bay Area and Partageons l'Espoir Montréal.



## JEANNE-LOUISE MOOLMAN

Jeanne-Louise Moolman is the violist of the Odeion String Quartet and viola lecturer at the University of the Free State in Bloemfontein, South Africa. She has been principal Viola in the National Orchestra in Pretoria, the Johannesburg Philharmonic Orchestra and currently the Free State Symphony Orchestra. Many South African composers have composed viola works for Jeanne-Louise. She regularly commissions repertoire for the viola and making appearances around South- Africa and internationally. She is working together with the Ethnomusicologist, Joseph Kunnuji to perform music composed in an African Idiom.



## MARCIN MURAWSKI

Violist, conductor, teacher, writer and prize winner in solo and chamber music contests, studied at the Ignacy Jan Paderewski Academy of Music in Poznań with his Father, professor Andrzej Murawski. He graduated with honors in 1998, and has been employed since 1997 at the Poznań-based Academy where he teaches a viola and chamber music class, currently as a titular professor. He has given solo recitals in most European countries, in the USA (e. g. in Carnegie Hall), China, Thailand, Brazil and New Zealand. Murawski has given lectures and master courses in viola and chamber music in Europe (Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst in Vienna Austria, National Conservatory of Music in St. Petersburg Russia, Royal Irish Academy of Music in Dublin Ireland, Academy of Music in Riga Latvia, National Music Academy in Lviv Ukraine, Estonian Music and Theatre Academy in Tallinn Estonia, National Music Conservatory in Tbilisi Georgia to name a few), China (National Conservatory of Music in Harbin), in the USA, in Thailand, Brazil and in New Zealand. He has been a juror in international and national musical contests, as well as the teacher of numerous graduates who went on to win several prizes and distinctions themselves. Murawski has released over 30 CD and DVD albums with solo and chamber works, most featuring world premieres. He has been cooperating with the publishing house Acte Préalable, for which he has recorded music across all periods and including contemporary music, such as the works of the American violist and composer Michael Kimber. Member of Australian and New Zealand Viola Society, founder of the annual Poznań International Viola Forum and President of Foundation Murovisation. In July 2020 he received the title of professor from the President of Poland. Since January 2020 Member of the Board of the International Viola Society.



**SARAH NIBLACK**

Sarah Niblack, «The Practice Professor» is a Paris-based professional violist and the innovative founder of SPARK Practice, a revolutionary system for musical learning and performance. She has dedicated her career to helping musicians overcome the barriers of traditional practice. Her unique methodology is a powerful synthesis of four distinct fields: the elite training of a top-tier conservatory musician, the mental toughness of a competitive athlete, the brain-based learning strategies of neuroscience, and the self-awareness of mindfulness.

Educated at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music and the CRR de Paris, Sarah has an extensive performance career with orchestras like the Orchestre National d'Île-de-France, and the academy of the Orchestre de Paris. However, it was her personal journey—navigating performance anxiety, injury, and even a five-year break from music—that inspired her to create SPARK Practice and the Intentional Practice System. With over 20 years of teaching and coaching experience, Sarah now provides musicians with the tools to practice with intention, regulate their nervous system, and perform with confidence and joy. She is also the founder of Classical Revolution Paris, making classical music accessible to new audiences.



## **NADINE OUSSAAD**

Nadine Oussaad is a Franco-Algerian violist who completed her musical studies at the CNSMD in Lyon and Paris. Her projects focus on performance and pedagogy at the intersection of contemporary and creative music with Mediterranean, Arab, and Eastern musical traditions.



## **LUCIA PERALTA**

Interprète engagée dans le champ de la création contemporaine, mais aussi dans l'interprétation historiquement informée. Directrice artistique de l'Itinéraire. Enseignante titulaire du CA.



## **YANNA PELSER**

Yanna Pelser is a Dutch violist who has performed in classical ensembles (Asko|Schönberg ensemble, ØModernrt, Philharmonie ZuidNederland) as well as improvising violist in non-classical groups (North Sea String Quartet and Brainteaser Orchestra and many others). She is a certified Resonanzlehre trainer with a 3-year education in Berlin with the founder of the method, Thomas Lange. Ever since her graduation she has given private sessions and workshops to help fellow musicians to enhance their sound quality, freedom of body movement and expression in sound.



**LOMANE PERRIER**

Biography



**DIANE PHOENIX-NEAL**

Violist Diane Phoenix-Neal has built a distinguished career as a teacher and performer. She performs internationally as a soloist, appearing on stages and festivals across four continents, including Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, Kennedy Center, the Bowdoin International Music Festival, and the Évien and Spoleto Festivals. In France, she served as principal viola of the Orchestre de Picardie and violist of the Quatuor Joachim, touring internationally, including at the Banff Centre for the Arts. Her tone is described as "rich and sumptuous" and "invaluable because memorable"

Ms. Phoenix-Neal studied at the Juilliard School with William Lincer and the Juilliard String Quartet, and earned her DMA from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, where she previously studied at the UNC School of the Arts. Her mentors include Sally Peck, Atar Arad, Paul Doktor, and Bruno Pasquier. A champion of new music for viola and underrepresented composers, she has performed at festivals such as James Madison University Contemporary Music Festival, Northwestern University New Music Conference, international viola congresses in Australia, Poland, Brazil, and the American Viola Festival. She serves as principal violist of the Shenandoah Valley Bach Festival and guest violinist with the Roanoke Symphony Orchestra. An active member of the American Viola Society, she is currently Associate Professor of Viola at James Madison University, Virginia, USA.

# 50<sup>TH</sup> INTERNATIONAL VIOLA CONGRESS



## POLE DUO

Founded in 2017 at the Conservatorio Superior de Castilla y León (Salamanca, Spain) by Santiago Velo and Roberto Marina, Dúo Pole is a viola and guitar ensemble dedicated to exploring and promoting contemporary classical repertoire. Their artistic approach aims to introduce audiences to lesser-known works, highlighting the timbral richness and expressive potential of this instrumental combination. Exploring the sonic possibilities of these complementary instruments is a central artistic focus of the duo. They regularly collaborate with composers such as Sebastián Wise and Enrique Yebra to expand their repertoire and push their artistic boundaries. Over the course of their career, they have self-produced two albums, available on Spotify. In July 2024, they premiered their latest project, *Almost a Concert*, in Dordrecht, marking the start of a concert tour between Spain and the Netherlands.



## NETHANEL POLLAK

Israeli violist and researcher Netanel Pollak is a member of many musical communities around the world such as the American Viola Society, the Perlman Music Program, The Academy of Sacred Drama (USA), Musique a Flaine (France), and Aurora (Sweden). As an early music performer, Pollak has been principal violist for the European Union Baroque Orchestra, Jerusalem Baroque Orchestra, Ensemble Phoenix, In Mixto Genere Ensemble (Israel), and Juilliard 415 ensemble. Pollak is an alumnus of the Jerusalem Academy of Music, the Juilliard School, and he recently received his D.M.A. degree from the University of Miami Frost School of Music, where he conducted a corpus research of unknown viola repertoire from the USSR. He plays on an 1801 Lupot viola, loaned to him by the Zisapel Family Foundation.



### JUTTA PUCHHAMMER-SÉDILLOT

Recently retired from her position as Professor of Viola and Chamber Music at the Université de Montréal, Austrian-Canadian violist Jutta Puchhammer-Sédillot has led a distinguished and multifaceted career. She has given masterclasses at leading institutions and summer festivals across the Americas and Europe, and served as principal viola of the Orchestre symphonique de Laval and Les Grands Ballets Canadiens de Montréal for over 20 years. An acclaimed chamber musician and soloist, she has performed worldwide, recorded extensively, and published several solo albums featuring rare Romantic viola repertoire. She has edited three volumes of *Pièces de Concours* for Schott Edition and commissioned works from Canadian women composers. A passionate advocate for the viola, she presided over the Canadian Viola Society (2000–2014) and the International Viola Society (2020–2026), playing a key role in organizing International Viola Congresses since 1999. Her contributions have earned her the Maurice Riley Award for International Achievement (2006), the Silver Alto Clef Award (2019), and the Canadian Life Achievement Award (2022). Her latest project, the IVS Audio Database hosted by IVS and Music4Viola, promotes forgotten viola and piano works up to 1940 by fostering recordings and global research.



### ANGÈLE PUNGIER

Born into a family of musicians, Angèle began music and classical dance at an early age. After earning her diplomas in viola performance and music theory, she is now continuing her studies at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse de Paris under the guidance of Françoise Gnéri. From childhood, thanks to her family environment, she developed a passion for traditional Celtic music, first learning on her own before specializing through Ceili Band classes with Céline Cozien and later Mickaël Cozien, with whom she also began studying the Scottish bagpipes in 2021. A true multidisciplinary artist, her creativity extends across music, dance, and even fashion. Comfortable in a wide variety of styles, she constantly seeks to create with her own hands—whether through arranging, composing, or exploring new artistic expressions.

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## CARLOS ALEIXO DOS REIS

Dr. Carlos Aleixo is a distinguished viola professor at the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG). He earned his Bachelor's at UFMG, a Master's in viola performance from Shenandoah University, USA (1995), and a Doctorate in Musical Arts (DMA) in viola performance in the United States through a CAPES/MEC scholarship (2006). A dedicated pedagogue, he teaches at numerous festivals across Brazil and regularly offers masterclasses and lectures on instrumental performance. He performs in a dynamic viola-piano duo with Professor Cenira Schreiber, focusing on Latin American repertoire, and is currently recording a CD of Brazilian viola and piano music. In addition to his roles as performer and teacher, Dr. Aleixo holds key administrative positions at UFMG, serving as Associate Director of the School of Music. His contributions to the viola community were recognized on June 2, 2022, when he was named an Honorary Member of the American Viola Society (AVS).



## EMMANUELLA REITER

Praised by Vladimir Jurowski for her beautiful tone, confident technique, and passionate musicality, violist Emmanuella Reiter has built a versatile international career. After eight years with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, she joined the Royal Opera House Orchestra in 2017. A dedicated pedagogue, she served as assistant to Kim Kashkashian at the New England Conservatory and later taught at the Birmingham Conservatoire and Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance. She has also given masterclasses at major institutions, including the CNSM Paris, Eastman School of Music, and NEC. Her book *The Legacy of Karen Tuttle: The Theory and Practice of Coordination* earned international acclaim for clarifying Tuttle's approach to coordination, expression, and injury prevention. A passionate chamber musician, she founded the Jigsaw Players concert series in Wimbledon (2008) and has collaborated with renowned artists worldwide. As a soloist, she has performed across Europe and the US, recording for Centaur and the Terezín Music Anthology.

A graduate of the Conservatoire National de Région de Nice, Emmanuella continued her studies at the Longy School of Music (Cambridge, USA) before joining Kim Kashkashian's class at the New England Conservatory, where she earned both her Bachelor's and Master's degrees.



### WENDY RICHMAN

Violist Wendy Richman is internationally recognized for her captivating sound and "engaging" "fresh and idiomatic" interpretations of "muscular vitality" (The New York Times, The Washington Post). As a soloist and chamber musician, she has performed at Carnegie Hall, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Mostly Mozart Festival, the Phillips Collection, and at international festivals across Europe, Asia, and North America. She is a founding member of the International Contemporary Ensemble. Ms. Richman is a lecturer at UCLA and viola professor at California State University, Northridge (CSUN). Her debut solo album, *vox/viola*, was released on New Focus Recordings in 2020.



### THOMAS RIEBL

Born in Vienna in 1956, Thomas Riebl studied with S.Führlinger, Peter Schidlöf and Sandor Vegh. He won 3rd prize in Munich (ARD) in 1976, and in 1982 won first prize at the International Naumburg Competition New York. He has performed with leading orchestras including the Chicago, Berlin and Vienna Symphony, the Bavarian, Vienna and Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestras, and with conductors such as Claudio Abbado, Horst Stein, Edo de Waart, Andrew Davies and Sylvain Cambreling.

His chamber music partners have included Jesse Norman, Andras Schiff, Oleg Maisenberg, Pierre-Laurent Aimard, Thomas Adès, Gidon Kremer, Natalia Gutman, Sabine Meyer, and leading string quartets. He was a member of the Vienna String Sextet (1979 - 2004).

From 1983 - 2024 Thomas Riebl had been a professor at the University Mozarteum Salzburg. Many of his students have won international competitions, have joined leading string quartets or symphony orchestras and have become professors at music universities. He has given numerous master classes worldwide, and has recorded for EMI, RCA, pan classics and Hyperion Records.

He is artistic director of the Internationale Sommerakademie Bad Leonfelden, Austria. In 2011 he developed, together with luthier Bernd Hiller, a five string tenor viola, on which he performs F.Schubert's Arpeggione Sonata, J.S.Bach's lute version of his 5th cello suite and his 6th cello suite and Mozart's clarinet concerto (the original basset clarinet version).

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## CAROL RODLAND

Carol Rodland enjoys an acclaimed international career as a concert and recording artist and teacher. Praised for her "larger than life, sweetly in tune, infinitely variegated" playing, her recordings on the Crystal and Neuma labels have received critical acclaim. A passionate advocate of contemporary music, she has commissioned, premiered, and recorded works by Kenji Bunch, Dan Coleman, Adolphus Hailstork, David Liptak, Christopher Theofanidis, and Augusta Read Thomas. Professor of Viola and Chamber Music at The Juilliard School, she also teaches at the Perlman Music Program and Morningside Music Bridge, and has held posts at Eastman School of Music (Co-Chair of Strings), New England Conservatory (recipient of the Krasner Award for Excellence in Teaching), Musikhochschule Hanns Eisler Berlin, and Arizona State University. With her "Tuttle Siblings," she co-authored *The Karen Tuttle Legacy* (Carl Fischer, 2020). Dedicated to students' physical and mental well-being, she promotes healthy, expressive musicianship.

In 2009, she founded If Music Be the Food..., a volunteer initiative raising awareness and support for the hungry through music, now active across North America. A former Fulbright Scholar, she studied with Karen Tuttle at Juilliard and Kim Kashkashian in Freiburg, serving as assistant to both. She debuted with the Philadelphia Orchestra as a teenager and won top prizes at major international competitions.



## ANN ROGGEN

As President of the New York Viola Society and a two-term board member of the American Viola Society, Ann Roggen has created numerous performance opportunities in New York for violists exploring both historic and contemporary repertoire. She has received grants from Chamber Music America and the National Endowment for the Arts and frequently performs as a member of the Orchestra of St. Luke's. Roggen appears regularly in recitals and special programs at venues such as the Nicholas Roerich Museum in New York. Recent projects include *A Celebration of Women in Music* (NYC), *A Musical Mosaic* (Billings, Montana), *The Forbidden Music – Music by Composers Banned by the Third Reich* (NYC, Oberlin College, William Paterson University), and an event highlighting composer Rebecca Clarke organized by Pen and Brush. Highlights of recent seasons include solo performances with the Zagreb Chamber Orchestra, as well as recitals and masterclasses under the auspices of the U.S. Cultural Centers in Zagreb and Vilnius, Lithuania. She teaches viola, violin, and chamber music at William Paterson University (New Jersey) and has served on the faculties of Vassar College and Bennington College, developing interdisciplinary programs combining music, literature, history, and languages. A tireless advocate for unusual and distinctive repertoire for viola with other instruments and voice, Roggen trained at the Peabody Institute of Johns Hopkins University and the Juilliard School.



#### **BRIGHTIN ROSE SCHLUMPF**

Brightin Rose Schlumpf is a versatile violinist and violist, praised for her expressive sound and stylistic range across orchestral, chamber, and solo performance. She has performed with the Colorado Symphony, Colorado Ballet Orchestra, Central City Opera, Boulder Philharmonic, and Colorado Springs Philharmonic, and has held section and principal roles with ensembles throughout the Mountain West, including the Boulder Bach Festival, Boulder Chamber Orchestra, and Steamboat Springs Symphony.

Chamber highlights include performances with the Chautauqua String Quartet in residence at Bravo! Vail, Friends of Chamber Music Denver Timberline Quartet, and the crossover string quartet Spinphony. She has also collaborated with artists such as Michael Bublé, Josh Groban, and Andrea Bocelli.

Brightin holds degrees from Cornell University (BA), Longy School of Music of Bard College (MM), and University of Colorado Boulder (MM), and is currently pursuing a Doctor of Arts in Viola Performance at the University of Northern Colorado. She also maintains an active teaching studio, inspiring students of all ages.



#### **VIATEUR ROY**

Viateur Roy trained under Patrick Robin for ten years and has earned numerous certificates and medals at international lutherie competitions, including events in Cremona, Mittenwald, the Philharmonie de Paris, Mirecourt, and the VSA in the United States. Today, he focuses on crafting violins, violas, and cellos, producing instruments of exceptional quality. His work is sought after worldwide, with instruments sold across Asia, the United States, Canada, and Europe.

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## MARÍA FERNANDA RUBIANO

María Fernanda Rubiano is a Colombian violist with a background in pedagogy, chamber, and orchestral performance. She has performed with major orchestras such as the National Symphony Orchestra of Colombia, the National Youth Orchestra of Canada, and the Youth Philharmonic Orchestra of Colombia. She has also played in prestigious venues including the Elbphilharmonie, Concertgebouw, Wiener Konzerthaus, and Kölner Philharmonie. She was a member of the Nogal String Quartet for five years, during which they won different competitions in Colombia. María Fernanda is currently pursuing a doctorate in viola performance at the University of Montreal and her research focuses on expanding the viola repertoire through transcription and analysis of Latin American works. She has received invaluable mentorship with teachers such as Cynthia Blanchon, Juan Miguel Hernandez, Raul Garcia, William Coleman and Ulrich Schönauer.



## SIMONA RUISI

Simona Ruisi graduated with top marks in viola and voice from the Conservatory "S.Cecilia", continuing her studies with Danusha Waskiewicz and at the Mozarteum University with Veronika Hagen. As a chamber musician, she has performed in various ensembles in prestigious venues alongside artists such as Jacot, Brunello, Carmignola, Andaloro, etc. A prizewinner in numerous competitions since childhood, she has served as Principal or Co-Principal Viola with Italian and international orchestras and collaborates regularly with the Orchestra of the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia and other leading ensembles. She also holds a Master in Media Entertainment – Music from LUISS University and she is currently President of the Italian Viola Society.



### DANIEL REZA SABZGHABAEI

Daniel Reza Sabzghabaei ( ) is a creator who is interested in looking at time through different lenses: unpacking notions of tradition, exploring memories of those past, and investigating nostalgic frameworks that lean forward. His music has been commissioned by: New York Youth Symphony, JACK Quartet, Alarm Will Sound, National Sawdust, Ensemble Proton Bern, loadbang, Duisburg Philharmonic, American Composers Orchestra, Beth Morrison Projects, New York Festival of Song, bassist Robert Black, the Banff Centre, Guerilla Opera, Moab Music Festival, Chorus Austin, The Esoterics, among others. Some of his prizes include a First Music Commission from the New York Youth Symphony, the Maurice Gardner Prize from the American Viola Society, the Israel/Pellman Prize from the Society for New Music, a 2024 New Music USA Creator Fund Award, and an IDEA Grant from OPERA America. Daniel holds a doctorate from Cornell University and is currently a GATES Postdoctoral Fellow at Université Grenoble Alpes.



### PAULINE SACHSE

Renowned for her versatility and expressive artistry, Pauline Sachse has long been part of the international music scene. She has performed with ensembles such as the Armida and Modigliani Quartets, and artists including Sabine Meyer, Jörg Widmann, Isabelle Faust, Janine Jansen, Carolin Widmann, Lauma Skride, and Martin Helmchen. A sought-after chamber musician, she regularly appears at leading festivals such as Salzburg, Rheingau, Schubertiade Schwarzenberg, Moritzburg, Schwetzingen SWR, and Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, with concerts in major venues including Wigmore Hall, Vienna Konzerthaus, Rudolfinum Prague, Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, and the Berlin Philharmonie.

Exploring stylistic diversity, she performs on gut strings with historical bows and tunings, collaborating with composers such as Widmann, Vasks, Jost, and Armstrong, and contributing premieres and her own compositions. Her discography spans Schumann, Brahms, Shostakovich, and Hindemith, alongside first recordings like Christian Jost's "Hamlet Echoes" and early sonatas by Franz Benda and Giorgio Antoniotto.

In 2023, she became Professor of Viola at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater Leipzig, following posts in Dresden, Lübeck, and Berlin. Formerly solo violist of the Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin, she also appeared with the Berlin Philharmonic, Bavarian Radio, and Mahler Chamber Orchestra. Educated under Tabea Zimmermann, Wilfried Strehle, and Jesse Levine, she studied at Hanns Eisler Berlin, Frankfurt, UdK Berlin, Yale, and Cologne. She plays a Paolo Maggini (1610) viola and one by Patrick Robin (2017).

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## FÁBIO SAGGIN

Fábio Saggin, principal violist of the Goiás Philharmonic Orchestra, holds a Doctorate in Musical Arts from the University of Wisconsin–Madison (USA), a Master's degree from Pennsylvania State University (USA), and a Bachelor's from the State University of Santa Catarina (Brazil). He has won numerous prizes in viola and chamber music competitions in Brazil and abroad. Dr. Saggin serves as First Secretary of ABRAV and President of IVS Iuventus. He is an active researcher in Brazilian viola music, as demonstrated by his album *The Roots of Brazilian Viola Music* and his participation in *AVS Presents: 2023 – Works by Underrepresented Composers*, featuring a work by Lúcia de Biase Bidart, a pioneering Brazilian composer for viola. He frequently lectures at conferences organized by the American Viola Society, the International Viola Society, and the Brazilian Viola Association. In his teaching, he integrates kinesiology with viola pedagogy to promote healthy and mindful playing techniques.



## LUCA SANZÒ

Luca Sanzò, a student of Bruno Giuranna, is active in concert, recording and teaching. He has performed all over the world, as a guest of important halls and prestigious festivals of chamber music, contemporary and electronic music. Many composers have chosen him as the dedicatee and reference interpreter of their works. He is part of the PMCE, Parco della Musica Contemporanea Ensemble, a group resident in the Parco della Musica in Rome, specialized in 20th century and contemporary music, invited several times to the Venice Biennale. He collaborates as first solo viola with the Teatro Lirico of Cagliari, the orchestra of the Teatro dell'Opera of Rome and the orchestra of the Teatro Comunale of Bologna. His teaching activity is very intense and fruitful, in the years of teaching he has trained new generations of excellent violists, now in turn conservatory teachers and members of important orchestras and chamber groups in Europe. He has published, for Ricordi, a revision of the 41 *Capricci di Campagnoli* for solo viola and he teaches viola at the Conservatory of S. Cecilia of Rome. He has more than 50 recordings to his credit, in various formations and as a soloist. He has recorded, for Brilliant Classics, the complete sonatas for viola and piano and for viola d'amore and piano by Hindemith, the complete sonatas by Brahms (more the two lieder with Sara Mingardo), the complete suites by Reger and, for Stradivarius, the chromatic fantasy by Bach Kodaly and the sonata by Ligeti for viola solo.



### PAUL SILVERTHORNE

For many years Paul Silverthorne has combined his solo career with the principal position in two of the most prestigious ensembles in London: the London Symphony Orchestra and the London Sinfonietta. His solo performances have taken him to the USA, China, Japan, Australia, Russia, Ukraine, and Africa, as well as the UK and Europe. After a performance at the BBC Proms in London, *The Times* described him as “a virtuoso in sensitivity and technique.” His interpretations of new music have led leading composers to be inspired to write for him. His recordings cover a wide range of repertoire and have received widespread acclaim. He teaches at the Royal Academy of Music in London. Many of his former students, coming from all corners of the globe, hold prominent positions in orchestras around the world. He has also given masterclasses at many US conservatories and universities, as well as in Europe and Asia.



### PETER SLOWIK

Described by *The Strad* as “a man of boundless energy and determination—he mentors talented musicians who rise to the highest positions worldwide,” Peter Slowik has been a featured artist and teacher at eight International Viola Congresses. He has performed with William Preucil, Anner Bylisma, Leonard Rose, the Mirecourt Trio, the Jasper, Arianna, Saint Petersburg, and Vermeer Quartets, the Smithsonian Chamber Players, and members of the Cleveland, Chester, Orford, and Smithson Quartets. He served as principal viola of the Smithsonian Chamber Orchestra, Concertante di Chicago, and American Sinfonietta. From 1986 to 1999, Slowik performed with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and was principal violist at the Lyric Opera of Chicago. He has given masterclasses in Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, England, Europe, New Zealand, and at most major U.S. conservatories.

Mr. Slowik is Viola Professor at the Oberlin Conservatory and Artistic Director of Credo. He has taught at Northwestern University, Indiana University, the Cleveland Institute of Music, and the Eastman School of Music, receiving top teaching honors at Oberlin and Northwestern. He received the Maurice Riley Viola Award from the American Viola Society for “excellence in teaching, knowledge, and performance.” His viola and chamber music students have won first prizes in numerous national and international competitions. Slowik’s students hold positions in nearly all major professional orchestras in the U.S., many in leadership roles, and occupy faculty and administrative positions at universities and conservatories nationwide.

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## JASMINE SMITH

Jasmine Smith is an emerging violist, founder and co-director of the Brisbane-based Wattle and Wood Ensemble (W&W). She has served as principal viola of both the Symphony Orchestra and String Orchestra of Griffith University's Young Conservatorium. Jasmine has also participated in the Australian Youth Orchestra programs, completed her AMEB Licentiate Diploma, and is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Music at the Queensland Conservatorium under Portuguese-Australian violist Raquel Bastos. She performs with the Queensland Conservatorium Symphony Orchestra, gives solo recitals and chamber concerts with W&W, teaches, and is also a dedicated bassist in her church orchestra.



## CARLOS MARÍA SOLARE

Born in Buenos Aires in 1960, Carlos María Solare studied viola with Tomàs Tichauer. In 1980, thanks to a scholarship from the Herbert von Karajan Foundation, he moved to Berlin, where he has lived ever since. A member of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra Academy, he took lessons with former BPO concertmaster Giusto Cappone. He graduated from the Hochschule der Künste Berlin under Bruno Giuranna and Hans-Joachim Greiner and attended masterclasses with William Primrose, Gérard Caussé, Donald McIntnes, and Ulrich Koch. Solare was principal viola of the RIAS Youth Orchestra, performing as a soloist in Berlioz's *Harold in Italy* and Mozart's *Serenata Notturna* (the latter with former BPO concertmaster Michel Schwalbé). He taught at the Leo Kestenberg Music School (1984–2001) and led the viola sections of the Berlin Youth Orchestra and Berlin Youth String Orchestra. He was a member of the Schmalenberg String Quartet (1996–1999) and is principal viola of the Schaffrath Chamber Orchestra. A member of the German Viola Society and the International Viola d'Amore Society, he has performed at numerous international conferences. Solare holds a musicology degree from the Free University of Berlin and contributes regularly to *The Strad* and *Opera* magazines. He served as president of the International Viola Society (2013–2019) and is currently interim president of the German Viola Society.



### EMLYN STAM

Violist Emlyn Stam is active as a chamber musician, soloist, pedagogue and performance researcher in the Netherlands and internationally. Since 2014 he has been artistic director of the New European Ensemble an international ensemble for contemporary and 20th century music. As a soloist Emlyn Stam has made numerous appearances for radio and television. He performed concertos with the Amsterdam Symphony Orchestra, Orquestra d'Espinho (Portugal) and the Schönberg Ensemble. Emlyn has also performed at numerous festivals such as Festival Vlaanderen, the Kuhmo Festival in Finland, Sound of Stockholm, Connect Festival, Giverny Chamber Music Festival, International Chamber Music Festival Utrecht and Grachtenfestival Amsterdam. His many chamber music performances have included concerts with the Parkanyi Quartet and regular appearances with the Ysaÿe Trio of which he is a founding member. Emlyn regularly gives masterclasses in both viola playing and chamber music. He taught at numerous conservatories in the Netherlands, Estonia, China and Sweden. He currently teaches at the Fontys University for the Arts in Tilburg.

Emlyn is an active music researcher and completed his doctorate at the Academy for Creative and Performing Arts at the Leiden University in 2019 with a dissertation entitled *In Search of a Lost Language: Performing in Early-Recorded Style in Viola and String Quartet Repertoires*. His research focuses on late 19th and early 20th century performance practices. He is regularly invited to give guest lectures on his research such as at the University of Leeds, the Hochschule der Künste in Bern and the Royal Conservatoire in The Hague.



### KATHRYN SCHMIDT STEELY

Dr. Kathryn Schmidt Steely, Professor Emeritus of Viola at Baylor University, is a multi-faceted violist and educator, seasoned orchestral musician and avid chamber musician. She has performed and presented across the United States. She is an enthusiastic mentor and dedicated teacher, committed to advancing the next generation of musicians.

Dr. Eka Gogichashvili is Associate Professor of Violin at Baylor University and has appeared in numerous performances as a soloist, chamber music and orchestral player both in Europe and the United States and regularly appears at national conventions as a performer and as a clinician on various topics of violin performance practice, repertoire, and pedagogy.

Dr. Kae Hosoda Ayer is Associate Professor of Piano at Baylor University and has been on the accompanying faculty at New the Conservatory and has concertized through the United States, Canada, Japan, and Korea where she is in demand both as a soloist and collaborative pianist.



## DOMINIC STOKES

Dominic Stokes is a violist, composer, actor, and director who has established himself as one of London's leading young contemporary artists. His passion and musical facility for all things contemporary has led him to work with groups at the forefront of the new-music scene, such as the Riot Ensemble, "The supergroup of top soloists playing new music", Manchester Camerata, I2 Ensemble, and Explore Ensemble, with multiple appearances as a soloist and in ensemble on and SWRkultur (DE), npoklassiek (NL), SRF 2 Kultur (CH), and BBC radios 3 and 4. Dominic is the founder and director of Rothko collective, an award-winning new music group who have commissioned over 25 new works, given multiple highly acclaimed performances across the UK and Europe, and released music in collaboration with NonClassical, STATE51, Apartment House, and Another Timbre. Dominic is dedicated to opening up classical music to a wider audience, to make it more accessible, and change the way it is perceived in society.



## JOHN STULZ

Originally from Ohio, USA, John Stulz is a violist with Ensemble Intercontemporain in Paris since 2015, is a viola professor at CNSMD de Lyon, and serves as Artistic Director of the VIVO Music Festival.



#### DANIEL SWEANEY

Daniel Sweaney received diverse training in the U.S. and Europe and has performed worldwide. He has taught at the Sewanee Summer Music Center, Interlochen Viola Institute, North American Viola Institute at Orford Arts Centre, Rocky Ridge Music Center, Green Mountain Chamber Music Festival, and the University of Alabama. He has given masterclasses at the Universities of Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Bowling Green State University, Louisiana State University, Texas Tech University, Brandeis University, the Instituto Superior de Arte in Havana, Cuba, the National Orchestra Festival, Interlochen Arts Academy, and was guest artist at the South Carolina Viola Intensive. During his time in Austria, he performed regularly with the Camerata Salzburg at venues and festivals including the Salzburg Festival, Vienna Konzerthaus and Musikverein, Singapore Arts Festival, Beethoven House in Bonn, Lincoln Center's Great Performers Series, Carnegie Hall, Kennedy Center, and Orchestra Hall in Chicago. He has appeared at the International Viola Congresses in Krakow, Porto, and Rochester, NY. Sweaney frequently performs duo recitals with violinist Annette-Barbara Vogel; their album *Violin Viola Duos Through the Centuries* was praised by American Record Guide as "superior playing and beautifully recorded."

He studied at Interlochen Arts Academy, Cleveland Institute of Music, Rice University, and Universität Mozarteum Salzburg. He is currently Viola Professor at the University of South Carolina.



#### POVILAS SYRRIST-GELGOTA

Born in 1976, Povilas Syrrist-Gelgota is a Lithuanian-Norwegian violist, composer, and multitasking artist, equally at home as a performer, teacher, and organizer of international projects. Described as a charismatic "singing violist," he has for more than two decades been a leading advocate of the viola as a solo instrument, giving hundreds of recitals that combine classical, contemporary, and folk traditions with his own works in a folk-romantic style. He is Artistic Director of the Norwegian Viola Festival—one of Europe's largest festivals devoted to the instrument—along with the concert series *Toner og Tanker på Malerhjemmet*. He previously served as Artistic Director of the Asker Chamber Music Festival and has been a member of the Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra. He also teaches at the International Viola Academy. Active in professional networks, he is a board member of the Norwegian Viola Society, a member of the Norwegian Society of Soloists, the Norwegian Society of Composers and Lyricists, and the Lithuanian Musicians' Union.

Around 50 new works have been written for him and his ensembles, and he has contributed some 40 compositions of his own to the viola repertoire. Recognized as a cultural bridge-builder, he has been especially active in promoting Norwegian music in Lithuania, a commitment for which he was awarded a medal by the Lithuanian Embassy in Norway.

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## ILANA TAPPER

Ilana Tapper is a viola player and instrument accessibility specialist, currently undertaking her postgraduate studies at the Royal Northern College of Music with Martin Schaefer. She was first introduced to the impact of viola design as a teenager while studying with Adrian Turner, and later collaborated with luthier Helen Michetschager to commission a viola that accommodated her disabilities. Most recently, she performed in the finals of the RNCM Brodsky and Underrepresented Competitions, and took part in the Play with Paraorchestra artist development scheme.



## VALERIE TATE

Dr. Valerie Tate PhD, ARMCM, GRNCM comes from Cambridge, England, studying violin with Yossi Zivoni and viola with Cecil Aronowitz at the Royal Northern College of Music. She now lives in Sydney, Australia. Valerie leads the viola section of the Ku-ring-gai Philharmonic Orchestra in Sydney. She has played with the Orquesta de Camera Metropolitana in Mexico City, the Queensland Theatre, the Queensland Pops, Wollongong Symphony and Penrith Symphony orchestras. Valerie has also given solo recitals in England, Mexico and Australia. Valerie completed a PhD (Newcastle University Australia), discussing the development of the solo viola through British Viola repertoire and giving recitals of music by Granville Bantock, Rebecca Clarke, Emil Kreuz, WH.Reed and Cecil Forsyth. Valerie has presented her research at the ANZVS Viola convention in Gosford NSW, Australia and at the 43rd International Viola Congress in Cremona, Italy (2016) and the 44th International Viola Congress, Wellington, New Zealand (2017).



**CARLOS TAVARES**

Carlos Tavares, a 29-year-old violist, violinist, and conductor, is currently pursuing a master's degree at UFRJ and holds a diploma in Music Education. Trained by Alysio de Mattos, he has participated in both national and international masterclasses. Founder of the Orquestra Sinfônica de Magé, he has taught in several institutions and performed at major festivals. He has served as principal violist with the Orquestra Sinfônica Cesgranrio, Escola de Belas Artes do Paraná, and Orquestra Sinfônica Nacional da UFF. Since 2014, he has been a guest violist with the Orquestra Petrobrás Sinfônica, and since 2022 with the Orquestra Sinfônica Brasileira. He is also the founder of the ensembles Trio Minueto and Duo Frias Tavares.



## BESTE TIKNAZ MODIRI

Beste Tیکنaz Modiri, is a winner of national and international prizes and awards, such as; ICMEC Competition (Gold Medal), B.O.CO. String Idol, MTNAYoung Concert Artists State and Eastern Competitions, B.O.CO. Concerto Competition, 9 Eylül University national viola Competition, Playing for Peaceaward, President award and Donizetti Chamber Music Award.

In addition to being a prize-winning soloist, Beste is also an activechamber music player was a member of long term ensembles and SempliceQuartet, Kibele, Sospino, Winsor Music Quartets Modiri Ensemble, OrientEnsemble and Borusan Virtuosi, and currently is a member of the Sion Soloists. The Prestigious festivals she attended is including Aix end Provence(France), Associazione Mozart Italia, Istanbul International Music Festival,Beethoven Fest (Bonn), BBC Proms (London), Salzburg Festival, FIMU Festival (France), Budapest Spring Fest, Apple Hill Chamber Music Festival andMediterranean Contemporary Music Days. As Tیکنaz/Anazco duo Their CD released from Alto Music Musical Concepts at2021. As principal violist her Cds has been released form DeutscheGrammophon, Onxy, Deutsche Welle. Her book about William Primrose has been released in Turkish with the title of 'VİYOLAYA HAYAT VEREN ADAM'.

Summers are spent teaching at Apple Hill in New Hampshire, Associazione Mozart Torino, Italy and As Session 4 Director of Music of Point Counter Pointin Vermont, and founder and Artistic director of Bosphorus Music Academy at Turkey. She like taking active roles at Social responsibility projects, and Artistic Director Of Dogal Sagligi Koruma Foundation.

She is curently holding an Professor position at Istanbul University State Conservatory, Head of the String Department, Vice President of Turkish Viola Society, Pricpal Violist of Istanbul Chamber Orchestra and Guest Principal of Philharmonisches Kammerorchester Berlin. She plays with '1883 Gand and Bernardei' viola.



## ALESSIO TORO

Alessio Toro teaches string quartet at the Conservatorio Alessandro Scarlatti in Palermo and is a member of PMCE – Parco della Musica Contemporanea Ensemble in residence at the Auditorium Parco della Musica in Rome. From 2021 to 2024, he served as Secretary of the Italian Viola Society.

A graduate cum laude of the Conservatorio Santa Cecilia in Rome under Massimo Paris, he continued his studies with Bruno Giuranna at the Stauffer Academy in Cremona and trained with leading ensembles and musicians including the Alban Berg Quartett, Trio di Parma, and Quartetto di Cremona.

He has appeared as soloist with the Orquesta Sinfónica del Estado de México, recorded Petrassi's Violasola in its world premiere for Tactus, and collaborated with artists such as Ennio Morricone, Giovanni Sollima, Katia & Marielle Labèque, and the Arditti Quartet. His performances have taken him to major festivals including Festival dei Due Mondi, RomaEuropa, La Biennale di Venezia, and I Concerti del Quirinale (Rai Radio 3).



### LUCA TROMBETTA

Luca Trombetta, a native of Catania, Italy, is an internationally active violist, educator, and scholar. He earned degrees from the Santa Cecilia Conservatory in Rome, studied further with Bruno Giuranna at the Lugano Conservatory, and completed his Doctor of Musical Arts at James Madison University in the USA. His education also includes studies with Simonide Braconi at the Lorenzo Perosi Academy and masterclasses with Michael Kugel, Yuri Bashmet, and Roberto Díaz. He has performed extensively across Europe and the United States as a soloist, chamber musician, and orchestral player, collaborating among others with conductors Riccardo Muti, Yuri Temirkanov, and David Chan, as well as artists Uto Ughi, Boris Belkin, Yo-Yo Ma, and Ennio Morricone. He is a member of the Liya String Quartet, serves as the principal violist of Opera on the James, and performs with Roanoke Baroque. As Coordinator of String Studies and Professor of Viola and Chamber Music at Liberty University, Dr. Trombetta actively promotes dialogue between performance and scholarship within today's viola community.



### BRYAN TYLER

Originally from Houston, Texas, Bryan Tyler's musical journey began in a children's choir. He then studied viola beginning at age 10. Bryan received degrees from The University of Houston and The Boston Conservatory. His instructors included Lawrence Wheeler, Roger Tapping, and Rictor Noren, and masterclasses with Karen Tuttle, Emanuel Vardi, Pamela Frank and Mimi Zweig. Orchestral fellowships included Aspen Music Festival and the Sphinx Organization and he was a semi-finalist for Houston Symphony's Community Embedded Musician Program. As a soloist, Bryan has appeared with ensembles in Boston including Brookline Symphony Orchestra and Symphony Nova. A recipient of Massachusetts Cultural Council's Creative Individuals Grant, Bryan is a passionate educator and administrator. Bryan was a finalist for Orchestra Personnel Administrator for the New York Philharmonic and he has served as Orchestra Manager for Boston University Tanglewood Institute as well as Brookline Symphony Orchestra. He also teaches violin and viola privately in Boston.

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## **ALICIA MARIE VALOTI**

Alicia Marie Valoti energizes the international music scene through performance, teaching, and research. She studied at McGill University, Rice University, the Florence Conservatory "Luigi Cherubini," Scuola APM di Saluzzo, Stony Brook University, Scuola di Musica di Fiesole, Indiana University, and the RNCM.

Valoti has performed widely: as a violist and pianist at Carnegie Hall, in the Teatro Gomhouria Orchestra in Egypt, as a viola recitalist in Florence, and in an Alaskan prison music rehabilitation program. She has presented world premieres (Mesa, Luporini) and recordings (Colonna, Donatoni, Gross, Beamish), and regularly collaborates with Emerson String Quartet members for New Music for Strings in Denmark, Iceland, and New York. Winner of the David Dalton Competition of the American Viola Society, she participated in its "Rising Stars" recital series in 2016.

Her research and performances focus on original 19th-century Italian viola compositions, primarily from Tuscany. Valoti's own Sonata for Solo Viola (2019) premiered in Siena during the Violafest of the Associazione Italiana della Viola. She has taught at Sam Houston State University, the University of Houston, Lone Star College, and Stony Brook University, and served as distinguished visiting professor at Wuhan Conservatory and Liaocheng University in 2010. She is currently Associate Professor of Viola at Central Michigan University, where she received the Provost Award in 2019.



## **SYLVAN VAN SASSE VAN YSSELT**

Accomplished violist with extensive experience in classical music and pop music, specialising in both solo and ensemble performances. Trained at Codarts Conservatory of Rotterdam, he participated in numerous national and international tours, and collaborated with esteemed conductors and musicians. His repertoire spans a wide range of musical styles, including classical, tango and contemporary music. He has performed in prestigious venues such as the Concertgebouw Amsterdam and Konzerthaus Berlin, and has been featured in live television broadcasts and music festivals. Dedicated to artistic growth, he continuously engages in masterclasses and collaborative projects, striving to bring unique interpretations to every performance.



#### ROALD VAN OS

Roald van Os (1982) is a violist and violinist specializing in historically informed performance. He recently completed his Master of Music Performance in Historical Viola and Violin with Antoinette Lohmann at the Utrecht Conservatory, having previously studied with Karin Dolman. As a freelance musician, Van Os has performed with ensembles such as Musica Poetica (Jörn Boysen), the Margaretha Consort, Dordrecht Chamber Orchestra and Concerto Brabant, in both modern and baroque settings. He has participated in projects with the Sweelinck Baroque Orchestra under Johannes Leertouwer and Jos van Veldhoven and collaborated with various choirs, cantata services, and festivals throughout Europe. Van Os is also active as an organizer and advocate for the viola, co-founding the Dutch Viola Society, initiating several national viola congresses and helping to get the IVC to be taken part in Rotterdam in 2018. His repertoire spans from 17th-century baroque to contemporary works, always approached with stylistic insight and flexibility.



#### RYAN VIS

Ryan Vis is a Canadian violist based in Ottawa. He holds a Master of Music in Performance from the University of Ottawa and a Bachelor's degree from McGill University. He has performed in diverse settings including chamber music, orchestras, and solo performances. Ryan has appeared with the National Arts Centre Orchestra, Ottawa Symphony, Gatineau Symphony, Ensemble Prisme, Obiora Ensemble, Candlelight Concerts, and was a member of the National Youth Orchestra of Canada. As President of the Canadian Viola Society, Ryan leads educational events and teaches group classes and theory at Ottawa Suzuki Strings. He also performs regularly at weddings and private events. He is known for his expressive playing, professionalism, and deep collaborative spirit. Ryan performs on a viola made by luthier Theo Marks (Netherlands/Canada) and engages in innovative multimedia projects with Canadian composers and visual artists.



## **DOROTEA VISMARA**

Violist Dorotea Vismara has been active in Europe, China, North and South America with the chamber ensembles Onibatan, Leonore Quartet and Gruppo Bruno Maderna and has performed chamber music with world celebrated musicians. A former principal violist of the Istituzione Sinfonica Abruzzese, and tenured violist of the Orchestra del Maggio Musicale Fiorentino and Cincinnati Chamber Orchestra, she is a founding member of the Italian Viola Society, one of its former Presidents, the host of the 43rd International Viola Congress, and a host and co-host of various national viola events presented by the Associazione Italiana della Viola in cities from south to north of the peninsula. A published researcher of new studio teaching methods for violin and viola, Vismara is a viola Professor at the Bolzano Music Conservatory since 2020. Former students of hers are professors in music conservatories and members of chamber ensembles and/or symphony orchestras in Italy and USA.



## **ANNETTE-BARBARA VOGEL**

Annette-Barbara Vogel is recognized as one of Germany's leading violinists of her generation, praised for her "formidable technique," "breathtaking musicality," and "deeply sensitive interpretations." With a career spanning more than 35 countries across six continents, she has appeared as soloist, recitalist, and chamber musician on major stages worldwide. Gramophone Magazine lauded her "flawless intonation," while Classical CD Review called her "the finest interpreter a composer could hope for." Vogel began her studies at eleven as the youngest ever admitted to the Folkwang-Hochschule Essen, graduating with highest distinction. She studied with Herman Krebbers in Amsterdam and Sir Yehudi Menuhin at the Menuhin Academy, then completed her Artist Diploma with Dorothy DeLay at the Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, performing Brahms' Violin Concerto under Keith Lockhart in DeLay's honor. A prolific recording artist, Vogel has released over fifteen albums on Avie, Bluegriffin, Harmonia Mundi, and Toccata. Her 2011 album Französische Komponistinnen won the UK's IRR Award for Best Recording, and her 2021 release of sonatas by Smyth, Andrée, and Bonis reached Naxos Sweden's Top 10. Internationally acclaimed for championing overlooked repertoire, she is especially noted for her pioneering recordings of Hans Gál. She is founder and Artistic Director of Magisterra Soloists, a non-profit dedicated to dynamic programming and outreach, whose debut CD for Toccata Records features works by Ferdinand Thieriot. A dedicated educator, Vogel has taught at the Folkwang-Hochschule, the University of Iowa, and since 2004 has been Professor at Western University in London, Canada, where she also serves as Head of Strings and Director of the University's String Instrument Bank.



**SHARON WEI**

Canadian violist Sharon Wei is a dynamic and multi-faceted musician. She has appeared as concerto soloist with orchestras such as Symphony of the Redwoods, Sinfonia Toronto, and San Francisco Chamber Orchestra. Recent premieres include Richard Mascal's "Zligwan" concerto with London Symphonia and Reena Esmail's "The Voyage". She has performed recital tours under the auspices of Debut Atlantic and Prairie Debut. Sharon performs at international festivals such as Verbier, Marlboro, Prussia Cove, Banff, Seattle and Ravinia. Co-founder of Ensemble Made in Canada, their Mosaïque Project won a 2021 JUNO and toured throughout Canada in both traditional venues and eclectic ones such as the seabed of Hopewell Rocks at low tide. Sharon was on faculty at Yale and Stanford University, Curtis Summerfest and is currently Associate Professor at Western University. Sharon has been the recipient of grants through the Canada Council for the Arts, Ontario Arts Council, FACTOR and Western University.



**HARRI WESSMAN**

Born in 1949, Harri Wessman studied musicology and languages at the University of Helsinki and composition at the Sibelius Academy under Joonas Kokkonen. He also taught music theory and composition at the Sibelius Academy. As a composer, he embraces melodic possibilities and describes his harmonic approach—his personal sound—as a kind of contrapuntally treated jazz harmony. His output is dominated by chamber and vocal music, as well as a significant number of concertos. Pedagogical music has become an increasingly central part of his work, with a focus on creating repertoire for young musicians.

# 50<sup>TH</sup> INTERNATIONAL VIOLA CONGRESS



## KINGA WOJDALSKA

Kinga Wojdalska is the first Polish prize winner of the Primrose International Viola Competition in the United States. In addition to the 2nd prize, she received a special award for her performance of her transcription of Grażyna Bacewicz's Polish Capriccio. As a soloist and chamber musician, Wojdalska has appeared internationally, giving premieres such as the European premiere of John Williams' Viola Concerto and the Swiss premiere of Zwei Szenen by Elena Mendoza. The violist has recorded albums of contemporary chamber music, including Noah Max's string trio Sojourn on Songs of Loneliness and a disc featuring Gabriel Prokofiev's music with the UNLTD Collective, Pastoral 2I. She is currently preparing her debut solo CD of Polish 20th-century music, which will include some of her own arrangements. In September 2024, Kinga joined the faculty of the Reina Sofia School of Music in Madrid as Assistant to Lawrence Power's viola class. She is generously supported by Thomastik-Infeld.



## SUMMER WOJTCZAK

Violist Summer Wojtczak, from Long Island, New York, is pursuing a Master's in Performance at Columbus State University under Dr. Katrin Meidell. She earned her Bachelor's in Music Performance from Queens College, CUNY, studying with Dr. Gregory Williams. A passionate chamber musician, she is violist of the Schwob School of Music Residency String Quartet, directed by Sergiu Schwartz. In Spring 2025, the quartet performed in collaboration with Dr. Esther Park and Wendy Warner. Summer has participated in the New York Youth Symphony Chamber Music Program, Green Mountain Chamber Music Festival, and the Sphinx Performance Academy at Cleveland Institute of Music and Juilliard School. Her mentors include Amelia Dietrich, Daniel Phillips, Marcy Rosen, Morey Ritt, and Rictor Noren.



#### ROSE WOLLMAN

Hailed as “innovative” and “stylish” by the Chicago Classical Review, violist Rose Wollman is sought after as a soloist, chamber musician and teacher. She was the founding violist of the Petar Jankovic Ensemble and the Larchmere String quartet. Rose has performed with the Lucerne Festival Academy Orchestra, the Pacific Music Festival Orchestra, and the Indianapolis Chamber Orchestra. She has collaborated with diverse artists, including Atar Arad, Michael Kanne, Jeffrey Dunham, Rachel Barton Pine, Julián Peralta, Pablo Aslan, and Michael Spiro. Rose’s discography includes *Breaking Glass Ceilings* with pianist Dror Baitel and *Homage to Nadia Boulanger* with Clare Longendyke, a solo album *Loop: Ligeti’s Inspiration & Legacy*, as well as chamber and orchestral releases. Rose is Assistant Professor of Viola at Colorado State University and holds a D.M. from the Indiana Jacobs School of Music.



#### ERIC WONG

Eric Wong, celebrated for an «amazing» and «toasted caramel» tone, is Assistant Professor at Vanderbilt University’s Blair School of Music and a member of the Blair String Quartet. A former member of the Cavani, Afiara, and Linden String Quartets, he is on faculty rosters at numerous music festivals and series. He attended Yale University and the Cleveland Institute of Music.



## PIERRE-HENRI XUEREB

Pierre Henri XUEREB a été alto solo de l'Ensemble Intercontemporain (Pierre BOULEZ) ; il mène une carrière de concertiste, invité dans les salles les plus prestigieuses (Wigmore Hall, Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Lincoln Center...) et dans les grands festivals internationaux (Prades, Kuhmo). Sa discographie abondante (pour Deutsche Grammophon, Harmonia Mundi, Talent, Harpandco...) lui a permis de recevoir le grand prix du disque de l'Académie Charles CROS pour une intégrale HONEGGER chez Timpani. Il enseigne au CNSM de Paris et au Conservatoire Royal de musique de Liège. Il a été directeur artistique des « Florence Gould Hall Chamber Players » (New York) et est depuis quelques années directeur artistique du Printemps de la Musique à Saint-Dizier et de la Fête de l'Alto à Lasalle-en-Cévennes. Dédicataire de nombreuses créations contemporaine : PHERSANT, A.SOLBIATI, K.HUBER...Il a joué en soliste avec l'Ensemble Intercontemporain, l'Ensemble Instrumental de France, l'Orchestre Symphonique de Tel Aviv, l'Israel Sinfonietta, Le Dusan Skovran Orchestra (Belgrade), l'Orchestre de Caracas, le Malta Philharmonic Orchestra, l'Orchestre PACA, le Prussian Chamber Orchestra, le Victoria Symphony Orchestra (Canada), l'Orchestre de Caen, l'Ensemble BIT 20 Bergen (Norvège), l'Ensemble Contrechamps (Genève)...Il est régulièrement invité à donner des masterclasses, notamment à Pékin CCM, Yale University, Indiana University...Il vient d'être nommé professeur aux « Talent Music Master Courses » de Vérone, et est invité chaque été à enseigner dans le cadre des Ecoles Américaines de Fontainebleau.

Il vient d'enregistrer le Concerto pour alto « Oblique » de Vladimir COSMA qui lui est dédié (Larghetto), ainsi que le « Tango » de Claude BOLLING (Lyrinx) avec l'Orchestre de chambre de Turin.

Pierre-Henri XUEREB joue également de la viole d'amour et a enregistré des répertoires baroques, classiques et contemporains avec cet instrument rare.

## ZI YE



Zi Ye began her musical journey at age four and was admitted to the Shanghai Conservatory of Music at 14, studying with Sheng Li. She earned a BA in Viola Performance and a BA in French Studies at Bard College, studying under Steven Tenenbom and Michael Tree, and completed her MM and DMA at the University of Montreal with Jutta Puchhammer. Dr. Ye has performed Bloch's 1919 Viola Suite under Grammy-winning conductor JoAnn Falletta and appeared in major venues including Carnegie Hall, Berlin and Vienna Konzerthaus, Rudolfinum Dvořák Hall, Mariinsky Theatre, and the National Centre for the Performing Arts in Beijing. She has performed as solo violist with I Musici de Montréal, the National Academy Orchestra of Canada, Orford Symphony, and Toronto Festival Orchestra. Dr. Ye contributed to Robert Martin's Synergy: Music and the Liberal Arts (2021) and is currently Assistant Professor of Viola at the Xinghai Conservatory in Guangzhou, China, serving on the International Viola Society board as Asian representative.



### LAURENT ZAKOWSKY

Laurent Zakowsky, 57, is a luthier based in Orléans, France, specializing in violas. He began his training at age 15 at the Mirecourt School of Violin Making and continued his apprenticeship in various Parisian workshops, including two years in Venice. At the request of a group of viola teachers, he has focused on crafting handmade violas that combine exceptional sound quality, durability, ergonomics, and aesthetics, while remaining affordable. To date, he has built over 200 instruments for students and professionals. Zakowsky is the author of two books on violin and viola, with a chapter published in the *Journal of the American Viola Society* in 2023. For the past three years, he has been developing the CIGAL, a lightweight viola designed to reduce physical strain for players, working closely with physicists, acousticians, physiotherapists, musicians, and sociologists. He won first prize at the 2024 Loiret Departmental Arts and Crafts Competition and holds the title of Master Artisan.



### YONA ZEKRI

Yona Zekri, a French violist, trained at the conservatories of Perpignan and Boulogne-Billancourt before joining the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse de Paris in the class of Jean Sulem, and later studying with Barbara Westphal at the Musikhochschule Lübeck. She won the Interpretation Prize at the International Contemporary Music Competition in Boulogne-Billancourt and First Prize at the American Virtuoso International Music Competition with the Naïs Quartet. She champions a humanist vision of music and the arts through collaborations with renowned artists and orchestras from diverse backgrounds and cultures. Open to new creations, she co-founded the ensemble METIS, a collective of solo musicians led by composer Alireza Farhang, dedicated to performing and creating contemporary music and promoting emerging composers. An engaged artist with a multicultural background, Yona believes that art and culture build connections, foster human growth, and help societies evolve positively. In this spirit, she joined the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra and became an ambassador for PAX MUSICA, an organization supporting young musicians in exile to continue their musical careers in France.