

Now in our 82nd year

Donate

We depend on your support

Subscribe

Get concert updates & more

Tri-County Concerts



2023 Annual Youth Festival

A very important part of Tri-County Concerts' program is its Annual Youth Festival, established in 1943. This is one of the area's most prestigious competitions for aspiring young musicians living in Chester, Delaware, and Montgomery Counties in Southeastern Pennsylvania.

Auditions are open to high-school and middle-school students in a wide variety of instruments, including piano, strings, winds, voice, and ensembles, as well as a musica diversa category that includes harp, classical guitar, and percussion.

The Youth Festival offers talented students an opportunity to audition before and receive critiques from professional judges. Each year those students deemed outstanding by the judges are given monetary awards; their photos and accomplishments are featured on the Tri-County web site; and they perform at a live winners' recital.

Our 80th Annual Youth Festival Winners' Recital was held on June 3, 2023, at 7:00 PM at Swope Music Building, West Chester University in West Chester, PA 19383. Check back here soon to watch a video of the recital.

80th ANNUAL YOUTH FESTIVAL - 2023 Winners' Recital

Video Coming Soon

Current & Past Winners, Photos, and Short Biographies

2022 Winners' Biographies

Suri Ahn, age 13, is an 8th grader at Valley Forge Middle School. She has been playing violin since age 6 and currently studies with Sylvia Ahramjian at the Nelly Berman School of Music. She previously played in her school ensemble, the Pennsylvania Youth Orchestra, Young Musicians Debut Orchestra, and others, and is now principal second violinist at the Philadelphia Young Artists Orchestra. Suri performed at Carnegie Hall as a winner of the 2019 American Protégé International Piano & String Competition, won 1st Place in the 2020 Triumph Music Festival, and made her solo concerto debut as a winner of the 2021 Warminster Symphony Orchestra's Young Artist Competition. She won 3rd place at the 2021 OPUS Music Competition Pennsylvania State Junior String Division and 2nd prize in the 2022 Bucks County Youth Orchestra Competition, for which she will perform for the Delaware Valley Music Club. She was also invited to perform for the Pennsylvania Academy of Ballet's "Dance into Spring 2022." Besides music, Suri enjoys playing golf, cooking, and drawing and loves animals.

Audition Repertoire: Max Bruch – *Violin Concerto No. 1 in G minor*, Op. 26: Mvt. I, Allegro moderato

Samantha Bedenko, age 15, is a freshman at Lower Merion High School. She began to study music at the age of 7 playing the violin. She transitioned from violin to saxophone to cello, and at the age of 9 began learning to play the flute, which she now studies with Ilya Ovrutsky. Samantha currently plays flute and piccolo in the Lower Merion High School concert band. Most recently winning 2nd Place in the Tri-County Youth Festival, she looks forward to participating in more competitions and youth orchestras. In addition to music, Samantha is a car photographer and enjoys learning about cars and automotive engineering. She also likes to work on graphic design and art in her free time.

Audition Repertoire: Cécile Chaminade – *Flute Concertino in D Major*, Op. 107

Clara Chen, age 12, is a 7th grader at The Baldwin School. Previously a student of the late Joy Kiszely at The Main Line Conservatory of Music, she now studies piano with Amy Yang of the Curtis Institute of Music. Clara has been a Gold Star Winner of the 2021 Elite International Music Competition, as well as a top prize winner of the 2020 and 2022 Philadelphia Music Teachers Association (MTA) Auditions, and will make her Weill Hall debut at the Dr. Andor and Joy Kiszely Carnegie Hall Recital in May 2022. In her first year at The Baldwin School, Clara received an award for Outstanding Contributions to the Life of the Middle School. During the summer of 2021, in collaboration with Allegro Music Consultants, she produced a solo video recital as part of her “EnviroMusic” project to bring music to retirement communities during the pandemic to raise awareness for climate change. As a competitive swimmer and member of Friends’ Central Aquatics, she recently medaled in the 50- and 100- yard breaststroke at the Mid Atlantic Silver Championships. Clara frequently attends concerts by The Philadelphia Orchestra where her father plays viola and at the Kingston Chamber Music Festival in RI where her mother is the artistic director.

Audition repertoire: Ludwig van Beethoven – *Piano Sonata No. 1 in F minor*, Op. 2, No. 1: Mvt. I, Allegro

Leon Chen, age 17, is a junior at Radnor High School. He has been playing piano since he was 5 and currently studies with Dr. Michael Sheadel at The Main Line Conservatory of Music, having previously studied with the late Joy Kiszely. When he was 7, Leon won honorable mention at the World Piano Competition in Cincinnati, Ohio, and made his first public performance at Carnegie Hall. Over the years, he has won awards in the American Fine Arts Festival and International Young Artists Competition, and, most recently, 1st place in the Crescendo International Competition. In addition to piano, Leon plays the violin and has participated in Pennsylvania Music Educators Association (PMEA) District 12 and Region 6 orchestras. Outside of music, he enjoys playing tennis, listening to music, and hanging out with friends.

Audition repertoire: Franz Liszt – *Sonetto 104 del Petrarca*, S. 161, No. 5

Matthew Chung, age 15, is a 9th grader at Methacton High School. He has been studying cello with Hsiao-Ming Chen for 10 years and was a merit scholarship recipient at Community Music School. Matthew made his solo debut with the Bucks County Symphony Orchestra as its Concerto Competition winner in 2021 and won 1st Place in the Tri-County 2021 Youth Festival in Junior Strings. At the state level, he was a 1st prize winner in the OPUS Competition and Crescendo International Competition, where he performed at Carnegie Hall. Also in 2021, he was the Alternate winner in the Music Teachers National Association (MTNA) Pennsylvania State Competition and 2nd place winner at the Philadelphia International Music Festival Concerto Competition. The Eridanus Trio, of which he was part, won 2nd Place in the Tri-County 2019 Youth Festival in Junior Ensemble, and his Temple Music Prep quintet recently won silver in the Bösendorfer Youth Music Festival. Matthew attends Temple Music Prep’s Center for Gifted Young Musicians (CGYM) and has participated in master classes with The Philadelphia Orchestra cellist Priscilla Lee and Jeffrey Solow. He was 2nd chair in PMEA District 11 Orchestra this year. In school, Matthew

is a distinguished honor roll student who enjoys math and European history. He plays soccer on his travel and high school JV teams and also enjoys competing on the track team with his friends.

Audition repertoire: Camille Saint-Saëns – *Cello Concerto No. 1 in A minor*, Op. 33: Mvt. III, Molto allegro

Michaela DeMaula, age 14, is a freshman at Perkiomen Valley High School. She currently studies with Manijéh Pickard at Community Music School. She has won competitions with the Philadelphia and Kansas City Lyra Chapters. In addition to the harp, she studies piano and plays the double bass with the school orchestra. Michaela is an active member of the Key Club and plays field hockey. She participates in the Equine Interscholastic Association horseshow circuit and has won many ribbons in the Hunter Jumper and Equitation classes. She works part time at Royersford Veterinary Hospital as a veterinary technician assistant.

Audition repertoire: Marcel Grandjany – *Pastorale*

Isabella Florendo, age 14, is a freshman at Conestoga High School and attends the Nelly Berman School, where she studied first with Nelly Berman and Elena Berman, and now with Ronaldo Rolim. Isabella has performed at different historical venues at Washington, D.C., Philadelphia, PA, NYC, NY, and Princeton, NJ. Besides piano, her other interests include the violin, harpsichord, voice, pipe organ, math, world history, foreign languages, swimming, and running.

Audition repertoire: Felix Mendelssohn – *Rondo Capriccioso in E Major*, Op. 14

The **Gray Charitable Trust Trio** features **Anagha Kapsi** (violin), **Amy Jung** (cello), and **Jesse Palmer** (piano), and is coached by Mitchell Newman.

Anagha Kapsi is an 11th grader attending the University Scholars Program at PA Leadership Charter School (PALCS). She has been playing violin for the past 11 years and currently studies with Lee Snyder at Settlement Music School. Anagha is assistant principal violin of the Philadelphia Youth Orchestra and co-concertmaster of the Delaware County Youth Orchestra, as well as a Philadelphia Music Alliance for Youth (PMAY) Artist. She is a member of the Colburn School’s first national cohort of the Fortissima program of 2021. In November 2020, she was featured on NPR’s *From the Top* Show 392, performing with Peter Dugan. Anagha’s other passions are composing and conducting. Her compositions have been performed at the 2016 and 2018 Music School of Delaware graduation ceremonies. In 2015, she composed a string quartet for The Sound of Silent Voices Project to give voices to children silenced during the Holocaust. Anagha has been studying conducting since 2018, currently with Andrew Hauze of Swarthmore College, and has conducted works for the Suzuki Academy String Orchestra and Delaware Orchestral Chamber Music Institute.

Amy Jung, age 17, is a junior at Hatboro-Horsham High School. She currently studies with Priscilla Lee of The Philadelphia Orchestra. Amy is a recipient of the Advanced Study Scholarship from Settlement Music School. This is her 4th year at Temple’s CGYM, where she holds first stand. She has been accepted to the PMEA District, All-State, and All-National (NAfME) Orchestras. She also won 1st place in the Philadelphia Korean Musicians Association’s 18th Annual Youth Music Competition Junior High Cello Division. At school, she is the principal chair cellist, a member of the Tri-M Music Honor Society and National Honor Society, an active participant on the Science Olympiad team, and President of the

Future Medical Leaders of America. Outside of music and school, she enjoys swimming, hanging out with friends, and traveling.

Jesse Palmer has been playing piano for 13 years, and currently studies at The Main Line Conservatory of Music. He has also played in piano trios at Settlement Music School for the past 6 years. Jesse is a senior at Penncrest High School and currently the student leader of its auditioned choir *The Ambassadors*, which sings at competitions and performances around the community. In May 2021, he performed at the Dr. Andor and Joy Kiszely Carnegie Hall Recital and in The Main Line Conservatory student recital. In addition to music, Jesse plays soccer and loves STEM subjects in school. He will study computer science at Brigham Young University in the fall and plans to continue his music education by taking piano lessons and joining an a cappella choir at BYU.

Audition repertoire: Felix Mendelssohn – *Piano Trio No. 1 in D minor*, Op. 49: Mvt. I, Molto allegro ed agitato

Audrey Kim, age 14, attends Valley Forge Middle School and studies violin with J Freivogel of the Jasper String Quartet. She joined Temple’s Center for Gifted Young Musicians in 2016 and is now a member of its Youth Chamber Orchestra. In the 2021-2022 season, she performed as a soloist with the Main Line Symphony Orchestra after winning the James Deitz Memorial Young Artist Competition. Recently, she won the Bucks County Symphony Orchestra Youth Concerto Competition and will perform with BCSO in December. As the Junior Division winner of the Luzerne Music Center’s 2020 Young Artist Scholarship Competition, she received a full merit award. Audrey has performed in solo masterclasses from Philip Setzer, Juliette Kang, Marc Rovetti, Sibbi Bernhardsson, and Robert Chen. This coming summer, she will be attending the Northwestern University Summer Violin Institute and Boston University Tanglewood Institute. In school, Audrey is involved in music programs and is a gifted student supported by the Tredyffrin/Easttown School District. Outside of music, she is a member of the Oaks Center Ice Figure Skating Club and enjoys reading and spending time with her friends.

Audition repertoire: Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky – *Violin Concerto in D Major*, Op. 35: Mvt. III, Finale: Allegro vivacissimo

Aaron Liu, age 15, is a freshman at Great Valley High School. He started playing the cello when he was 6, went on to study with Christine Watts for 4 years, and currently studies with Priscilla Lee, associate principal cellist of The Philadelphia Orchestra. He previously competed and won 2nd prize in the Tri-County Youth Festival Junior Division. He has attended summer institutes such as Curtis Summerfest, Youth Art & Self-Empowerment Project (YASP), and Philadelphia International Music Festival (PIMF), and will be attending the Bowdoin International Music Festival this summer. He has also attended Temple Music Prep for 7 seasons and is in its Youth Chamber Orchestra, which is conducted by Aaron Picht. He recently started mentoring middle school students playing cello for his school orchestra. Outside of cello, Aaron likes participating in science and math Olympiads and attending concerts with aspiring musicians.

Audition repertoire: Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky – *Variations on a Rococo Theme*, Op. 33: Thema & Var. I, II, III, & VII

Elena Osipova, 18, was born in Moscow, Russia, where she started learning to play the flute at age 6 at the Moscow Gilels Music School. When she was 8, her family moved to Philadelphia, where she continued studying with various teachers. Now she attends Settlement Music School studying under Ilya Ovrutsky. In 2015, Elena won The Flute Society of Greater Philadelphia’s John and Helen Tomasone Memorial Young Artist Competition in the Junior Novice Division, and in 2018 she won 1st place in the Tri-County Youth Festival in Junior Winds. Aside from music, Elena enjoys education, political science, and linguistics. During the 2021 lockdown, she tutored immigrant children as part of a

California-based nonprofit organization. She enjoys learning languages and is currently studying French, Chinese, and Tibetan. She will be attending Penn State Harrisburg in the fall of 2022, majoring in international politics.

Audition repertoire: Vladimir Tsybin – *Concert Allegro No. 2 in A-flat Major for Flute and Piano*

Roch Parayre, age 16, is a junior at The Haverford School. His vocal coach is Carole Latimer, with whom he has been studying classical and musical theater voice for 5 years. He is also a member of his school’s selective a cappella group, the Notables, and has been studying classical piano for 12 years. He began his singing career in 6th grade when he was cast as the lead in *Oliver!* and has since been extensively involved in his school’s musical theatre program, performing in *Seussical: The Musical*, *Carousel*, and *Something Rotten*. Roch is actively involved in diversity, equity, and inclusion groups both inside and outside of his school, including being the co-chair of his school’s Diversity Alliance and co-founding the National Diversity Coalition. Additionally, he is a Haverford Tour Guide, runs a Current Events & Knitting Club, and interned at the Mann Music Center over the summer of 2021.

Audition repertoire: Stefano Donaudy – “*O del mio amato ben*”; Richard Hundley – “*Come Ready and See Me*”

Brooklyn Taylor, age 14, is in 8th grade at Strath Haven Middle School. She began studying piano when she was 6 years old with Christina Emata. In addition to her solo studies, she enjoys playing as a collaborative pianist. She has accompanied for a cello studio, served as a choral pianist, and performed often as part of a piano duo. Brooklyn is an honors student in school and a dedicated athlete, playing volleyball, basketball, and lacrosse.

Audition repertoire: Aram Khachaturian – *Toccata in E-flat minor*, Op. 11

The Trio Vivace features **Ala Cho** (violin), **Samuel Kim** (cello), and **Matthew Ma** (piano) and is coached by Keiko Sato.

Ala (Ara) Cho, age 17, is a junior at Conestoga High School. She studies the violin with Davyd Booth. Ala is a member of the Philadelphia Youth Orchestra and formerly participated in the Philadelphia Young Musicians Orchestra, Philadelphia Sinfonia, and Temple Music Prep chamber ensembles. She was concertmaster of the Schuylkill Valley Area Orchestra and after winning 1st place at the Little Mozarts Crescendo Competition was invited to play at Carnegie Hall. Ala has participated in PMEA District and Regional festivals as well. Last year, she was accepted into the Luzerne Music Center in New York for the Senior Session. Ala is principal second in the Symphony Orchestra and concertmaster in the Antioch Church Orchestra. At school, she is the President of ‘Stoga Chamber Music, President and Co-Founder of the Korean Culture Club, and a member of the Tri-M Music Honor Society and ‘Stoga Key Club. In her free time, she loves watching TwoSet Violin.

Samuel Kim, age 16, is a junior at Conestoga High School. He has studied cello for 6 years and currently studies under Ohad Bar-David. Recently, he was admitted to the PMEA District 12 Region 6 festival and further qualified to All-States. He also plays in the Delaware County Youth Orchestra. Sam won an Honorable Mention in Newark Symphony Orchestra’s Betsy L. Kent concerto competition. In addition to music, he enjoys playing soccer and running track.

Matthew Ma, age 15, is a freshman at Conestoga High School. He has studied piano for 10 years, and currently studies under Keiko Sato. He has won 1st place in the Little Mozarts Crescendo Competition and appeared at Carnegie Hall twice, and also won 2nd place twice in the Elite International Music Competition. Matthew is part of his school’s

concert choir and chorale and also accompanies them. Additionally, he plays the trumpet for the concert band, jazz band, and marching band. Matthew is also actively involved in several churches’ music ministries. Aside from music, he competes in DECA and Robotics and enjoys biking, running, and rowing.

Audition repertoire: Ludwig van Beethoven – *Piano Trio in D Major*, Op. 70, No. 1, “Ghost”: Mvt. I, Allegro vivace e con brio

Charles Witmer, age 18, is a senior at The Haverford School. He currently studies with Carole Latimer. He sings as the bass section leader in school and with PMEA's District, Regional, and All-State chorus, and is a choral scholar at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Chestnut Hill. In addition to singing, Charles plays the cello and enjoys the study of biology. He is a semifinalist in the USA Biology Olympiad, has won gold and silver in the British Biology Olympiad, and has contributed to research at CHOP. He will be attending the University of Pennsylvania in the fall, where he plans to double major in biology and vocal performance.

Audition repertoire: George Frideric Handel – “*Why do the nations so furiously rage?*” from *Messiah*, HWV 56, Pt. 2; Stefano Donaudy – *Amorosi Miei Giorni*

Emily Wu, age 15, is in grade 10 at Unionville High School. She began her piano studies when she was 5 with Joy Kiszely at The Main Line Conservatory of Music and currently studies with both Natalie Zhu and Hanchien Lee. Emily made her orchestral debut with Kostroma Symphony Orchestra in Russia at the age of 9 and performed with Concert Festival Orchestra in New York at the age of 10. At 11 years old, she was a prize-winner in The Philadelphia Orchestra’s 2018 Albert M. Greenfield Concerto Competition. She was also the Alternate winner in the MTNA Pennsylvania State Competition Junior Division and a Grand Prize winner of the International Young Artists Competition. Additionally, she won 1st Place in Tri-County Youth Festival's Junior Division, which led to a live radio broadcast performance on WRTI 90.1 FM. Emily was the top prize winner at many other regional and international competitions, such as the American Protégé International Piano and String Competition, American Fine Arts Festival Competition, Paderewski International Piano Competition, and World Piano Competition. She has performed in Carnegie Hall numerous times from age 6, most recently in this year's Dr. Andor and Joy Kiszely's Recital, and has also performed at the Kimmel Center’s Verizon Hall, Ehrbar Hall and Mozart Haus in Vienna, Robert Schumann Museum in Zwickau, the Russian Center for Science and Culture in Paris, and Kurozweki Palace in Poland. In addition to solo piano, Emily plays in a piano trio at Temple’s CGYM. Besides music, Emily loves foreign languages; she studies French and Spanish in school and enjoys learning other foreign languages on her own. In her free time, she loves baking desserts, reading, writing, and traveling the world.

Audition repertoire: Franz Liszt – *Transcendental Étude in A-flat Major*, S. 139, No. 9, “Ricordanza”

For further information, please contact the Youth Festival Directors at tricityyouthfestival@gmail.com.

Wendy Schmid and Eleanor James, Co-Directors, Tri-County Concerts Youth Festival

We gratefully acknowledge the generous grants from:

We also thank our season sponsors.

Find out more about them by clicking their logos.



© 2023 Tri-County Concerts Association, Inc. | All Rights Reserved

