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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

## 2023 Winners' Biographies

**Braval Trio** features **Clara Chen** (piano), **Penny Tang** (violin), and **Sophia Cui** (cello) and is coached by J Freivogel of the Jasper Quartet. Formed in Fall 2022 at Temple Prep's Center for Gifted Young Musicians, the trio derives its name from its members' schools: The Baldwin School, Radnor Middle School, and Valley Forge Middle School.

Clara Chen, age 13, is an 8th grader at The Baldwin School. She currently studies piano with Amy Yang of The Curtis Institute of Music and previously with the late Joy Kiszely at The Main Line Conservatory of Music. Clara was the 2nd place winner in Junior Piano at the 2022 Tri-County Concerts Youth Festival. She has also been a Gold Star Winner of the 2021 Elite International Music Competition and a top prize winner of the 2020 and 2022 PhMTA Auditioned recital, and made her Carnegie Weill Hall debut as part of the Dr. Andor & Joy Kiszely Carnegie Hall recital in May 2022. A rising freshman at Baldwin, Clara has recently been elected to the 2023-2024 class officer position of Treasurer, as well as earning an auditioned spot on the highly regarded Baldwin B-Flats, an award-winning a cappella group which tours and competes in many international events. This summer, in addition to competitive swimming, she will also be attending the Lyra Young Artist Performance Program in Hudson Valley, NY.

Penny Tang, age 14, is currently in 8th grade at Radnor Middle School. She started the violin at age 4 with Sarah Sutton and now studies with J Freivogel. She is concertmaster of the PMEA District 7/8 Orchestra and at Radnor Middle School. She has been a member of Prysm Strings and is currently in the Chamber Players Orchestra at Temple Prep. She is a founding member of the Braval Trio. She plans on attending the Philadelphia International Music Festival this summer. She enjoys playing tennis, art, and playing with her dog, Boba Tang.

Sophia Cui, age 12, is a 7th grader at Valley Forge Middle School. She has been studying cello with Jennifer Jie Jin since the age of 7. She is a member of the Chamber Players Orchestra at the Center for Gifted Young Musicians at Temple University. She is also a member of the Valley Forge Middle School orchestra. She has performed in the Bösendorfer Youth Music Festival (2023), Crescendo International Competition (2023), Rising Talents Festival (2022), and Triumph Music Festival (2021). In the past, she participated in ensembles including PRYSM and Pennsylvania Youth Orchestra. Sophia also has been studying piano with Dr. Ariane Alexander since the age of 5. Aside from music, Sophia enjoys writing, math, painting, running, and baking.

Audition Repertoire: Clara Schumann - Piano Trio in G minor, Op. 17: Mvt. I, Allegro moderato

Photo Credit: Distinguished former Tri-County Youth Festival winner Burchard Tang

**Julie Chen**, age 12, is a 7th grader at Valley Forge Middle School, where she is in the Gifted Program. She began studying cello at age 8 and currently studies with Hai-Ye Ni, the principal cellist of The Philadelphia Orchestra. Julie has been the principal cellist of PRYSM Strings of the Philadelphia Youth Orchestra and of her school orchestra since 2021. She won 3rd Place in the 8-11 division of the Philadelphia International Music Festival’s (PIMF) online concerto competition in 2021. She then won 1st Place in the 11-13 division and overall runner-up in PIMF’s summer camp concerto competition in 2022 which earned her a spot in the Winners' Circle Concert this March with Philadelphia Orchestra members. Julie also won 1st Place in the American Protégé Concerto Competition with Judges' Distinction Award this year and will perform at Carnegie Hall in November. Her other interests include dancing, singing, playing the piano, swimming, and playing squash. For the last two years, Julie has attended PIMF summer camp; this year, she has been accepted into the summer program at the Meadowmount School of Music in New York State.

Audition repertoire: Luigi Boccherini - Cello Concerto No. 9 in B-flat Major, G.482: Mvt. 1, Allegro moderato

**Eridanus Trio** features **Daniel Chu** (piano), **Haley Chung** (violin), and **Matthew Chung** (cello), and is coached by Hsiao-Ming Chen.

Daniel Chu, age 16, is a 10th grade distinguished honors student at Spring-Ford High School, and he is a member of the National Honor Society. He has been studying piano for 8 years, currently under the direction of Milena Urban at Community Music School in Trappe. He played with the Eridanus Trio under the coaching of Hsiao-Ming Chen in 2019, when they earned 2nd place at the Tri-County Concerts Youth Festival, and also had the privilege to perform at the Philharmonic concert in 2019. Besides studying piano, Daniel has also played violin in his school orchestra for 6 years. In March 2019, he had the honor of participating in the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association (PMEA) String Festival. In March 2022, he joined the school orchestra to perform in the Festival Disney music competition in Orlando, Florida. In addition to studying piano and violin, he has been composing music, and recently won the 2023 PMEA outstanding composition award. His hobbies include swimming and computer programming.

Haley Chung, age 17, is a senior at Methacton High School, and has played violin for 13 years. She currently studies with Yevgeniy Dyo. Haley has been a member of Philadelphia Sinfonia for 4 years. This year, she has enjoyed participating in PMEA All-State Orchestra and the Academic Decathlon States competition. Haley is the president of her National Charity League class, the co-president of her school’s Tri-M Music Honor Society chapter, and the vice president of her school’s Academic Decathlon team. She previously won 2nd place with the Eridanus Trio in the Tri-County Concerts Youth Festival in 2019. She also won

3rd place in the Charleston International Music Competition in 2022. Haley has received the President’s Volunteer Service Award for 4 consecutive years.

Matthew Chung, age 16, is a sophomore at Methacton High School. He has studied with Hsiao-Ming Chen for 11 years at Community Music School. He also plays in Temple Music Prep’s CGYM Youth Chamber Orchestra and ensembles. Matthew participated in the PMEA District, Regional, and All-State Orchestra, in which he was first chair cellist. At the Tri-County Concerts Youth Festival, he won 2nd place in Junior Ensemble with the Eridanus Trio (2019), 1st place in Junior Strings (2021), and 2nd place in Senior Strings (2022). Matthew was the winner of the Bucks County Symphony Orchestra’s Youth Concerto Competition (2021), co-winner of the Ambler Symphony’s Menges Scholarship Competition (2022), and Grand Prize winner in the Korean Musicians Association competition (2022). He was the PA State Alternate in the MTNA Competition 2021 in Junior Strings and won 1st prizes in the Opus Competition and Crescendo International Competition, in which he performed at Carnegie Hall. For two summers, Matthew attended the Philadelphia International Music Festival, where he won 2nd place in the 2021 Concerto Competition. Matthew’s CGYM Quintet won silver in the Bösendorfer Youth Music Festival in 2022. He has performed in masterclasses at CGYM and PIMF with Priscilla Lee and Marcy Rosen.

At school, Matthew is a distinguished honor roll student who enjoys math, computer science, and history. He and his debate team partner won 3rd place at the Valley Forge District National Speech and Debate Association tournament, qualifying for nationals. Matthew is secretary of his school’s Tri-M Music Honor Society and vice president of its Debate Club, plays soccer, and competes on his track team with his friends.

Audition repertoire: Schubert - Piano Trio No. 1 in B-flat Major, Op. 99, D.898: Mvt. I, Allegro moderato

**Audrey Kim**, age 15, is a freshman at Conestoga High School. She has been playing the violin since the age of 4 and currently studies with J Freivogel. She is a member of Temple Prep’s CGYM and the Myer Schwartz Advanced Study Piano Trio at Settlement Music School. She has performed as a soloist with the Bucks County Symphony, Main Line Symphony, and Temple Youth Chamber Orchestra. She was recently named a winner of the Old York Road Symphony Young Artists Competition and will perform with the orchestra during the 2023-2024 season. Additionally, she won 1st Place in Junior Strings at the 2022 Tri-County Concerts Youth Festival and the 2020 Luzerne Music Center Young Artist Scholarship Competition. She is also the recipient of the Jeanne Marvin Phillips Prize and the Marie Paxson Fund Prize presented by the Delaware Valley Music Club. Audrey has participated in masterclasses with prominent violinists, including Sibbi Bernhardsson, Robert Chen, Ilya Kaler, Juliette Kang, Paul Kantor, Fabiola Kim, Violaine Melaçon, Blair Milton, Marc Rovetti, Eduard Schmieder, Philip Setzer, and Steven Tenenbom of the Orion String Quartet, as well as with the Merz Trio. This summer, she will be attending the Heifetz International Music Institute and will study with renowned teachers such as Nicholas Kitchen, Ani Kavafian, Mark Kaplan, and Ivan Chan. Outside of music, Audrey is involved with her school newspaper club and is also a member of the varsity girls' ice hockey team.

Audition repertoire: Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky - Violin Concerto in D Major, Op. 35, TH.59: Mvt. I, Allegro moderato

**Andrew Li**, age 14, is an 8th grader at Valley Forge Middle School. He currently studies with Elena Berman and Marianna Prjevalskaya at the Nelly Berman School of Music. Andrew has performed at Carnegie Hall in New York City and the Academy of Music in Philadelphia. He has won numerous awards including First Prizes at the 2021 and 2022 Triumph Music Festivals, First Prize and Exceptional Young Talent Special Prize at the 2021 New York Golden Classical Music Awards International Competition, Honorable Mention at the 2022 American Virtuoso International Music Competition, Silver Prize at the 2022 Amadeus International Music Awards, Second Prize at the 2022 US New Star Piano Competition by Composer, Second Prize at the 2022 New London International Music Competition, Third Prize at the 2022 Medici International Music Competition, Honorable Mention at the 2022 Tri-County Concerts Youth Festival, and Superior performance at the 2022 Dorothy Sutton Festival. More recently, Andrew was awarded The Menges Scholarship and performed with the Ambler Symphony. In addition, he has accompanied for his school chorus since 4th

grade. Beyond piano, Andrew loves cooking, collecting/investing in LEGOs, golfing, and traveling around the world.

Audition repertoire: Ludwig van Beethoven, Piano Sonata No. 14 in C-sharp minor ("Moonlight"), Op. 27, No. 2: Mvt. III, Presto agitato

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**Ben Sessions**, age 17, is currently a junior at Oxford Area High School. He began his piano studies at the age of 8 at the Oxford Arts Alliance. He was a student of Dr. Carl Cranmer of West Chester University from 2018-2021. In the summer of 2019, Ben attended the Philadelphia International Music Festival, where he studied with Ashley Hsu and Svetlana Smolina. He attended the Interlochen Center for the Arts High School Piano Summer Program in 2021, where he studied with Dr. Michael Coonrod. Ben has been attending the Nelly Berman School of Music since November 2021, studying with Dr. Ronaldo Rolim and Dr. Anna Kislitsyna. He attended the Oberlin Piano Festival in the summer of 2022, studying with esteemed guest artists, including Stanislav Loudenitch and Peter Mack. In his spare time, he enjoys playing in local retirement homes.

Audition repertoire: Sergei Prokofiev - Piano Sonata No. 1 in F minor, Op. 1

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**Michelle Snyder**, age 16, is a sophomore at Spring-Ford High School. She has been playing the harp for 8 years. She previously studied with Manijéh Pickard for 6 years, and her current teacher is MaryAnn McCann at Community Music School at Trappe. In 2021, Michelle won 1st place in the Pedal Harp Junior Division at the Philadelphia Harp Chapter Competition. Michelle is a Distinguished Honor Roll student and especially enjoys computer science and Spanish.

Audition repertoire: Carlos Salzedo - Suite of Eight Dances: Mvt. III, Polka

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**Raymond Tai**, age 17, is a junior at Methacton High School, currently studying with Dragan Petrovich for alto saxophone. This is his first year competing in the Tri-County Concerts Youth Festival. He played in the PMEA District 11 Band in his sophomore and junior years and is the lead saxophonist in his school's jazz band. In addition to saxophone, Raymond played for Prysm Strings and the PYMO orchestra as a Violin 1 and is a member of the Lulu Shriners orchestra. At school, he is the captain of the sprinters for the track team and has qualified for Presidents' Athletic Conference (PAC) championships and Districts. He is planning to pursue academic studies in Pre-Medicine.

Audition repertoire: Eugène Bozza - Improvisation et Caprice: Mvt. I, Moderato; Mvt. II, Allegro moderato

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**Cecily Vu**, soprano, age 15, is currently a freshman at Owen J. Roberts High School. She has been studying voice and piano for 3 years with Marie Anderson at the Aria and Fugue Studio. She is a member of her school's show choir, theatre productions, and ambassador club. Outside of school, Cecily enjoys taking part in musicals at local theatres and cantoring at her church. She also likes to dance and play the piano. She looks forward to furthering her music education and taking part in more competitions like this.

Audition Repertoire: Henry Purcell, "If Music be the Food of Love," Z.379, and W. A. Mozart, "Vedrai Carino" from Don Giovanni, Act II

**Megan Xie**, age 16, is a junior at Lower Moreland High School. She began playing piano at the age of 5 with Ursula Ingolfsson and currently studies with Natalie Zhu. At age 9, Megan received the Rosalyn Tureck Prize in Category I of the 4th Rosalyn Tureck International Bach Competition, in which she made her first public performance at the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts. She also received Honorable Mention awards in the MTNA Pennsylvania State Competition (2020, 2022) and Tri-County Concerts Youth Festival's Senior Piano Division (2022). In addition, Megan won top prizes in numerous international competitions, including Music-Fest's International Rising Talents Festival (2017, 2018, 2019), the Elite International Music Competition (2020, 2021, 2022), and the Golden Key International Music Festival (2022, 2023). She was also selected as a top performer in the Dr. Andor and Joy Kiszely Audition to be awarded with a professional recording (2021, 2022). As the co-president of the Super Joey Foundation, a nonprofit organization, Megan organized and performed in two music recitals to raise money in support of families affected by childhood cancer. Outside of piano, Megan plays cello in her school orchestra and chamber strings ensemble and is a Settlement Music School scholarship recipient for her cello studies. She is the president of her school's Math Club and Coding Club and has won awards in various Biology Olympiads, including a Gold Award in the Biogenesis International Olympiad and a Certificate of Merit in the USA Biology Olympiad's semifinal round.

Audition repertoire: Ludwig van Beethoven - Piano Sonata No. 26 in E-flat Major ("Les Adieux"), Op. 81a: Mvt. I, Das Lebewohl: Adagio - Allegro

**Patrick Xie**, age 14, is in 8th grade at Murray Avenue Middle School. He began learning piano at age 5 under Ursula Ingolfsson and currently studies with Natalie Zhu. Patrick has won awards in numerous international competitions, including a Grand Prix in Music-Fest's Rising Talents Festival (2018), First Prize in the Elite International Music Competition (2020, 2021), a Silver Award in the International Young Artists Competition (2021), and a Gold Award in the Golden Key Music Festival (2021, 2022). He has also performed at various venues, such as the Weill Recital Hall in Carnegie Hall, the Academy of Music at the Kimmel Center, and Teatro in the Italian Academy at Columbia University. In addition, Patrick performs in the Super Joey Foundation recitals that his sister organizes to help raise money in support of families affected by childhood cancer. Besides piano, Patrick plays the saxophone in his school's concert band and jazz band ensemble. His jazz band has been invited to perform at June Fete in Huntingdon Valley, PA and at Dorney Park's Music in the Parks Festival, in which he was the only saxophone player to receive the Outstanding Soloist Award. Other than music, Patrick enjoys tennis, chess, math, and computer science.

Audition repertoire: Sergei Rachmaninoff - Prelude in G-sharp minor, Op. 32, No. 12

**Julie Zheng**, age 12, is in 7th grade at Bala Cynwyd Middle School. She started her music education at age 4 with piano, then moved to violin at age 6. She has participated in several orchestras, including PYO Music Institute's Young Musicians Debut Orchestra (YMDO), where she sat principal second, Philadelphia Young Artists Orchestra (PYAO), and her school orchestra. Julie studied violin first with Davis Barnett, then with Angela Sulzer. For the past three years she has been studying with her current teacher, Meichen Liao-Barnes. Julie recently received Honorable Mention in the 2023 Bucks County Youth Concerto Competition. Apart from violin, Julie has been a part of her school's tennis team, track team, and cross country team, and ice skates when not playing competitive sports for school. During free time, she likes to spend time drawing and with her friends and siblings. She also loves animals, especially cats.

Audition repertoire: Max Bruch - Violin Concerto No. 1 in G minor, Op. 26: Mvt. I, Vorspiel: Allegro moderato

For further information, please contact the Youth Festival Directors at [tricityyouthfestival@gmail.com](mailto:tricityyouthfestival@gmail.com).

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

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