MAGAZINE

MAESTRO

APRIL '25
VOL. 7



Eduard Arevshatyan
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David Wong
Award-winning Oboist

Qi Cao
Violinist, violin teacher, and app developer

Alice Li
Classical Stars Competition- Artist of the Season

Emma Rose Koeswandy
Both a Pianist, and a Violinist

Maria Sá
"Every accomplishment, no matter how small, is always a step forward."

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Inspired by both her love for music and her country

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You won the top prize in the Global Young Musicians Competition. Would you recommend participating in online competitions to other musicians? Why?

Yes, I think exposing yourself in any way is always very important as a young musician.

How do you celebrate your big and small achievements?

For me, every accomplishment, no matter how small, is always a step forward, and recognizing them keeps me motivated and grateful for the journey. I like to celebrate my achievements—both big and small—by taking a moment to reflect on the journey that led me there and both give me immediately lots of motivation to continue the work I did until that moment. I like to celebrate with my family, friends, and especially my teachers who have supported me along the way. Whether it's a nice dinner, a small gathering, or simply sharing the excitement with loved ones, I believe it's important to acknowledge the hard work that led to the moment.

Where do you study and what is your day-to-day life like at the moment?

I study in Salzburg in Austria. My routine consists of getting up early, practising, moving my body, get my-self surrounded with music in every possible way, like attending concerts, reading books about composer's lives, analysing scores and listening to recordings. I also try to have good and balanced meals as well as having enough sleep.

What is your greatest inspiration in taking on musical challenges?

My greatest inspiration in taking on musical challenges comes from the deep emotional connection that music can create between people. The ability to tell a story, express my emotions beyond words, and move an audience through my sound is what drives me to push my limits as a musician.
I'm also inspired by the great violinists like Itzhak Perlman, Jascha Heifetz, Oistrakh, Benjamin Schmid and Emmanuel Tjeknavorian.

Their dedication, artistry, and unique interpretations remind me that there is always more to explore and refine in my playing.
Beyond that, my personal journey and the support of my family, teachers, and my friends motivate me to embrace challenges. Every obstacle is an opportunity to grow, and knowing that my music can inspire others keeps me striving for excellence.

What do you think a musician should be like in order to communicate to the audience?

I believe the most important duty a musician has is to be able to share the joy and passion through the music to the audience. To tell your story and to make them feel what you feel.

What are your dreams?

My dream is to become a better version of myself.

Do you have any dream pieces that you haven't played before and would like to perform?

Yes, I would love to play the Korngold violin concerto.

What are you like outside of music? What do you enjoy doing the most?

Everything in my life has a meaning because of music, but in the times that I'm a bit more overwhelmed, I like to connect with nature, like going on hikes in the Alps or surfing in the south coast of Portugal.

"My greatest inspiration ... comes from the deep emotional connection that music can create between people.



Eduard Arevshatyan



What was your earliest experience of playing the piano and when you first decided to pursue a career as a pianist?

My first experience playing the piano is a memory that is more felt than understood. I was only a few years old when I first touched the keys, and although I didn't realize then that it would become a part of my life, I already felt a certain kinship with music. Over time, I understood that the piano is not just an instrument but a means of self-expression, a space where I can truly be myself. The decision to dedicate myself to music did not come instantly but through the realization that it is my natural language.

Could you refer to other people who have been inspiring you on your musical path?

My greatest inspirations have always been composers whose music I feel especially deeply. Bach—for his architectural precision and his ability to convey endless emotional depth through strict forms. Chopin—for his sincerity, lyricism, and that unique sadness that always has deep inside a certain sense of light. Ravel—for his refined colors, the fragility and subtlety in his music. Rachmaninoff—for the sheer scale of his emotions, for the way he blends longing and hope in every note. But it wasn't only composers who inspired me—my teachers, fellow musicians, the audience, and my loved ones have also been an important part of this journey.

A special place in this belongs to my sister Shushan Arevshatyan—a pianist and composer, who not only inspired me but also became my guide into the professional world. She shared her experience, helped me master complex pieces, and taught me to hear the depth beyond the notes. Her support and belief in me gave me the strength to overcome difficulties, find my own voice in music, and never stop. Without her influence, my path would have been completely different.

What are your feelings when you perform on stage and share your music with an audience?

When I step onto the stage, I feel that music becomes something alive, something that breathes. At that moment, time disappears, all external thoughts fade away, and only the sound remains—its depth, its movement. For me, performing is not just about playing the notes but about revealing something profound, about having a conversation with those who listen. In these moments, I am no longer just a musician but a medium between something immeasurably greater and those in the audience.

Which of your stage experiences was the most significant for you?

One of the most significant moments in my performance experience was playing Chopin's Second Sonata. This piece is an entire world, filled with tragedy, inner struggles, and inevitability. When I played it for the first time, I felt not only the complexity of the music but also its depth, its immense emotional weight. Especially the Funeral March, where every chord sounded like a step across a bridge between worlds. In that moment, I realized that music can do more than just convey emotions—it can experience them alongside you.

What are your aspirations for your music career?

In my music career, I do not strive for external achievements but for true, deep expressiveness. It is important for me not just to perform a piece but to find something personal within it, to understand it in such a way that every sound has meaning. I want my music to speak to people, to be sincere, alive, and able to reach deep within them.

What are your interests outside of music? What do you enjoy doing in your free time?

Outside of music, I find inspiration in literature and philosophy. Books help me see the world in a multifaceted way, to search for answers to questions that cannot be expressed in words. Sometimes, I just need to be in silence, in nature, to catch those sounds that will later become a part of my music.

What motivates you to participate in online music competitions such as Classical Music Stars IMC, World's Best Musicians IMC, Mozart IMC or BACH IMC?

Participating in competitions such as Classical Music Stars IMC, World's Best Musicians IMC, Mozart IMC or BACH IMC is not about competition for me—it is an opportunity to hear others, to exchange musical perspectives. It is a way to step beyond the familiar, expand the boundaries of perception, and remind myself that music is not just a personal experience but a dialogue with the world.

> *"When I step onto the stage, I feel that music becomes something alive, something that breathes.*





Emma Rose Koeswandy

How did your adventure in music begin?

My musical journey began at the age of four when my parents enrolled me in after-school activities. Initially, I participated in gymnastics, but I quickly grew bored and asked my parents to sign me up for piano lessons. Soon after, I developed an interest in the violin as well. From that moment, music became my passion, shaping the course of my artistic journey.

I still vividly remember how the after-school staff would panic every Wednesday because they couldn't find me—I would always sneak into the orchestra room, captivated by the older girls playing in the ensemble. I was mesmerized by their performances, and my conductor eventually noticed my fascination. Instead of sending me away, she kindly allowed me to sit and watch, further deepening my love for music.

You are a very versatile musician. How do you divide your time between violin and piano?

Thank you for the recognition. Piano and violin have been integral parts of my life, each profoundly shaping my personal growth. Through both instruments, I have learned discipline and the importance of respecting the process, understanding that true mastery requires time, patience, and dedication. It is not merely about ounting practice hours, but rather about cultivating focus, discipline, and intentionality in every moment of learning.

From a young age, my violin teacher instilled in me a strategic approach to studying, teaching me how to learn efficiently, while my piano teacher emphasized the significance of time management, organization, and appreciating the value of every moment. I have also come to recognize the necessity of balance—knowing when to pause, take care of myself, and nurture my social life.

At times, I have had to perform on both piano and violin in a single day at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. Managing such a demanding schedule would not be possible without an



exceptionally well-organized administration team, whose careful planning ensures my concerts and performances are scheduled with consideration for my stamina, recovery, and preparation. It takes an entire team working in harmony to support one another, and for that, I am truly grateful.

You have won many prizes in Universal Maestro Society competitions, often the highest. Are online competitions valuable, and why would you recommend other young musicians to participate in them?

First and foremost, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Maestro Society Competitions for providing musicians with a platform to share their artistry and establish a global presence. These competitions allow us to capture the essence of our musical journey, preserving the moments we have dedicated to learning and refining each repertoire we prepare.

As I progress through different phases of my life, I have come to realize that competitions are not merely about winning, but rather about fostering friendships, embracing growth, and respecting the invaluable time of the adjudicators who honor us by watching our performances. Receiving their thoughtful feedback is a privilege, and I deeply appreciate every word they share, as it offers me valuable insight and learning opportunities.

I highly encourage everyone to seize every opportunity, no matter how small, as even the slightest chance can lead to profound experiences. The Maestro Society provides a supportive and enriching environment for musicians to participate, learn, and connect, making it a truly meaningful platform for artistic growth.

"I highly encourage everyone to seize every opportunity, no matter how small.

Which pieces are you currently working on, and which would you like to perform in the future?

I am currently working on Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 1, and I feel incredibly grateful that my teacher has entrusted me with this learning journey. It is a privilege to analyze, internalize, and grow through a piece that has been brought to life by some of my greatestmusical idols—artists who have reached the pinnacle of performance with this concerto.

I hope that when my time comes to perform with an orchestra, I will have the honor of bringing this masterpiece to life alongside talented musicians. It has been my dream since childhood to collaborate with an ensemble, to experience the dialogue between instruments, and to share in the collective artistry that makes this concerto so timeless.

What was your greatest experience being on stage?

I will never forget the time I had an accident that required knee surgery, leaving me on crutches for three months. During that period, I had to adapt—playing my violin solos while seated and performing piano using only my right foot. On top of that, I was preparing for an orchestra audition, hoping to earn a spot.

Everything seemed to fall apart when I didn't make it to the semifinal of a piano competition, and my violin audition became an afterthought. It was a difficult time, but I kept practicing, and the unwavering support from my teachers and family carried me through.

When I finally received the green light to return, I made my comeback on stage at the Conservatorium — an unforgettable moment. The audience witnessed not just my performance but also my journey, seeing me return without crutches, playing with greater confidence, and expressing myself fully through music. That experience taught me a valuable lesson: everything happens for a reason, and setbacks can lead to even greater comebacks.

What does your day look like? How much do you practice and how do you combine it with your school duties?

My day begins like that of most students—attending school, meeting my friends and teachers, and participating in sports from Monday to Friday. Saturdays are dedicated to my music education, where I meet my wonderful friends at the Conservatorium. Sundays are reserved for family time, and recharged.

Currently, I am a student, and I understand the responsibility that comes with it. My priorities include completing my homework, respecting exam schedules, and practicing both the violin and piano.

What are your interests outside of music?

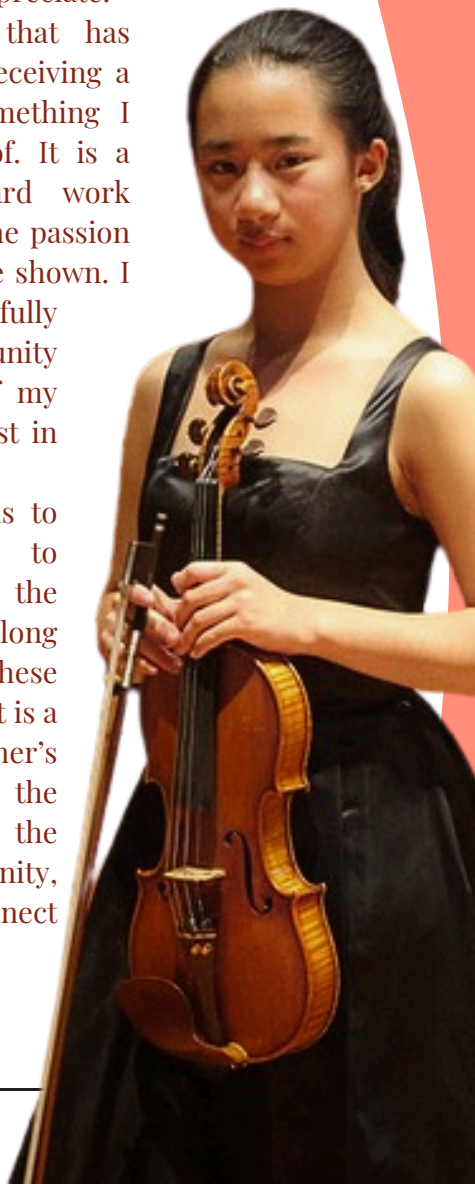
I have many interests outside of music. In the past, I was part of competition teams for cross country, gymnastics, swimming, skiing, and ballet. However, my interests have since shifted to spending quality time with my friends. We enjoy dancing together to our favorite music, playing chess, reading books, and I also love staying connected with the library committee to get new book lists before they're published in our school library.

What are your dreams, what would you like to achieve?

That's a great question, and if you could see my face right now, my eyes would be wide open and sparkling like twinkling stars. I have many dreams that I hope will come true, but I also understand that each dream requires dedication, hard work, and sacrifice. When the time comes to accept and honor my dreams, I believe it will be a sweet and meaningful accomplishment, one that I will deeply appreciate.

One of my dreams that has already come true is receiving a music scholarship, something I am incredibly proud of. It is a testament to the hard work behind it, but also to the passion and commitment I have shown. I promised myself to fully embrace this opportunity and make the most of my potential, giving my best in all that I do.

Currently, my dream is to remain healthy and to continue playing both the piano and violin for as long as I can. I love these instruments, and I feel it is a way to honor my teacher's legacy. I hope to share the beauty of music with the world and the community, showing how it can connect and inspire us all.



Qi Cao



You took the top prizes in the Classical Stars International Music Competition, the Fenix Award International Music Competition, and the Mozart International Music Competition in addition to a huge number of other awards. Do you feel like a fulfilled artist?

Winning top prizes in these international competitions was incredibly rewarding, especially since they are highly prestigious. What made these experiences even more significant was the fact that I wasn't just competing against other violinists, but musicians playing a variety of instruments. That added an extra layer of difficulty, making each victory even more meaningful.

Tell us about your latest biggest artistic projects.

I am currently developing two AI-driven apps and actively seeking funding through various channels. The first app is designed to emulate the interpretative styles of legendary musicians, including those who are no longer with us, helping students gain deeper insights into repertoire. The second app is an AI-powered practice assistant that helps students refine their playing between lessons by identifying and correcting objective mistakes such as wrong notes, rhythms, and intonation. If you're interested in learning more, you can visit my fundraising page:

https://www.gofundme.com/f/empower-music-education-with-qi-caos-ai-apps

What does a 'typical day' look like for an established violinist in America?

I'll use Friday as an example since my schedule is quite structured. My day starts with a dress rehearsal in the morning at Meymandi Concert Hall in downtown Raleigh with the North Carolina Symphony. In the afternoon, I take a short nap before teaching a couple of students. Then, in the evening, I return to the concert hall to perform, always with great excitement.

What place does education occupy in your life? Do you enjoy sharing your knowledge with younger music students?

Absolutely! I deeply value education because I believe knowledge has the power to transform lives. I hold a Master's degree from Yale University, a Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and I'm currently pursuing an MBA at Fayetteville State University while working full-time as a professional musician. My

love for learning extends beyond music — I've been taking courses on platforms like Coursera for over 15 years and have earned certifications in areas such as paralegal studies, wedding planning, real estate, human resources, UX design, women's entrepreneurship, music technology, fundraising, and prompt engineering.

Teaching has been a significant part of my life for the past 21 years. I currently coach at the North Carolina Chamber Music Institute and Triangle Youth Music while also running a small private violin studio. I find immense joy in guiding students from their very first notes to a level where they win competitions. Teaching requires patience, but it's incredibly fulfilling—it feels like planting a seed, nurturing it, and watching it grow into a beautiful tree. Beyond violin technique, I focus on shaping my students into well-rounded individuals. I emphasize kindness, curiosity, and creativity, encouraging them to explore interests beyond music. My teaching style is flexible and student-centered — I don't impose my fingerings or bowings but provide multiple options, explain the reasoning behind each, and let my students decide. I believe critical thinking is essential, not just in music but in life. Music is the universal language of humanity, and I feel truly honored to be a violin teacher.

What advice would you give to violin students starting out in their career?

Never lose the passion, excitement, and faith that first drew you to music. The journey of a musician is filled with ups and downs, and because music is such a subjective art form, there will be times when you don't get the results you expected—whether in auditions or competitions. But don't let setbacks discourage you. Keep working hard, stay dedicated, and trust in your growth. If you persist, your moment to shine will come.

Is music at the centre of your life? Do you also have other interests?

Yes, music is central to my life, but I also have diverse interests. For instance, two years ago, I worked as a human resources intern at an IT company, where I gained hands-on experience posting job openings, hosting job fairs, interviewing candidates, and conducting reference calls. It was an eye-opening experience. From 2021 to 2024, I also worked as a realtor, helping many buyers find their dream homes at the best possible prices through negotiation. My work was recognized with the 2022 Fastest Growing Agent award from Homesnap and the 2024 Best Agent award from BestAgents.us. Beyond my professional pursuits, I have a passion for poetry (I'm an active member of Poetry.com), astronomy, chess, and sports-



especially basketball and golf. I believe that having a wide range of interests fuels my creativity as a musician, as the arts require imagination and knowledge to be fully appreciated.

Maintaining a career in music can be demanding. How do you prioritize self-care and well-being in your daily life?

Being a professional musician is incredibly demanding, both mentally and physically. The pressure to perform at a high level is intense, and as a perfectionist, I sometimes even find myself "apologizing" to composers in my mind when I make mistakes during a performance — ha! That being said, I always strive to be fully focused and prepared for every concert. Physically, the strain can take a toll, especially on my neck and shoulders after a particularly intense week of playing. When needed, I seek professional therapy or massage treatments to relieve tension. I'm also continuously exploring better ways to manage stress. One of my favorite ways to unwind is to take a break from music and engage in other activities. Walking on nature trails has been especially beneficial—it clears my mind and rejuvenates both my body and spirit. Lastly, sleep is non-negotiable. I believe that getting a good night's rest is crucial, not just for musicians but for everyone. No matter how stressful a day may be, I remind myself that tomorrow is a new day, full of fresh possibilities.

What are your dreams, what would you like to achieve?

I must admit— I am an ambitious person! But as I've grown older, I've come to see ambition as a positive trait. It pushes me to learn more, practice harder, and aim higher. However, I also remind myself that my ambitions must align with my abilities, which is why I strive to improve every day. I am deeply grateful for the gifts I've been given, and I believe it is my responsibility to use them to contribute to the world. Whether I am performing as a professional violinist, teaching, working in HR, assisting clients as a realtor, or developing AI apps, my ultimate goal is to use my skills to help others. Rather than focusing on one big singular dream, I see my life as a series of small yet meaningful dreams—each one driven by my passion for learning, my desire to make a difference, and my commitment to staying kind and humble.

"Teaching ... feels like planting a seed, nurturing it, and watching it grow into a beautiful tree.



Derek Lee



You are already an experienced pianist at a young age. Tell us about your musical path.

I started taking piano lessons when I was five years old at the Mannes School of Music's pre-college program in New York under the tutelage of my wonderful teacher, Donna Weng Friedman. At Mannes Prep, I was fortunate to take additional classes such as chamber music, theory with Ionel Petroi, and composition with Dr. Steven Sacco. Over many years of studying with Donna, collaborating with another excellent pianist, Vladimir Rumyantsev, and playing in various master classes and summer programs, my technical and interpretive skills have grown, which has expanded my knowledge of music. Also, I have been very lucky because my mother loves to attend concerts and has taken me with her from time to time. Therefore, I have observed and been inspired by many great piano performances since I was a little boy. Moving forward, I am excited to continue to develop my pianistic capabilities and explore more exciting and beautiful repertoire.

What was your most important musical experience?

My most important musical experience was listening to Chopin's Ballades for the first time. I loved Chopin's exquisite harmonies and the way he balanced virtuosity with melodic lines so perfectly. Previously, I listened to mostly Classical and Baroque works like the Beethoven Concertos and Mozart Sonatas, which I adored and still do. However, listening to the Ballades introduced me to the vast world of Romantic music. After listening to the Ballades, I was hooked and eagerly jumped into other Chopin works as well as those of Mendelssohn, Schumann, Liszt, and Brahms. Because of Chopin's Ballades, I completely fell in love with Romantic music, the genre which I favor the most to this day.

What is a typical day like for you? How do you manage to balance school and practice?

Typically, my academic responsibilities take up an enormous part of my day, so I try to practice whenever I can outside of studying, doing homework, reading, and writing papers. I try to practice during free periods at school and in the evenings after I finish my schoolwork. Although balancing academics with piano practice can be quite challenging for me, it is totally manageable. It just takes discipline and organization.

Would you recommend other young pianists to participate in the Colors of Chopin Piano Competition?

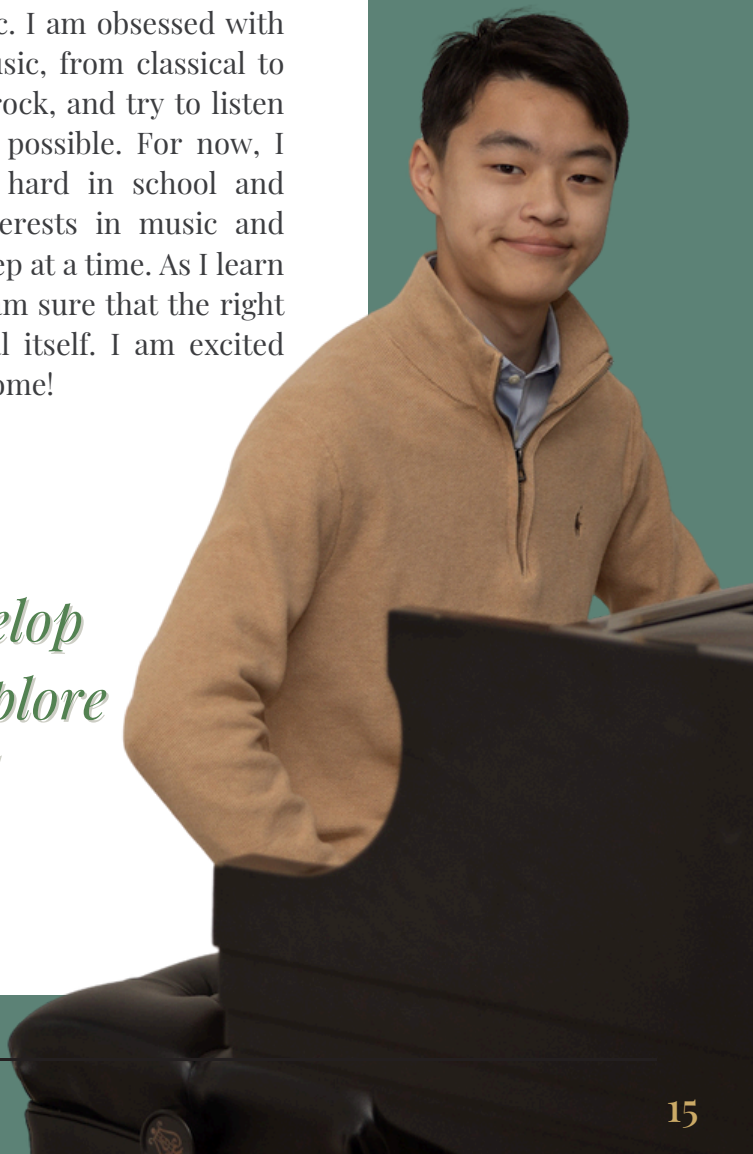
I would absolutely recommend other young pianists to participate in the Colors of Chopin Piano Competition because it provides opportunities to perform a wide range of musical styles, not only the music of Chopin. In other competitions, the repertoire can be strictly limiting, forcing pianists to narrow their musical vocabulary and taste. However, the Colors of Chopin Piano Competition encourages young pianists to widen their musical knowledge by learning a range of pieces and styles.

Outside of music, what activities and hobbies do you enjoy?

I really love to exercise, so I am on the Varsity Squash team at my high school. Playing squash gives me an opportunity to exercise and run around, which is a vastly different way of moving my body from practicing at the piano. It also requires quick, full-body movement, strategic thinking, and endurance. Squash is such an enjoyable sport and ensures that I stay fit. Additionally, I love speed cubing, or solving Rubik's cubes as quickly as possible. It's an extremely fun activity that is challenging and keeps my brain in shape. I enjoy these two hobbies that keep my body and mind healthy and active.

What are your plans for the future?

To be honest, I haven't decided yet exactly what I would like to do in the future. There is so much in life that I find fascinating. That said, I know that music will play a major role in some way. Of course, I plan to continue piano and composition studies because I love it. Regardless of what direction my life takes, I will always practice and play piano in some capacity. In addition, I will keep listening to classical and other genres of music. I am obsessed with all kinds of music, from classical to pop to jazz to rock, and try to listen to as much as possible. For now, I want to work hard in school and pursue my interests in music and beyond. One step at a time. As I learn more in life, I am sure that the right path will reveal itself. I am excited for what is to come!



"I am excited to continue to develop my pianistic capabilities and explore more exciting and beautiful repertoire.

Alice Li



How did it happen that you started playing the violin?

My art journey started at the age of three. I took dance, piano, singing, gymnastics, and drawing classes. I also tried modelling and acting, and was cast in several movies and TV series.

Then one day, my mom and I went to a Ryu Goto violin concert. It was so beautiful that I could feel the music flowing through my mind. After the show, I decided to learn violin. At first, I only played it for 10-15 minutes a day. I improved fast! When I was seven, my brother and I won the first prize of the prestigious Hummingbird Music national competition as a duo (he played piano while I played violin). I realized then that I wanted to take violin more seriously.

What is your typical day like? How do you manage to balance school and practice?

I usually wake up at 7:30AM, and start practicing my violin at 8:00am. I skip some morning classes (music/art/PE, Chinese and recess) and go to school at 10:00am. I play for two hours in the morning, and three hours in the afternoon. I often stay up late at night to finish my school homework.

"It was so beautiful that I could feel the music flowing through my mind.

What is your favourite composition to play? In which repertoire do you feel most comfortable?

My favourite composition is Bach: Violin Concerto No.1 in A minor. I like this composition the best, because that it is a little sad but rational, and the rhythm is light and brisk.

My most comfortable repertoire is Mozart: Violin Concerto No.1 in B-Flat Major. I spent a lot of hours practicing this one, and remember all the details in the techniques.

How do you celebrate your musical achievements?

I ask my mom to buy me a JellyCat toy when I get an achievement. I put JellyCat toys on my bed, and now I have many of them.

What are your biggest dreams for the future?

I wan to become a violinist when I grow up.

What are your hobbies? In your spare time, what do you like to do?

In my spare time, I listen to K-pop, paint, and go to Jazz dance practice with my friends.



Antonina Maria Waliszewska



Among other competitions, you won the title of Chopinist of the Season in the Colors of Chopin competition. Tell us what particularly captivates you about Chopin's music, why is it close to you?

I love Chopin's music, because it is so abundant in emotions and all human feelings. His music is a combination of woe, distress, grief, loneliness as well as happiness, amusement and pure joy. It's so transcendent and timeless, yet so elusive. Also, I am Polish, just like Chopin, and in Poland everyone thinks Chopin as our national pride and treasure. I think that you can really feel in his pieces, for example in the Polonaise in A flat major op.53, the real polish spirit. Each time I listen to his music the love to my homeland grows even stronger.

What is your favourite piece and why?

I think that for the time being my favourite piece is his Concerto no 1 in E minor. I cannot describe and define the way I feel when I listen to this concerto. Everytime I need solace, I just turn it on and everything fades away. It's just me and the beautiful melody of this concerto. The first movement is very emotional. At times it's slightly uneasy, and at times it is so soft, fragile, so delicate. The second movement brings us peace, calmness, hope. The third one is so playful, humorous, you just cannot stop smiling. My biggest dream is to play this brilliant piece one day with an orchestra.

Which Chopin works are you currently working on, and which ones do you wish to do in the future?

Currently, I am working on the few of his Waltzes, for example op.34 no 1, Ballade in F major op.38, Etudes, for example op.10 no 5 and Scherzo in B minor op.20. I am looking forward to playing some of his most popular and well-established pieces such as Andante Spianato and Grande Polonaise Brillante in E flat major op. 22, Polonaise op.53 and of course his Concertos. Hopefully, I will play them some day and I am anticipating this moment very much.

What are the benefits that playing the piano gives you in "normal life"?

I think that playing any instrument gives you a whole host of benefits. Of course first you have to toil for some time, but then those advantages are unmistakeable. Except those obvious benefits, such as the fact, that you can actually understand and make music yourself, there are other things you learn from piano, that are useful on a daily basis. For example I feel like my memory is improving because of all those notes you have to remember. It helps me retain all sorts of information and remember new things easily. Also I see, that thanks to my trained ears, I absorb languages very fast, pick up new words, and thanks to that, I love learning languages. Playing the piano also teaches me to manage my time more effectively, because my time resources are confined and I need to fix my schedule perfectly to do everything that has to be done for school plus my practice sessions.

What stage experience was the most meaningful for you, what did you feel?

I think that every stage experience is meaningful for me, because it enables me to grow as a pianist and as a human. I remember most of my stage experiences very distinctively and right now to my mind comes the recital I gave a year ago or so. I played mainly Chopin pieces, but also Beethoven, Liszt and Paderewski. In the middle of the recital there was a break during which I gave an interview on the stage, it was more like a conversation with the anchor. The whole concert and interview was broadcasted in a radio. It was the first time when I gave a whole about 50 minutes concert, and I was the only pianist performing that evening. When I saw all those people who came there because they really wanted to listen to my playing, my heart just melted and I felt over the moon. I will never forget that concert.



"I love Chopin's music, because it is so abundant in emotions and all human feelings.



What are your dreams, what would you like to achieve?

Like I said before, my piano dream is to play Chopin's Concerto no 1. When I grow up, I want to travel the world and share my music with other people, give concerts and stand on those splendid stages. Also, like probably most of the pianists, I would like to take part in the International Chopin's Competition in Warsaw. I think that knowing languages might facilitate me all these piano dreams, so in the future I want to be able to communicate in at least 4, 5 languages. Those are my dreams that definitely need some specific actions to become reality. I will work hard to get where I want to be. And my last dream is very apparent, I just want to be happy and feel fulfillment both in my professional and private life.

What does your day look like? How much do you practise and how do you combine this with your school duties?

My schedule vary depending on the day of the week, but during the school week I usually wake up at 6 AM and practise before the school starts. From 8 AM to around 3 PM I have lessons at school. I try to do my homework on the school breaks, in order to have more time at home, mostly to practise. Usually I have piano or music theory classes at music school in the evening. When I come back home I practice or I learn languages. All things considered, I manage to play the piano at least 4 hours a day, and during weekends it reaches 6 hours

What do you like to do outside of music? Do you have hobbies or exciting interests?

I have a lot of interests besides music, from completely different areas. First of all, I am fond of learning languages. For instance, I am currently learning English, German and Italian. Also I am interested in science, mainly biology and chemistry. To be honest, I love learning. The world is so unfathomable and I love to explore its every corner.

"The world is so unfathomable and I love to explore its every corner.

David Wong



Congratulations on the gold prize at the Global Young Musicians competition. What are your impressions of participating in this competition?

Participating in the Gold Young Musicians Competition was an incredibly rewarding experience. It presented an opportunity to challenge myself, refine my artistry, and showcase my love for music. Winning the Gold Prize in this competition is an honor, but beyond the award, I truly appreciate the journey of preparing for this competition and the inspiration it has given me to keep pushing my musical boundaries.

Why did you specifically choose the Haydn concerto? Is music from this period close to you in any way?

I chose the first movement of the Haydn Oboe Concerto because it highlighted both technical skill and elegant phrasing. My teacher recommended it as a piece that would challenge me to develop my articulation, dynamic control, and Classical-era style playing. I was particularly drawn to its lively character, expressive melodic lines, and playful ornamentation with its numerous trills and mix of note lengths.

What other styles and composers do you particularly enjoy playing?

I like playing classical pieces like Tchaikovsky and Mahler since I feel like their pieces are so different depending on which movement you play: the first movement is faster and light-paced, and the second is slow and contemplative. But I also enjoy playing more modern pieces on both the oboe and the piano! Evan Call has some fantastic music that he composes for shows, specifically his work with Violet Evergarden, with oboe solos that are beautiful and flowing (and also melancholy when required). Arranged pop music for the piano is also fun to play, and I especially like J-pop since there are so many key changes and unique sounds that sound producers use to make songs.

What was your path of development as a musician? Why did you choose the oboe? What do you like about the instrument and why?

My parents encouraged my sister and me to explore all our interests, including both sports and music. My older sister is a pianist and cellist, so I grew up surrounded by classical music and attended many concerts from a young age. I started learning piano when I was five, and even though my parents didn't have a background in music, they always wholeheartedly supported both my musical journey. They genuinely enjoyed listening to me play and showed how proud they were. I think that their encouragement became my motivation to enjoy learning music and to never give up.

I chose the oboe after my middle school band class had an instrument exhibit where all the new students would walk around and try out different instruments. One of my friends was already playing the oboe, and I decided to give it a try because I thought it was super unique with its instrument design and the sound of it (after listening to a couple of recordings). I think the oboe is different from all of the other instruments in its tone and sound quality, and that's what I love about it. My middle school band director, Mr. Perkins, was also really attentive and I learned a ton from him; during COVID, I ended up learning with a private teacher, Ms. Kathy Oh, and got to experience playing in a full orchestra when I was a freshman in high school which made me fall in love with ensemble performances.

What are you currently working on?

Blues for D.D. by Jeffrey Agrell. This piece is a lively and jazzy work for solo oboe and piano, characterized by syncopated rhythms, blue notes, and an improvisatory feel. It blends classical technique with jazz influences, offering me an opportunity to explore a more jazzy-style of oboe playing compared to the traditional classical sounds of an oboist. It's made me far more interested in exploring





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a jazz - influenced oboe repertoire.

The second movement of Mozart's Oboe Quartet in F Major, K. 370 is a beautifully expressive Adagio highlighting the oboe's lyrical and vocal qualities. I chose this movement for its elegance, emotional depth, and the way it allows me to showcase phrasing and musical sensitivity. I think it also sounds much more impressive intonation compared to some other slower repertoire.

What are your plans for the future? Dreams?

My plan for the future is to attend a college with a reputable orchestra or band program so I can continue playing the oboe in college. I'd also like to combine my passion for music with my love of literature and writing into a club that combines literary and music performances, such as a read-a-long at a local library or spoken-word performances with a music backdrop, to give back to the community in what I'm passionate about. In addition, spearheading or supporting an initiative that allows young children to have the opportunity to learn and play instruments would be another plan for me in the future. Ultimately, my dream is to become a doctor, but I aim to excel not just in the STEM fields but also embrace the arts and humanities to leave a positive impact on the world.

Tell us what you like to do in your free time, other than music?

In my free time, I enjoy a variety of activities that keep me both active and inspired. I love playing pickleball because it's a social sport and relatively easy to pick up, which allowed me to pick it up easily to play with my dad on weekends at the local courts. Beyond sports, I indulge in reading and writing, especially creative non-fiction, often while listening to instrumental music playing from my headphones. I also nurture a small garden of herbs in my backyard as an afterschool pastime, and I always love being able to smell my mom brew tea using mint that I've grown wafting from the kitchen to my bedroom. Additionally, I enjoy walking my dog Oreo since it helps me calm my mind by taking a couple of steps outside along with a friend.

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Magazine design: Julia Salaga

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