



Guest Artists

Nancy Zhou, Violinist

Lauded as one of today's probing musical voices infused with searing virtuosity, Nancy Zhou is rapidly building an international profile after winning the 2018 Shanghai Isaac Stern Violin Competition. She made her orchestral debut at the age of 13 with her hometown orchestra, the San Antonio Symphony, and went on to collaborate with the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra, St. Petersburg Philharmonic, and symphonies of Munich, Shanghai, Kansas City, San Diego, and Padua, among others. Upcoming engagements include performances with the China Philharmonic, Hangzhou Philharmonic, Sichuan Symphony, National Taiwan Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra of Perugia, Naples Philharmonic, and the IRIS Orchestra.

In addition to her work as a soloist, Nancy holds interest in chamber music and in guiding young musicians. As a collaborator, she has performed at the Verbier Festival, Ravinia Festival, Tongyeong Music Festival, Festspiele Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Festival de Coimbra, and the Marvão Festival, with upcoming performances at the Paganini Genova Festival. In 2017, she was invited by the Encore Chamber Music Festival to serve as guest artist and faculty member. She is a regular guest educator in Taiwan, holding masterclasses at various institutions and conducting private classes. Since the spring of 2020, Nancy devotes time to a private online studio, teaching a number of students across the globe.

Born in San Antonio to Chinese immigrant parents, Nancy began the violin under the guidance of her father. She went on to study with Miriam Fried at the New England Conservatory while pursuing her interest in literature at Harvard University. An Associated Artist of the Queen Elisabeth Chapel, where she studied with Augustin Dumay, she also has been generously supported by the Anne-Sophie Mutter Foundation.

Randall Goosby, Violinist

Signed exclusively to Decca Classics in 2020 at the age of 24, American violinist Randall Goosby is acclaimed for the sensitivity and intensity of his musicianship, his determination to make

music more inclusive and accessible, and bringing the music of under-represented composers to light.

Goosby has performed with orchestras across the United States including the New York Philharmonic, Cleveland Orchestra, Baltimore Symphony, Detroit Symphony, Nashville Symphony and the London Philharmonic Orchestra and Philharmonia Orchestra. Recital appearances have included the Kennedy Center, Kravis Center, London's Wigmore Hall, New York's 92nd Street Y, San Francisco Symphony's Davies Symphony Hall and Boston's Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum.

June 2021 marked the release of Goosby's debut album for Decca entitled "Roots," a celebration of African-American music which explores its evolution. Collaborating with pianist Zhu Wang, Goosby has curated an album paying homage to the pioneering artists who paved the way for him and other artists of color. It features three world-premiere recordings of music written by African-American composer Florence Price, and includes works by composers William Grant Still and Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson plus a newly commissioned piece by acclaimed double bassist Xavier Foley.

Goosby took first prize in the 2018 Young Concert Artists International Auditions. In 2019, he was named the inaugural Robey Artist by Young Classical Artists Trust in partnership with Music Masters in London; and in 2020 he became an Ambassador for Music Masters, a role that sees him mentoring and inspiring students in schools around the United Kingdom.

Goosby made his debut with the Jacksonville Symphony at age nine. At age 13, he performed with the New York Philharmonic on a Young People's Concert at Lincoln Center's Avery Fisher Hall and became the youngest recipient ever to win the Sphinx Concerto Competition. He was chosen to receive Sphinx's Isaac Stern Award a career advancement grant from the Bagby Foundation. A graduate of the Juilliard School, he continues his studies there, pursuing an Artist Diploma under Itzhak Perlman and Catherine Cho. An active chamber musician, he has spent his summers studying at the Perlman Music Program, Verbier Festival Academy and Mozarteum Summer Academy among others.

Goosby plays a 1735 Giuseppe Guarneri del Gesù on generous loan from the Stradivari Society.

Timothy Jones, Bass Baritone

Bass Baritone Timothy Jones, an enthusiastic champion of contemporary works and composers, is equally at home on the opera and concert stage as he is in the more intimate settings of chamber music and solo recital. His theatricality was recently praised as he "relished the dramatic possibilities of the songs' text and music as much with facial expressions and body language as with vocal inflections."

Performance highlights include engagements with the Cleveland Orchestra, Utah Symphony, Houston Symphony, Dallas Symphony, Alabama Symphony, Detroit Symphony, Baltimore Symphony, Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra, and the Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble, as well as leading roles with the Connecticut Opera, Mobile Opera, Opera Birmingham, and Opera Pacific.

Thomas Mesa, Cellist

Thomas Mesa, Cuban-American cellist, has established himself as one of the most charismatic, innovative, and engaging performers of his generation. He is the recipient of the 2023 Sphinx Medal of Excellence Award, First Prize in the 2016 Sphinx Competition, and Winner of the Astral Artists 2017 National Auditions. He has appeared as soloist with major orchestras such as The Philadelphia Orchestra, The Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl, The Cleveland Orchestra, Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, New Jersey Symphony Orchestra.

Highlights in the 2022/2023 and 2023/2024 seasons will include premiering and touring Jessie Montgomery's "Divided for solo cello and orchestra," approximately 30 recitals, a residency at Colburn Conservatory, curating and performing chamber music programs with the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, and duo recording projects with Olga Kern, JP Jofre, and Michelle Cann. Next season's venues will include Carnegie Hall, Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, The Supreme Court of the United States, Colburn School of Music, Kohler Foundation and numerous others.

He serves as the cello professor of The Conservatory of Music at SUNY Purchase College located in Purchase, New York.

Mesa's solo album, "Division of Memory" on the PARMA Recordings label, received rave reviews. Other projects to be released on the same label include a duo album with Michelle Cann featuring composers who are Black and Latinx, a duo album with bandoneonist JP Jofre, and a duo album with Olga Kern. Thomas was featured on the GRAMMY-nominated album, "Bonhoeffer," with multiple-GRAMMY winning group The Crossing Choir. He has appeared with them as soloist at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Longwood Gardens, and The Winter Garden.

William Wolfram, Piano

Tall and powerfully built, pianist William Wolfram has a technique to match. While he is able to summon torrents of sound for the grandest moments in the Romantic literature, he is also able to produce the subtlest gradations in volume and inform soft passages with the most persuasive, lambent tone. Wolfram has won ringing reviews for his live performances and the re-release of his superb collaboration with violinist Frank Almond on the Brahms' violin sonatas has been extravagantly praised.

After completing his studies at the Juilliard School, Wolfram attracted attention with his silver medal performances at both the William Kapell and Naumburg competitions. He debuted with the Pittsburgh Symphony led by Leonard Slatkin, and he has appeared as soloist with orchestras in Dallas, Florida, Fort Worth, Indianapolis, Milwaukee, Minnesota, Omaha, San Diego, San Francisco, Syracuse, and in Washington, D.C. with the National Symphony. Beyond North America, Wolfram has appeared with the Budapest Philharmonic, the Krakow Symphony, the Moscow Philharmonic, the Wroclaw Philharmonic and the symphonies of Capetown and Johannesburg, the National Symphony of Peru, and Thailand's Bangkok Philharmonic. In recital, he has performed in numerous halls in France, Holland, Spain, Italy, Switzerland, Canada, and the Philippines.

In addition to the stage, Wolfram has recorded the first and third piano concertos of American composer Edward J. Collins with conductor Marin Alsop and the Royal Scottish National Orchestra. The Brahms sonatas he recorded with violinist Frank Almond have been praised on re-release as the finest yet recorded.

Vanessa Becerra, Soprano

Peruvian and Mexican-American soprano Vanessa Becerra is a recent graduate of LA Opera's prestigious Young Artist Program where she was praised for her "bold and bright" singing (Opera News), "full, beautifully focused" instrument (Wall Street Journal), and "charismatic and eloquent" presence (San Francisco Chronicle).

In the 2022-23 season Vanessa debuts the roles of Marie in *La fille du régiment* (Minnesota Opera), Susanna in *Le nozze di Figaro* (Opera Omaha), and Juliette in *Roméo et Juliette* (Boston Lyric Opera) with additional debuts yet to be announced. She revisits the roles of Rosina in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (Amarillo Opera), Mujer in *El Milagro del Recuerdo* (Houston Grand Opera) and last summer joined Madison Opera and Madison Symphony Orchestra for their annual *Opera in the Park* celebration.

Despite her young age, Becerra has performed breakthrough opera roles at the Washington National, Austin Opera, Opéra Parallèle as Belle, Intermountain Opera Bozeman, the Metropolitan Opera, and Arizona Opera, the Houston Grand Opera, the Liepāja Symphony Orchestra in Latvia, and the Glimmerglass Festival. In the 2019-20 season she made her Kennedy Center debut with Washington National Opera as Zerlina in *Don Giovanni*.

In concert Becerra has performed with Minnesota Opera and the Virginia Symphony as the soprano soloist in Handel's *Messiah*. Other solo performances have been with Fort Worth Opera, Aural Compass Projects, and premieres of two song cycles by Mexican composer Jorge Sosa at Opera America in New York. During COVID-19, Vanessa had the great fortune of joining Opera San Jose as a Resident Artist.

Becerra's professional debut came in 2014 with Fort Worth Opera in the world premiere of *With Blood, With Ink*. Shortly after, Becerra received a master's degree from The Boston Conservatory, which invited her to perform in its 150th Anniversary Gala at Boston's renowned Symphony Hall. Fort Worth is Becerra's hometown.

Elena Durán, Flute

Elena Durán is one of the most charismatic flute players on the international concert platform today. She was born and raised in East Oakland, California to parents who were both born in Aguascalientes, Mexico. She received her early musical education in the Oakland Schools system and after high school studied at Mills College. At the age of only 20 she was appointed Lecturer in Flute at Stanford University.

After two years she resigned her post at Stanford to resume her studies in Europe with Jean Pierre Rampal, Alain Marion, Aurèle Nicolet and James Galway. She then moved to England where she developed a concert career that has taken her all over Europe, the Far East, Australasia, and the Americas.

Durán has performed and recorded with major orchestras in the United Kingdom, the United States, Europe and virtually every orchestra in Mexico. She has played regularly for members of the British Royal Family including two Royal Galas with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra in London's Royal Albert Hall in front of Her Majesty the Queen. She has also appeared frequently on television and radio in many countries and has had her own radio programs in both Mexico and the United Kingdom. She was also the founder and for 20 years the artistic director of the Stratford-on-Avon International Flute Festival.

Elena has devoted herself to the cause of Mexican music and has found enormous success with her shows "Mexico de mi Corazón" and "Amorcito Corazón," and is about to premier her new show "Ella y El Rey," devoted to the music of José Alfredo Jiménez.

Jon Kimura Parker, Pianist

Pianist Jon Kimura Parker is known for his charisma, enthusiasm, and dynamic performances. A veteran of the international concert stage, he has performed regularly in the Berlin Philharmonie, Carnegie Hall, London's South Bank, the Sydney Opera House, and the Beijing Concert Hall. He is the Creative Partner of the Minnesota Orchestra, having hosted and given seven concerto performances with them in July 2021 with Osmo Vänskä, Karina Canellakis, and Ken-David Masur. He is Artistic Director of the Honens International Piano Competition and Artistic Advisor for the Orcas Island Chamber Music Festival.

A collaborator in a wide variety of styles, Kimura Parker has performed with Doc Severinsen, Audra McDonald, Bobby McFerrin, Pablo Ziegler, and Sanjaya Malakar. As a founding member

of Off the Score with Police drummer Stewart Copeland, he also performed with Copeland for the Orcas Island Chamber Music Festival's 20th Anniversary Season, featuring his own arrangements of music by Prokofiev, Ravel and Stravinsky. He has accompanied Frederica von Stade, Susan Graham, and Luca Pisaroni in recital.

A committed educator, Mr. Parker is Professor of Piano at the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University. His students have won prizes in major competitions internationally, and given concerto performances in the US, Europe, Russia and China. He has also lectured at The Juilliard School, and given master classes at Yale. This season he also chaired the jury of the Hilton Head International Piano Competition.

Parker's discography of a dozen albums features music ranging from Mozart and Chopin to Barber, Stravinsky and John Adams. His most recent recording, "Fantasy," built around Hirtz's *Wizard of Oz* Fantasy, was described by Musical Toronto as giving "a big, clear picture window of a rich soul and great artistic depth." His YouTube channel features a series of "Concerto Chat" videos which explore the piano concerto repertoire. His "Whole Note" series, featuring performances of great composers, is available on Amazon Prime Video. He is now recording master class videos for Tonebase. These focus on major works of the piano concerto repertoire.