

Shining Stars of Tomorrow

FEATURING

GRAND PRIX WINNERS from the 2024 RUSSIAN MUSIC COMPETITION

Saturday, April 26, 2025, 7:00 pm

MIPC, 3605 84th Ave SE, Mercer Island, WA 98040

PROGRAM:

Caroline Zhang (Teacher: Maria Maltseva)
Chopin: Nocturne in D flat Major, op. 27, no. 2

Annabelle Wang (Teacher: Tatiana Lanford)
Waltz in Ab Major Op.69, No. 1

Ian Shu Ai (Teacher: Yang Lu), Accompanist: Irene Chen
Ayvazyan: Georgian Dance

Chloe Nari Wang (Teacher: Adam Aleksander)
Chopin: Prelude Op.28 No.21 in B-flat major
Prokofiev: Prelude Op.12 No.7 in C major

Eric Chan, Cello (Teacher: Olga Ruvinov)
Cassado: Suite for violoncello III. Intermezzo e danza finale

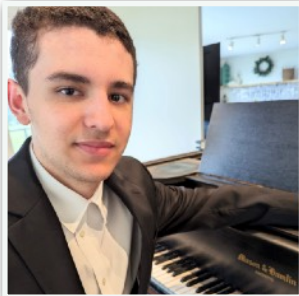
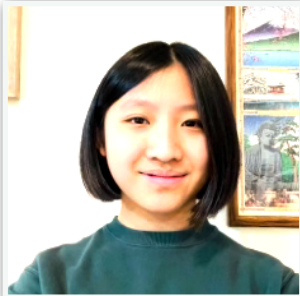
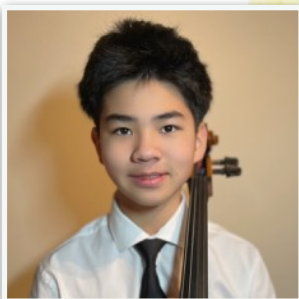
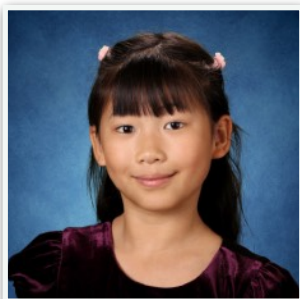
Alexander Vollmer (Teacher: SH Youn)
Rameau: Le Rappel des oiseaux
Ravel: Alborada del gracioso

Ashley Zong (Teacher: Alexandra Tsirkel)
Shchedrin/Pletnev: Two Concert Pieces from Anna Karenina

Alec Rodriguez (Teacher: Irene Bowling)
Scriabin: Sonata No. 9 Op. 68

RCMFS LAUREATE: Paloma Oh (Teacher: Eliza Vysotsky)
Chopin: Ballade no. 1 in G minor

RCMFS LAUREATE: Minjae Kim (Teacher: SH Youn)
Liszt: Mazeppa



Caroline Zhang

Caroline Zhang is a fourth grader in the gifted program at Somerset Elementary. She has been studying piano with Maria Maltseva for almost three years. During this short stretch of time, she has earned many top prizes from local, regional & international piano competitions, including Chopin Northwest (silver), Enkor (second prize), International French Music Competition (gold), Pacific Northwest Piano Competition (gold), Pacific International Piano Competition (gold & most memorable award), EMTA Scholarship Competition (third place), and various SIFP events (four gold medals for Virtuoso Artists, Bach and Classical). Her most recent achievement is the Grand Prix award from the Russian Chamber Music Festival, 2024. Caroline is a self-motivated, musical and determined young pianist, who also enjoys ballet, Chinese dance, reading, writing and various outdoor activities.

Annabelle Wang

Annabelle Wang is a 9-year-old 4th grader with a deep passion for music, particularly the piano. She began playing piano at a young age and has demonstrated exceptional talent and dedication. Under the mentorship of Mrs. Tatiana Lanford, Annabelle has achieved remarkable success in various piano competitions and festivals. She has won multiple gold medals in prestigious events, including the SIFP Bach Festival, Russian Chamber Music Competition, Pacific NW Piano Competition, Chopin NW Festival (for two consecutive years), and the German Festival. Her expressive performances and technical precision have earned her high praise from judges and audiences alike. Beyond music, Annabelle is also an enthusiastic figure skater. She has been skating since she was seven years old and, after recovering from an injury, returned to the ice with great determination. She continues to train diligently, refining her skills and pushing herself to new heights. Annabelle is also an avid reader, with a love for literature that fuels her creativity and critical thinking. She enjoys immersing herself in books and exploring new ideas, which also strengthens her skills as a writer. With her dedication to both the arts and academics, Annabelle continues to grow as a well-rounded and accomplished young individual.

Chloe Nari Wang

Chloe Nari Wang is a 10-year-old aspiring pianist from Bellevue, WA, studying under the esteemed Dr. Adam Aleksander. Having begun her piano journey at the age of five, Chloe has quickly risen to prominence through her dedication and remarkable talent, earning top honors in both local and international piano competitions. She has been a gold medalist at the Chopin NW Competition from 2022 to 2025, the Russian Chamber Music Foundation Competition from 2022 to 2024, the Virtuoso Artist Festival from 2021 to 2023, and the Pacific Northwest Piano Competition from 2023 to 2024. In 2022, she won First Prize and a Special Diploma at the Charleston International Piano Competition. That same year, she secured Second Prize at the Chopin Avenue International Piano Competition, earning an invitation to perform in Warsaw, Poland. In 2023, she won First Prize at both the Golden Classical Music Awards and the Great Piano Master Competition. Most recently, in 2024, she placed Second in the Vienna International Classical Piano Competition. A highlight of Chloe's performance career includes her debut at Carnegie's Weill Hall as a First Place Winner in the American Protégé International Piano & Strings Competition in 2023. Beyond music, Chloe is a well-rounded young talent with a love for animals. She enjoys skiing, golfing, reading, and traveling, embracing new experiences both on and off the stage.

Ian Shu Ai

Ian Ai is a 5th grader at The Overlake School. He began his musical journey at the age of six by learning to play the piano. However, he discovered his passion for the cello at the age of seven, and is now studying with Dr. Yang Lu. Not only does Ian love playing the cello, but he also enjoys sharing his musical gift with others. As the eldest child in the family, he enjoys playing music with his siblings, also frequently plays for his schoolmates and friends, bringing joy to their lives through his music. In addition to music, Ian is also an active sports enthusiast, enjoying Tennis and skiing in his free time.

Eric Chan

Eric Chan is a 13 year old who resides in Bellevue, Washington. He began playing cello at the age of four and is currently a student of Olga Ruvinov. A frequent participant in competitions, Eric is a first prize winner at both the American Protégé international concerto competition and Charleston International Music Competition. He has also won multiple 1st and 2nd prizes in the Performing Arts Festival of the Eastside and is a 2nd prize winner of the Opus Music Competition, advancing to the national level. In addition to his solo work, Eric is an avid orchestral musician, playing with SYSO from 2021, currently at the Junior level, is a member of both his school advanced and chamber orchestras, and was chosen for the All-State Middle School Orchestra. In his free time, Eric enjoys playing golf, reading, and listening to music.

Alexander Vollmer

Alexander Vollmer, a ninth-grade student at Lakeside School, began his piano studies at the age of nine. His exceptional talent and dedication have earned him top prizes in numerous prestigious competitions. His accolades include First Prize in the 2022 American Virtuoso International Music Competition, Absolute First Prize and the Overall

Poetic Interpretation Special Prize in the 2023 UK International Music Competition, Gold Medal in the 2024 Chopin Northwest Piano Competition, Bronze Medal in the 2024 Piano Star International Competition, two Grand Prix awards (solo and concerto) in the 2024 RCMFS Competition, Double Platinum Medals at the 2024 Pacific Northwest Piano Competition, Third Place in the 2024 Elevato International Youth Piano Competition, and two Distinguished Gold Medals in the SIFP Classical Viennese Festival (2022 & 2023), among many others. Most recently, Alexander performed with Bellevue Symphony after winning the RCMFS Concerto Competition Grand Prix, won the Utah Philharmonic Orchestra Concerto Competition in Salt Lake City and was awarded the Grand Prix Gold Medal at the 2025 Chopin Northwest Piano Competition. He is the 2024 MTNA Washington State Senior Piano Duet Winner and a two-time WSMTA State Recitalist Winner. In addition to his solo achievements, he has collaborated with esteemed ensembles such as the Eastside Symphony, TMC Orchestra, and Mukilteo Community Orchestra. He has performed at renowned venues, including Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall and Beethoven-Haus in Germany. In 2023, Alexander was accepted into the highly selective Seattle Piano Institute. Since 2021, he has been studying under the guidance of SH Youn.

Ashley Zong

Ashley enjoys running, playing ultimate frisbee, studying biology, and volunteering. She started studying piano at age five with her current teacher, Alexandra Tsirkel. At age 10, she was awarded gold medals at the 2019 Russian Chamber Music Competition and the 2020 Chopin NW Piano Competition. Ashley participated in the Seattle Piano Institute (SPI) that summer and again this year. She especially enjoyed the immersive masterclasses given by UW faculty members. In 2023, Ashley was invited to Japan for the Crescendo International Student Exchange Program after winning first prize. The many recital opportunities and exposure to Japanese music history made the trip one of her most memorable musical experiences. In June of 2024, Ashley performed at the winners' recital of the WSMTA Outstanding Artists Piano Competition. She was also a spotlight performer at the 2024 Vancouver Piano Sessions, in Vancouver, Canada. Ashley is a current sophomore at the Lakeside School in Shoreline.

Alec Rodriguez

Alec Rodriguez is an 11th grade student from North Kitsap High School. Playing piano since the age of five, Alec has always been inspired by classical music and loves collaborating and performing for an audience. He has participated in various events across Washington State and earned repeated recognition and awards from the Kitsap and Washington State Music Teachers Associations, the Ellensburg Sonatina Festival, Bremerton Westsound Symphony's Young Artists Competition, and the Russian Chamber Music Foundation of Seattle's Russian Music Competition. Recently, he has been accepted to Interlochen Center for the Arts' High School Summer Piano Program and Summer Performing Arts with Juilliard. He has also participated in masterclasses with Dr. Leonard Richter, Dr. Craig Sheppard, and Professor Mikhail Voskresensky, and is looking forward to his invitation to a private lesson with the world-class pianist Garrick Ohlsson this spring. Since 2019, he has studied under Dr. Irene Bowling and is very grateful for her invaluable guidance and support.

Paloma Oh (class of 2025)

Paloma is a senior at Garfield High School and has been playing the piano for 13 years. Her favorite composers are Rachmaninoff and Chopin and she also plays the harp. In her free time, Paloma enjoys cooking, making art, playing games, and spending time with friends and family. She hopes to continue studying music in college as well as study to become a neurosurgeon. Paloma has garnered RCMFS Gold and Silver medals every year, since 2020.

Minjae Kim (class of 2025)

Minjae Kim, an 18-year-old senior at North Creek High School, is an accomplished pianist recognized for his outstanding achievements in national and international competitions. Along with his brother, he was a 2023 Regional MTNA winner. In 2024, Minjae won First Place at the prestigious Chicago International Piano Competition. His accolades include multiple Gold Medals from renowned competitions such as the Chopin Northwest Competition, the Russian Chamber Music Competition, and the Virtuoso Competition (Distinguished Gold Medalist). He has also secured First Place titles at the Carles & Sofia International Piano Competition, the Canadian International Music Competition, the Pacific International Piano Competition, and the KMA Competition. Additionally, he is a two-time Finalist for the Seattle Symphony Competition and the winner of WMEA's Solo and Ensemble. Minjae has been a featured soloist with the Mukilteo Community Orchestra in its 2022 and 2024 Fall Concerts. His performances have graced esteemed venues, including Benaroya Hall, Mercer Island's Burbank Park, and various chamber concert settings. Most recently, he earned two coveted Platinum Medals at the 2024 Pacific Northwest Piano Competition, and Grand Prix award at the 2024 International French Music Piano Competition. Beyond his musical achievements, Minjae is passionate about computer programming, gaming, and tennis. He is an elite student of piano instructor SH Youn. Minjae has accrued over 8 medals from RCMFS since 2017.