



PhilaDELphia Viola Society
Viola Virtual Concert
February 3rd, 2021 - 12 PM

Program

- Maria Rusu - Cello Suite No. 5, Prelude
Hannah Barton - Cello Suite No. 2, Prelude
Sebastian Gonzalez Mora - Cello Suite No. 3 Prelude
Rudolf Haken - Partita II, Allemande, Courante
Shasta Ellenbogen - Cello Suite No. 6, Prelude
Joseph Henderson - Cello Suite No. 6, Gigue
Marcos Salvador-Riera - Cello Suite No. 1, Allemande
Zoe Yost - Cello Suite No. 2, Prelude
Ariel Chien - Cello Suite No. 1, Courante
Celia Hoffman - Cello Suite No. 1, Minuet I, II, Gigue
Danny Jordan - Cello Suite No. 1, Sarabande
Meghan Beaudry - Cello Suite No. 3, Sarabande
Scott Woolweaver - Cello Suite No. 6, Sarabande
Rizwan Jagani - Cello Suite No. 3, Allemande
Chase Jordan - Cello Suite No. 5, Gigue
Alexander Cai Knecht - Sonata No. 2 in A Minor, Grave
Morgan Ballard-Wheeler - Cello Suite No. 1, Sarabande
Erik Fauss - Cello Suite No. 6, Allemande
Anna Mędzkiewicz - Cello Suite No. 1, Courante
Shannon Merlino - Sonata No. 1, Prelude

Thank you to everyone who submitted a video for this concert! We look forward to the next event! For more information visit www.philadelphiavolasociety.org

Biographies

Maria Rusu received her Bachelor of Music from Bowling Green State University and her Master of Music from University of Delaware, both in viola performance. During her time at BGSU, Maria studied with Prof. Matthew Daline-McBride. At University of Delaware she worked with both Dr. Esme Allen-Creighton and Sheila Browne. Before moving to the States, Maria studied music for twelve years with her mother, Teodora Rusu. She has taught violin, viola and chamber music as a Teaching Artist at Play On, Philly!, conducted the CMSP High School string orchestra at Temple University Music Preparatory Division and is currently a core-faculty member at The Music School of Delaware teaching violin, viola and jazz voice. She is also the DYSO string coach and assistant conductor, as well as a member of the Wilmington Community Orchestra and Newark Symphony Orchestra. She is currently the president of the PhilaDELphia Viola Society since January 2017, organizing viola recitals and masterclasses for violists in the tristate area. For more information about her performances, visit www.mariarusu.com

Violist **Hannah Barton** moves easily between the worlds of classical, rock, and contemporary music. A native Chicagoan, Ms. Barton is an active teacher and performer on violin, viola, and electric “viper” violin. Ms. Barton has been a member of dozens of small chamber ensembles, beginning when she was four years old. She has worked closely with many composers, both performing and recording new works. A teacher as well as performer, Ms. Barton is a faculty member of the DePaul School of Music, teaching Suzuki and traditional lessons through the community department. She works regularly with the Chicago Youth Symphonies, coaching sectionals and listening to auditions. Ms. Barton serves on the board of the Society of American Musicians. A veteran of symphony orchestras, Ms. Barton has been performing symphonic repertoire for over two decades. Her many orchestras include the Quad City Symphony, Oistrakh Symphony, and Northbrook Symphony. Ms. Barton began studying violin at age two with her sister Rachel Barton Pine. She earned a Bachelors Degree in Violin Performance from the Peabody Conservatory and a Masters Degree from the Lamont School of Music. Her teachers include Pamela Frank, Desiree Ruhstrat, Yumi Hwang-Williams, David Taylor, and Charles Pikler. All her latest concert information and videos can be found on her website at www.hannahbartonviolin.com and on Instagram @hebartonviolin.

Born in Quebec, Canada, **Sebastian Gonzalez Mora** spent most of his life in Colombia and received all his musical training there. He took his first steps in music at the age of 10 with the violin and, two years later, he began to learn the viola with Jocelyne Bastien at the Montreal Music Conservatory. During summer festivals, Sebastian has had the opportunity to work with renowned violists such as Dimitri Murath, Miguel Da Silva, Kim Kashkashian, Antoine Tamestit, Michel Michalakakos and Atar Arad. Since 2017, Sebastian has received several scholarships such as: Fondation du Camp des Laurentides Scholarship, Fondation de Soutien aux Arts de Laval Scholarship, Academie du Domaine Forget Scholarship, Orford

Music Scholarship and the Excellence Scholarship of the 2018 Viola Class of the Academie du Domaine Forget. Apart from this, Sebastian has won the grand prize at the Chœur de la Montagne Competition, the grand prize at the MDA-Québec Competition and the second place at the Festival de Lanaudière Concerto Competition. On the other hand, his passion for contemporary music has led him to collaborate with composers such as Gilbert Patenaude and Matthias Hutter for the creation and dissemination of new works for the viola. In the orchestra, Sebastian had the opportunity to occupy the first chair in the Montérégie Youth Symphony Orchestra, the second chair in the Montreal Conservatory Symphony Orchestra and the first chair in the Curé-Antoine-Labelle Symphony Orchestra, orchestra with which he performed as a soloist in 2016. The young violist can be heard often as a soloist at the Montée des Arts, concert hall for which he is in artistic residency for 2019-2020. With 20 years of age and a multitude of projects in mind, Sebastian is currently in his second year of bachelor's degree. Sebastian plays a 1700 Presbler Italian viola with a Lotte bow, courtesy of Canimex.

Rudolf Haken, Professor of Viola and Electric Strings at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, is known for his eclectic performing and compositional styles. He frequently performs his electric viola concertos with orchestras throughout North America, Europe, Asia and South America. During the Covid lockdown Haken has initiated several virtual performing ensembles, among them the Bayreuth International Online Folk Orchestra. He has also led numerous workshops on collaborative music video production. Haken has been received commissions from artists such as violinist Rachel Barton Pine, trumpet virtuoso Paul Merkelo, and flutist Jean Ferrandis. His recordings have been awarded the American Record Guide Critics' Choice Award, as well as being featured in important journals such as The Strad and the Journal of the American Viola Society.

Shasta Ellenbogen (1988) grew up in Canada and lives in Berlin. She studied at conservatories in Amsterdam and London, but dropped out to follow her own instinctive path. She is the founder and artistic director of Classical Sundays, a concert series and YouTube channel based in Berlin bringing chamber music to a wider audience.

Joseph Henderson studied viola and violin at the University of North Florida. He has performed at the Karen Tuttle Workshop, the National Orchestral Institute, Green Mountain Chamber Music Festival, and the Jacksonville Cello Workshop. As a soloist, he performed the Mendelssohn Violin Concerto after winning the University of North Florida Concerto Competition. As an orchestral musician, Mr. Henderson has performed with the Jacksonville Symphony, the Coastal Symphony of Georgia, Civic Orchestra of Jacksonville, Symphony of the Goddesses, Roy Orbison Hologram Tour, Electric Lights Orchestra, and Video Games Live Orchestra. Joseph Henderson currently studies with Jacksonville Symphony's Principal Violist, DJ Cheek. For fun, he plays all genres of music with his band Good Pluck Trio and teaches private lessons online to students of all ages.

Marcos Salvador-Riera is a 7th grade vocal and strings major at Cab Calloway School of the Arts in Wilmington. He began playing violin at age six, and has been studying viola with Julianne Murphy Ruiz at the Music School of Delaware since 2017. He is currently a member of the Delaware Youth Symphony Orchestra (DYSO), under the direction of Maestro Simeone Tartaglione and a 2020 winner of the Jacqueline Beach Faulcon Scholarship. At Cab, Marcos is a tenor in the 7th grade Choir and a violist in the orchestra. Marcos is also a member of Cab's Science Olympiad team. He loves to model in 3d, and produces his designs on his own 3D printer. Marcos also enjoys reading, playing soccer and capoeira, and participating in musical theater productions.

Zoe Yost, seventeen, is a violist, composer, and writer from Delaware. She has been playing for ten years and currently studies with Kerri Ryan, assistant principal viola in the Philadelphia Orchestra. She is principal violist in the Youth Chamber Orchestra at Temple University's Center for Gifted Young Musicians, where she studies chamber music with the Jasper Quartet, and a scholarship student in Settlement Music School's Trowbridge Advanced Study String Quartet, coached by Thomas Kraines. A prolific performer and winner of numerous concerto and scholarship competitions, she enjoys sharing music with her friends and fellow musicians and looks forward to returning to live concerts. For the past three summers, she has attended the Bowdoin International Music Festival in Brunswick, Maine, where she studied viola with Carol Rodland and Kirsten Docter, and chamber music with Phillip Ying and Ahrim Kim. She also attended Valdres Sommersymfoni, a Norwegian orchestra festival, on scholarship in 2019. After high school, she plans to attend conservatory and pursue a career in viola performance and pedagogy. Zoe is an avid composer, and her original music has won prizes in contests from the National Guild of Piano Teachers, Music Teachers National Association, Pennsylvania Music Teachers Association, and Make Music Alliance. She is also honing her craft in fiction writing, poetry, and illustration, and hopes to pursue them in addition to music.

Violist **Ariel Chien** began her music studies at age three when she was introduced to the violin by her father, Shen-Pang Chien. At the age of seven, Ariel switched to viola and became more serious with her music studies. In 2011, Ariel was accepted into the American Youth Philharmonic Orchestras where she participated in the program for four seasons. At age 11, she was accepted into the WorldStrides Honors Performance Series for three consecutive summers where she was given the opportunity to perform at Carnegie Hall.

Ariel has been awarded first prize in the Northern Virginia Music Teacher Association (NVMTA) Concerto Competition and has also been a prizewinner to the NVMTA Caurine Easterling Strings Competition. In August of 2018, She performed her first solo recital at the Bach Recital Hall in Taipei City Taiwan. Ariel has attended many festivals and workshops including the High School Music Academy at the University of Maryland College Park, Green

Mountain Chamber Music Festival, Karen Tuttle Viola Workshop, Serafin String Quartet Workshop, and the Aspen Music Festival.

Ariel's influential teachers include Shen-Pang Chien, Sheila Browne, Susan Dubois, Karen Ritscher, Wesley Collins, Christian Colberg, and Daniel Foster. She has also had the privilege to play in masterclasses for the Escher Quartet, Michelle LaCourse, Ed Gazouleas, Kirsten Docter, Lynne Ramsey, and Stephen Wyrzynski. She is currently a freshman at the Cleveland Institute of Music studying under Jeffrey Irvine.

Celia Hoffman is an IB student at Mount Pleasant High School with plans to study ecology and Spanish. In addition to Mount Pleasant's orchestra, she is in the Delaware Youth Symphony Orchestra and studies private viola lessons with Maria Rusu at The Music School of Delaware in Wilmington. In her free time, she plays volleyball and enjoys creating increasingly bizarre ice cream flavors.

Violist **Danny Jordan** is currently pursuing a Master's Degree in Viola Performance at the Cleveland Institute of Music under the tutelage of Mark Jackobs. Prior to beginning their studies in Cleveland, Jordan received a Bachelor's Degree in Viola Performance, graduating Summa Cum Laude, from Southern Methodist University in Dallas, TX, studying with Barbara Sudweeks. Their past accolades include a finalist position in the 2019-2020 Meadows School of the Arts Concerto Competition, Two-Time Orchestral Fellow at the Texas Music Festival, performances as principal viola at Meyerson Symphony Center and Winspear Opera House in Dallas, TX, and performances with the Dallas String Quartet. Orchestral experience includes performances with the San Angelo Symphony Orchestra, Meadows Symphony Orchestra, Cleveland Institute of Music Orchestra, and Texas Music Festival Symphony Orchestra, while Chamber Music experience includes performances with Dallas String Quartet, Bishop String Quartet, Kyklos Quartet, and Amaiera Quartet, as well as performances alongside members of the Escher Quartet and masterclass performances for the Elias String Quartet and the Pacifica Quartet. Jordan is extremely passionate about classical music education, having taught both privately and in group settings, ranging from solo to orchestral contexts, throughout their career. They are currently available to teach in Cleveland, OH or via online platforms. Jordan currently performs on a viola made in Seattle, WA in 1999 by Alan and Sarah Balmforth.

Meghan Beaudry is a violist and teacher in the Houston area. In 2012, she graduated with her MM in Viola Performance and Suzuki Pedagogy from the Hartt School in Connecticut, where she studied viola with Rita Porfiris and Suzuki pedagogy with Teri Einfeldt. Ms. Beaudry received her BM in Viola Performance from SUNY Purchase College in New York. She maintains a private studio in Clear Lake, where she teaches students ages three to ninety- two years old.

Scott Woolweaver is principal violist of the Boston Pops Esplanade Orchestra and the Ann Arbor (MI) Symphony Orchestra. After graduating with Distinction from University of Michigan he moved to Boston for graduate studies with Walter Trampler at Boston University and the New England Conservatory of Music. In Boston he founded the Boston Composers String Quartet, which won the Silver Medal at the String Quartet Competition and Chamber Music Festa in Osaka, Japan. The Quartet also received recording and residency grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Aaron Copland Foundation. For 25 years he was a member of the New England Piano Quartette, which received numerous awards, including a residency grant from the C. Michael Paul Foundation and three Chamber Music America commissioning grants. For 10 years Scott was principal violist of the Vermont Symphony, the oldest state-supported musical organization in the United States, and at the invitation of the VSO's Music Director, was visiting artist with the National Orchestra of Panamá. For eight years he was violist of the Ives String Quartet (now the Ives Collaborative), based in the San Francisco Bay area. Scott also performs, records and tours with the Chameleon Arts Ensemble of Boston, and Alea III, a contemporary music ensemble based Boston. He is Artist Affiliate in Viola and Chamber Music at Tufts University, and a faculty member of the All Newton Music School in West Newton (MA), where he is Director of the Con Brio chamber music series. He has held the position of Artist Associate at prestigious Williams College in Williamstown, Massachusetts, Instructor of Viola at Eastern Michigan University School of Music and Dance (Ypsilanti, MI) and Guest Artist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge (MA). He is a regular guest of the Martha's Vineyard Chamber Music Society and is Director of the Adult Chamber Music Institute at Kneisel Hall in Blue Hill, Maine. Scott plays a Johan Georg Thir viola made in Vienna, 1737.

Rizwan Jagani is an American violist of Indian/Pakistani heritage. Coined the “new-fit” musician by violist and mentor Tatjana Mead Chamis, Jagani reimagines the idea of what the viola can do by combining his formal training in Western Classical performance with other musical genres such as Bollywood, Musical Theatre, Pop, Rock, and more. You can hear this in his various renditions of popular musical works. He has a Bachelor of Arts (Major: Music/minor: Spanish) degree from Austin College and a Master of Music Performance degree from Carnegie Mellon University. Jagani is currently studying with Kate Hamilton at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas as the school's first Artist Diploma candidate.

Chase Jordan is a violist and composer currently based at the Hartt School, where he is pursuing a Master of Music Degree in Viola Performance and Music Composition, studying viola with Rita Porfiris and composition with Juhi Bansal. Chase holds a Bachelor's Degree in Viola Performance ('20) from the University of Wyoming, where he studied viola with James Przygocki. Jordan is a frequent performer of orchestral, chamber, and solo music; having performed in the Bozeman Symphony Orchestra (MT) viola section, as a recitalist with the New York Viola Society, and as a soloist multiple times with the University of Wyoming Chamber Orchestra, including the world premiere of his composition, "Talus Dance" for solo viola,

strings, and percussion in February of 2020. In addition, Chase enjoys the performance of new music, having performed several world premieres in addition to commissioning works from composers including Stephen Weigel and Hannah Rice.

Alexander Cai Knecht completed a DMA under full scholarship at USC in 2018, where he studied with Brian Chen. He holds a master's degree from Juilliard, where he studied with Masao Kawasaki, and bachelors' degrees from La Sierra University, where he studied with Jason Uyeyama. In 2018, he became a member of the viola section of the Long Beach Symphony Orchestra. Since 2019, he has served as a Teaching Artist for the Caesura Youth Orchestra at Columbus Elementary School in Glendale. In 2019, he founded a free violin class outreach program at the Los Angeles Chinese Seventh-Day Adventist Church. He is a regular participant as a violinist in the liturgical music at St. Joseph the Worker parish in Loma Linda. He has been a mentor teaching strings in the CKC-Music community engagement program in San Bernardino since its founding in 2008, continuing to the present day through Zoom.

Last summer he performed in an online celebration of the violin caprices of Sophie-Carmen Eckhardt-Grammaté, as part of a celebration of Canada Day hosted by Scott St. John of the Colburn School. He remains an active teacher and performer online.

In past summers he has been a fellow at the Aspen Music Festival, the Music Academy of the West, and the Gonggeng Music Festival in Zhejiang Province, China. He comes from a musical family of Chinese, Korean and Caucasian ancestry including three siblings, all of whom play and teach string instruments.

Morgan Ballard-Wheeler hails from Tucson, Arizona, and has a wide array of interests and experiences in music. He is currently a master's student in viola at the Hartt School, studying with Rita Porfiris, but when not playing viola he is singing a Mozart aria or Schubert lied. He also has experience as a conductor and thinks more violists should take the podium. Morgan recently graduated from St. John's College in Annapolis, Maryland where he studied the literature and history of science from the Western Canon. He keeps Shakespeare on his bedside table.

Erik Fauss is an award-winning violist, songwriter, and artistic director currently freelancing in London. He studied music in California, Vienna, and recently finished his Masters at the Royal Academy of Music. Active in his faith, he serves on the music team at Reality Church London and performs regularly with the Kings Chamber Orchestra (a professional Christian ensemble). He recently formed an indie-folk band with Audrey Tambudzai, and the two will be releasing their first album this summer. Having finished a research project on audience-performer dynamics, he is now starting a chamber concert series that involves audience participation and creative performance platforms. Fauss hopes to continue creating and collaborating with other artists.

Anna Mędzkiewicz, born in Poland in 1990, enjoys career as a violist, chamber and orchestra musician and teacher, currently living in Norway. Anna holds the position of viola player with Filharmonia Warmińsko-Mazurska in Olsztyn (Poland) since September 2015. In 2020 she was member of Ålesund String Quartet and Ålesund Symphony Orchestra (Norway). Anna was member of European Union Youth Orchestra (2015-2017), Green Kore (2018), International Lutosławski Youth Orchestra (2017), Orkester Norden (2014), 1B1(2013-2015). She performed during festivals such as Chopin and his Europe, Bolzano Festival Bozen, Young Euro Classic, Stresa Festival, Ravello Festival, Edinburgh International Festival, Pärnu Music Festival, Ljubljana Festival, Rheingau Musik Festival, Ålesund Kammermusikkfestival, International Chamber Music Festival Stavanger. With orchestras she gave performances at venues like Konzerthaus Berlin, Royal Concertgebouw Amsterdam, NFM Wrocław, Usher Hall Edinburgh, Stavanger Concert Hall. Anna studied at the Karol Szymanowski Academy of Music in Katowice (prof. Elżbieta Mrożek-Loska), University of Stavanger (prof. Wouter Raubenheimer and prof. David Samuel) and the Feliks Nowowiejski Academy of Music in Bydgoszcz (prof. Daniel Deuter). She further honed her skills at master classes led by leading soloists and pedagogues around the world (Sirkka-Liisa Kaakinen-Pilch, Paul Cortese, Zbigniew Pilch, Maxim Rysanov, Lars Anders Tomter, Roger Benedict, Torleif Thedéen, Ida Bryhn, Stefan Kamasa, Piotr Reichert, Alfredo Persichilli).

Philadelphia-area native **Shannon Merlino** completed her Bachelor of Music degree in violin performance at Rutgers University as a student of Matthew Reichert and Lenuta Ciulei. After studies at the Hartt School with Emlyn Ngai, she received her Master of Music degree in violin performance as a scholarship student at the Mannes College of Music as a student of Lewis Kaplan. In 2012 she completed coursework at Rutgers University for her Doctor of Musical Arts degree in violin under the auspices of Mikhail Kopelman, but she still gravitated towards viola playing and decided to “make it official”. In 2016 she was accepted to the Doctor of Musical Arts program in viola performance at Temple University as a student of Kerri Ryan, from which she graduated in May 2019.

Shannon freelances regularly on all four instruments as soloist, chamber musician, and orchestral musician. She has appeared as soloist with the Temple University Contemporary Ensemble and the Temple University Symphony Orchestra, and prior to the pandemic, was performing regularly with several large ensembles in the Philadelphia area as both section member and substitute. Her work as both performer and academic has taken her to perform and lecture in venues such as Carnegie Hall, the Kimmel Center, and the Library of Congress.

Her interests, aside from modern viola, include playing Baroque viola and modern and Baroque violin and performing contemporary music. She has a passion for pedagogy, and maintains an active private teaching studio.