WINNERS CONCERT
and
AWARDS PRESENTATION

Saturday, May 6, 2023
7:30 pm
enée B. Fisher was an elegant writer, accomplished musician, dedicated teacher and a devoted wife and mother. She was the author of the widely acclaimed *Musical Prodigies: Masters at an Early Age* (1973), the first book on the topic when it appeared. The book included chapters on prodigies including Mozart, Paganini, Anton Rubenstein, Adelina Patti, Arturo Toscanini, Lorin Maazel, Ruth Slenczynska, Philippa Schuyler, Yehudi Menuhin and Louis Armstrong. Armstrong was delighted with what she wrote about his childhood: “The whole time I was reading your book I could see my hometown, New Orleans. Keep on telling it like it is, or was,” he wrote. Yehudi Menuhin liked the book as well, and wrote the foreword. Ms. Fisher was also the author of *Heroes of Music* (1974), a book for young adults about the composers who changed the shape of Western music – composers such as Monteverdi, Bach, Handel, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Liszt, Chopin, Schumann, Brahms, Berlioz, Bartok, Wagner, Debussy, Verdi, Stravinsky, Gottschalk, Gershwin and Ives. She contributed articles and music reviews frequently to national and scholarly publications, and at the time of her death was researching a book about a fascinating musical family that included one of Europe’s most celebrated nineteenth-century opera stars.

Piano was Ms. Fisher’s favorite instrument and she enjoyed playing a broad repertoire, from classical to chamber music to jazz and blues. She performed piano professionally and also composed for the piano. Ms. Fisher played string bass (she was a member of the Norwalk Symphony and the Bridgeport Symphony) as well as clarinet, vibraphone, organ, accordion, guitar and other instruments. She organized and conducted a number of vocal groups as well.

Ms. Fisher taught music and music education at the University of Bridgeport, Brooklyn College, Long Island University, Southern Connecticut State College and in the public school systems in New York and Westport, Connecticut. A native of New York, she moved to Westport with her husband, the late Milton Fisher, and their daughter, Shelley, in 1960. She spent many stimulating and happy days in New Haven doing research for her books in Yale’s Sterling Memorial Library and later visiting her daughter, who became a member of the first class of women to graduate from Yale. (Shelley Fisher Fishkin continued at Yale for her Ph.D., became a teacher and administrator there and is now professor of English and director of American studies at Stanford University.)

Renée Fisher died in 1976 at the age of fifty-seven. Following her untimely death, Milton Fisher, a writer and attorney who also taught a course in “Applied Creativity,” looked for a fitting way to honor her memory. The Renée B. Fisher Piano Competition and the Renée B. Fisher Composer Awards were the result. Both celebrate the potential of each generation to make beautiful music.
FISHER COMPETITION STAFF AT NEIGHBORHOOD MUSIC SCHOOL

Noah Bloom, Executive Director
Michelle Zingale, Fisher Competition Manager, Piano Teaching Artist
Alexis Zingale, Assistant Competition Manager, Piano Teaching Artist
Istvan B’Racz, Composition Coordinator, Piano Teaching Artist
Patty Boczer, Facilities Coordinator

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

NMS wishes to thank our Fisher Competition staff, the NMS office staff and these piano teaching artists for the care and professionalism with which they reviewed submission materials: Minjoo Choo, Richard Hagemannz, Adam Matlock and Elaine Silbereis. Thanks to Shayna Roosevelt for program production.

THE FISHER COMPETITION

Now in its forty-sixth year, the purpose of the Competition for Young Pianists is to nurture the growth and development of student musicians, to reward them for excellence in classical repertoire and to encourage them to acquaint themselves with and perform contemporary music. To qualify for the competition, students must live or study in Connecticut. A special feature is that through the Renée B. Fisher Composer Awards, two composers each year are chosen internationally to create new works for performance at the competition. In 2003, Neighborhood Music School proudly accepted the management of this legacy at the request of the Renée B. Fisher Foundation.

Congratulations to all the winners, and to the parents and teachers who nurture their talent. May music deepen your joys and soften your sorrows throughout your lives.

-The Renée B. Fisher Foundation & Neighborhood Music School
YOUNG PIANISTS’ BIOGRAPHIES

Past Fisher prize winners have gone on to attend all the major U. S. conservatories at the undergraduate and graduate levels, to participate in major international piano competitions and to serve on the piano performance faculties of major colleges and community music schools. We wish this year’s prize winners success in their future careers.

Mirah Chang, age twelve, Mirah studies piano with Kumiko Imamura at the Suzuki Music School of Westport and Orange. Mirah was selected as a first place winner in the Piano for 4-hands Junior Division at the eighth J.Y. Park Piano Competition in April 2023. She was selected as a winner in the Deborah Kahan Competition for the past three years and was awarded the Judges’ Special Award in 2022 and 2023. Mirah received an Honorable Mention at the 7th J.Y. Park Competition in 2022, and she won second place at the Schubert Club’s Award Competition in the French Impressionist and Chopin categories in 2022. Mirah was selected as the first place winner at the Festival Audition sponsored by the CSMTA Fairfield in 2019. Mirah enjoys playing in ensembles and performed Mozart’s Divertimento in B-Flat Major in a trio at the Burgos International Music Festival in 2022. She also performed Concerto No. 8 in C major by Mozart at the Concerto and Aria concert at the Westport Library in 2022. Mirah loves all kinds of handicrafts, especially crocheting. She enjoys biking, hiking, and traveling with her family, and reading with her dog, Cheerio.

Avigail Kohl is a fifth grade student at Booth Hill School in Trumbull. She has studied piano with Dan Nadav since she was six years old. Avigail has performed in several music festivals and competitions. She won first prize at the CSMTA Festival Audition and at the thirty-sixth Deborah Kahan Competition. She attended Chamber Music Central summer camps and sang at United Girls’ Choir. Avigail excels at all subjects in school. She served at the student council and received a special recognition for her writing. Her interests outside of music include drawing, playing soccer, and baking. Avigail adds “Playing music is like telling a story by seeing the meaning in each and every note. It takes us out of our normal lives and into a different world.”

Giora Nadav is a seventh grade student at Hillcrest Middle School in Trumbull. He has studied piano with Dan Nadav since the age of seven. Giora has performed in several music festivals and competitions. He won first prize at the CSMTA Festival Audition and at the thirty-sixth Deborah Kahan Competition. He participated in a masterclass with Aaron Kurtz as part of the Heida Hermanns International Piano Competition. Giora enjoys music collaborations. He attended Chamber Music Central summer camps and he sings in his school’s choir. Outside of music, his interests include history, geography, and cooking dishes from around the world. Giora adds: “Music can evoke emotions deeper than any words can express.”
**Edward Neems** is a sixth grade student at Bristow Middle School in West Hartford. He has studied piano with Elaine Silbereis since the age of six. Edward has performed in many piano competitions and festivals and has received multiple prizes in local and international competitions, including HMTA Virtuoso Pianists Competition, CT Bach Festival, Young Artist Piano Competition, and Renée B. Fisher Competition. He has also performed in Carnegie Hall as the recipient of the Royal Conservatory of Music Award of Excellence. Edward won the second place in the Carmel Klavier International Competition for Young Artists in 2021, and the first place prize in the seventh J.Y. Park Piano Competition in 2022. He was chosen as a Semi-Finalist in Royal Conservatory’s “Music Lights the Way” Competition this January. Most recently he placed first in the Virtuoso Pianists Competition. At school, he recently started playing cello and has joined the selective orchestra Bristow Bows. Additionally, he is a pianist in Bristow Big Band and the student pianist for Voices for Bristow. In addition to music, he enjoys studying P.E. and mathematics. Outside of school, he enjoys reading, gymnastics, tennis and skiing.

**Jason Nguyen** is a tenth grade student at Conard High School in West Hartford. At the age of six, he became a student of Malgosia Lis at the Hartt School Community Division. Jason also enjoys participating in a piano trio, which has performed in many concerts in and outside of the Hartt School. Jason also studies drums at the Hartt School. He especially enjoys modern and contemporary music, and likes to play unconventional pieces by unknown composers that feature extended techniques and interesting sounds. His favorite composers include Maurice Ravel and Erik Satie, but his favorite piece is Alberto Ginastera’s Suite de Danzas Criollas. Outside of music, Jason holds a black belt in Tang Soo Do and is a student instructor at Thornton Martial Arts. In his free time, he likes playing puzzle games, learning new skills, appreciating nature, and watching clouds.

**Hudson Shi** is a tenth grade student at E.O. Smith at Storrs-Mansfield, CT. He started to learn piano when he was five years old. He has received the State Certificate of Excellence Award five times from Royal Conservatory of Music (RCM). He received the First Class Honors with Distinction in RCM level 10 piano performance exam and he received the second prize in Junior Division in Connecticut Bach Festival. In the last two years of the Renée Fisher Competition, he received the second prize in the Middle School Division and the third prize in High School Division.
Braeden Shizume is an eleventh grade student at Nathan Hale Ray High School in East Haddam. He has been studying the piano for eight years. He is currently under the tutelage of Dr. Marie Jureit-Beamish. In the past several years, he has won numerous awards, including the CTMTNA Karen Nelson Scholarship, honorable mention at the Connecticut MTNA State competition, first place at both the 2021 and 2022 Opus Music Competition (Connecticut), the Rachmaninoff Award at the URI Piano Extravaganza, and was a finalist in the Hartford Symphony Orchestra Young Artists Competition. He hopes to attend one of the nation’s top music conservatories in the Fall of 2024 to continue his musical education and career.

Sebastian Utomo, age fourteen, started to play piano competitively at the age of eight. His piano career started after he was selected as a first place winner in the Elite International Music Competition and made his debut at the Carnegie Hall in 2017. Sebastian continued to win numerous prizes in national and international piano competitions following that year, including the Elite International Competition, the Young Maestro International Competition and the Suzanne Culley International Music Festival. Sebastian was also a recipient of the Sonatina and Early Bach Special Plaque Awards from the American College of Musicians. Sebastian currently studies piano with Svitlana Fiorito and has been participating in many state and regional competitions. Last year, he was selected as a grand prix winner in the New York Concert Festival, the first place winner in the Audrey Thayer Competition, the second place winner in the Schubert Club’s Junior Level Chopin category, and the second place winner in the MTNA’s Junior Performance Competition. More recently, he received the first prize in the Schubert Club’s Junior Level for both the Modern and French categories. At school, Sebastian plays violin for the school’s orchestras and serves as a section Leader of the First Violins. During his free time, he enjoys building model airplanes, hanging out with Seji, his mini dachshund, playing video games and tennis with his friends.

Richard Zhuang is a sixth grade student at the East Ridge Middle School in Ridgefield. He began playing the piano at the age of eight and a half with Mallory Mercier at Ridgefield Suzuki School. In fall 2019, he started studying under Ms. Anh Rozman, and progressed quickly to advanced level (Suzuki Book 7). Twice, he won first place at the Suzanne Culley Festival as well as one of five special prizes last year. He recently began studying under Margarita Nuller and has continued to improve his skills ever since, earning this year’s Renée Fisher Piano Competition prize of best performance for the commissioned piece and honorable mention overall in the elementary/middle school division.
Svitlana Fiorito, founder and director at Stamford Music & Arts Academy and Suzanne Culley International Competition, holds Masters Degrees from National Academy of Arts, Ukraine. Mrs. Fiorito’s students have won more than 100 awards at state, national and international competitions including Ettlingen International Competition in Germany and Chopin National Piano Competition in Florida, and they have been invited to perform at the Kennedy Center for the Arts, U.S. State Department, Carnegie Hall, Juilliard School, and Historique du Bon Pasteur in Canada. In addition, her students have performed with the Tianjin Symphony Orchestra in China, and on WQXR.

(Winning student: Sebastian Utomo)

Kumiko Imamura studied harpsichord, fortepiano, and piano. She has performed with numerous orchestras such as Little Orchestra Society at Lincoln Center, Staten Island Symphony, Bronx Arts Ensemble, Colonial Symphony, Kanagawa Philharmonic Orchestra, and New Brunswick Chamber Orchestra. She has also performed at the Noon Day Concert at Trinity Church, the Bösendorfer Concert, and the Kawai Concert Series in Japan. Ms. Imamura taught at Rutgers University, Mason Gross School of the Arts, Dutchess County Community College, Allegheny College Summer Festival. She studied at Senzoko College of Music (BM), Manhattan School of Music (MM, PSC), and at Rutgers University Mason Gross School of the Arts. Ms. Imamura was awarded the Distinguished Teacher Award by the New Jersey Educators’ Association eight times and currently teaches at the Suzuki School in Westport.

(Winning student: Mirah Chang)

Dr. Marie Jureit-Beamish, Professor Emerita of Music from Principia College, has had versatile career as a performing musician and professor of music at Principia College since 1978. Formerly the Charles Stewart Harding Mott Distinguished Professor of Music, she is now on the boards of the Arts Council of Martin County (Florida), the Asher Student Foundation, the Boca Symphonia, and the Atlantic Classical Orchestra. She has worked with some of the music giants of the twentieth century. Earning her doctorate from Yale School of Music, she was as founding chair of the Frances Blaisdell Scholarship Competition of the National Flute Association. Recently awarded the Golden Anniversary Award from the National Flute Association, Dr. JB received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Arts Council of Martin County, the “Women of Distinction” award from Soroptimist International, the Community Service Award from the Daughters of the American Revolution, and the Sage Award for her outstanding contribution to the arts in Martin County, Florida. With many of her students being recognized for their outstanding accomplishments in music, she maintain a large class of private students. Her professional affiliations include Music Teachers National Association, Florida State Music Teachers Association, the National Flute Association, and the Florida Flute Association.

(Winning Student: Braeden Shizume)
TEACHERS’ BIOGRAPHIES

Malgosia (Malgorzata) Lis earned her Master of Music in Piano Pedagogy at the Paderewski University of Music in Poland. While there, she was on a piano faculty at the Music School for Talented Youth. She is now a faculty member at the Hartt School Community Division in CT, where she is the Coordinator of the Suzuki Piano Department, Chamber Music Piano Coordinator, and the Piano Coordinator for the Hartt Suzuki Summer Institute. Her students received numerous prizes at piano competitions and festivals, including: CT Bach Festival, Renée B. Fisher Competition, Rhode Island University Piano Competition, Chopin International Competition, J. Park Competition, Musical Club of Hartford Competition, Virtuoso Pianists Competition, Czech Republic Piano Competition, and Bach International Competition in Poland. Her students were selected to perform for the Suzuki Conference Masterclasses in every conference since 2010. Lis is frequently invited as a masterclass teacher/clinician for Piano Workshops and Institutes, among them Dallas Suzuki Piano Workshop, Queens College Piano Workshop, New England Suzuki Institute, Suzuki Music School of Westport, Maine Suzuki Workshop, Music Institute of Chicago, and the McGill University Suzuki program. She collaborated with Mirror Visions Ensemble and performed at the Polish Library in Paris, France, where she had a chance to play on one of Chopin’s pianos.

(Winning student: Jason Nguyen)

Dan Nadav was born in Tel Aviv, Israel. Success as a pianist came early for him. At the age of fifteen he began performing recitals in Israel and Europe playing at prestigious music festivals. Mr. Nadav graduated from the Music Academy in Tel Aviv, then completed a Master’s degree in music from Tel Aviv University with a focus on piano teaching. Throughout his music career, Mr. Nadav managed various piano departments at well-known music conservatories in Israel promoting classical music through lecture-recitals and master classes. Mr. Nadav holds a Master’s degree in business administration from Cornell University. Parallel to teaching piano, Mr. Nadav devotes his career to advancing renewable and clean energy, focusing on fighting climate change and reducing global warming. Mr. Nadav brings to piano teaching the joy of learning the universal language of music and its profound role in elevating the human spirit.

(Winning students: Giora Nadav and Avigail Kohl)

Margarita Nuller (piano) graduated from the St. Petersburg Conservatory, Russia. Since her arrival in the United States, she has performed extensively as a soloist and chamber musician in the New York and New England areas, as well internationally. She has been soloist with the Arkansas Symphony, Danbury Symphony, Klassika Orchestra (Russia), Orchestra Temple Beth, and Chamber Orchestra of Puerto Rico. Ms. Nuller played her debut recital at Weill Hall at Carnegie Hall in New York City as a winner of the Artist International Auditions. She has attended many summer festivals including the SIPO in Óbidos (Portugal), the Shandelee Festival (NY), and Music in the Palaces Festival in St. Petersburg (Russia). She has taught at the University of Hartford, the Moussorgsky College of Music (Russia) and the Connecticut Conservatory in New Milford. Currently Ms. Nuller has a teaching studio in New Fairfield and is on the faculty of the Kent School. She is the organist at the Church of Christ, Scientist in Ridgefield, and a regular accompanist at Camerata d’Amici.

(Winning Student: Richard Zhuang)
TEACHERS’ BIOGRAPHIES

Elaine Silbereis has enjoyed a career as a pianist, organist, and highly experienced teacher. She holds advanced degrees in piano and organ performance. Growing up in Pasadena, CA, her main teachers were Anita Norskav Olsen and Earl Voorhies (CA Institute of the Arts). In summers she studied with Edith Oppens and Aube Tzerko at the Aspen Music School. Her organ studies were with Robert Glasgow (University of Michigan) and Roberta Gary (College Conservatory of Music, University of Cincinnati). Elaine’s teaching is deeply informed by her Kodaly studies with Katinka Daniel, and her Taubman Approach training with the Golandsky Institute. Elaine’s students regularly and successfully participate in local, national and international competitions. Her students consistently attain high marks on their yearly Royal Conservatory of Music exams. Many have performed in Carnegie Hall as recipients of the RCM Certificate of Excellence. Elaine enjoys a large studio of students at her home in West Hartford and at the Neighborhood Music School. She is past president of the Hartford Music Teachers Alliance and the Founding Director of the CT Bach Festival.

(Winning students: Edward Neems and Hudson Shi)
PROGRAM

Rain

Richard Zhuang

*Best Performance of the Commissioned Work – Elementary/Middle School Division*

Max Vinetz - Comments
2023 Fisher Composer Awards Winner

French Suite No. 5
Allemande, Courante, Sarabande & Gigue

Edward Neems

*Honorable Mention – Elementary/Middle School Division*

Prelude & Fugue No. 21, B flat Major, WTC Bk. I

Richard Zhuang

*Honorable Mention – Elementary/Middle School Division*

Impromptu, Op. 90, no. 2

Avigail Kohl

*Third Prize – Elementary/Middle School Division*

Moments Musicaux, Op. 16, no. 4

Giora Nadav

*Second Prize – Elementary/Middle School Division*

Trois Nouvelles Etudes: No. 1 & 2

Mirah Chang

*First Prize – Elementary/Middle School Division*

- INTERMISSION -
Variations

Bracha Bdil

Jason Nguyen

*Best Performance of the Commissioned Work – High School Division*

**Bracha Bdil - Comments**

2023 Fisher Composer Awards Winner

Polonaise, A-flat Major, Op. 53

F. Chopin

Hudson Shi

*Honorable Mention – High School Division*

Gaspard de la Nuit, I: Ondine

M. Ravel

Jason Nguyen

*Third Prize – High School Division*

Prelude & Fugue No. 11, F Major, WTC Bk. II

J. S. Bach

Sebastian Utomo

*Second Prize – High School Division*

Suggestion Diabolique, Op. 4, no. 4

S. Prokofiev

Braeden Shizume

*First Prize – High School Division*

Presentation of Awards

Noah Bloom, Executive Director, Neighborhood Music School

Michelle Zingale, Fisher Competition Manager

Please join us for a reception following the concert.
JUDGES’ BIOGRAPHIES

American pianist, Steven Beck, graduated from the Juilliard School of Music in New York City. Beck made his debut with the National Symphony Orchestra, and has toured Japan as soloist with the New York Symphonic Ensemble. Other orchestras with which he has appeared include the New Juilliard Ensemble, Sequitur, Jupiter Symphony Chamber Players, and Virginia Symphony. Mr. Beck has performed as soloist and chamber musician at the Kennedy Center, Alice Tully Hall, Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, Merkin Hall, Miller Theater, Steinway Hall, Tonic, and Barbes, as well as on the New York Philharmonic Ensembles Series and WNYC; summer appearances have been at the Aspen Music Festival, Lincoln Center Out of Doors, Greenwich Music Festival, Woodstock Mozart Festival, and Wellesley Composers’ Conference. He is an Artist Presenter and regular performer at Bargemusic, performs frequently as a musician with the Mark Morris Dance Group, and has performed with the New York City Ballet. As an orchestral musician he has appeared as an orchestral keyboard player with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, New York City Ballet Orchestra, Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, Mariinsky Orchestra and many others. An experienced performer of new music, Mr. Beck worked with many renowned composers, and has appeared with ensembles such as Speculum Musicae, Manhattan String Quartet, Pacifica String Quartet, Metropolis Ensemble, New York Philomusica, New York New Music Ensemble, Mosaic, Lyric Chamber Music Society, Omega Ensemble, Ensemble Sospeso, Orchestra of the S.E.M. Ensemble, Counterinduction, American Contemporary Music Ensemble, East Coast Composers’ Ensemble, Fountain Ensemble, Friends and Enemies of New Music, Lost Dog, and Antisocial Music. He is a member of the Da Capo Chamber Players, new music ensemble Future In Reverse (FIRE) as well as the notorious Knights of the Many-Sided Table and the Talea Ensemble. He is also a member of Quattro Mani, a piano duo specializing in contemporary music. Pianist Steven Beck continues to gather acclaim for his performances and recordings, which can be found on the Albany, Bridge, Monument, Mulatta and American Classics labels.. His discography includes Peter Lieberson’s Piano Concerto No. 3 (for Bridge Records) and a recording of Elliott Carter’s Double Concerto on Albany Records. He is a Steinway Artist, and currently lives in New York City.

Marina Obukovsky lives and works in New York City where she is a sought-after piano teacher, performer and clinician. According to the American Suzuki Journal, “Marina is a true musician and passionate about music, with the ear of a superhuman, able to distinguish the most nuanced of nuances.” Ms. Obukovsky currently holds positions at the School for Strings, where she is a Chair of Piano Department and Teacher Trainer, as well as Faculty at the Mannes College of Music Preparatory Division. As a dedicated and inspiring teacher, Ms. Obukovsky maintains a full studio of pianists, ranging from beginner to pre-college level. Her students frequently participate in master classes with renowned pianists and have won many of New York’s prestigious competitions, performing at venues such as Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, Steinway Hall, Merkin Concert hall, and Symphony Space. Many of her students continue their training at conservatories and major in music in college. In demand as a clinician and teacher, Ms. Obukovsky has given numerous workshops and masterclasses in New York, Washington DC, Maine, Vermont, Texas, and Bermuda. At the 15th Biennial Suzuki Conference, she was invited to give a master class on new piano repertoire in the revised Suzuki piano
books. During the past five years, she has taught at the InterHarmony International Festival in Germany and Italy, and at the “Accademia di Musica Lorenzo Perosi” in Biella, Italy. A longtime faculty member at the Hartt Suzuki Institute in Connecticut, she additionally joined the faculty of the Berkshire Summer Music Camp in Massachusetts in 2014. Ms. Obukovsky received her Master of Music degree (cum laude) from Kharkov Conservatory, Ukraine. She also participated in numerous masterclasses and workshops at the renowned Gnessin Russian Academy of Music in Moscow. As a student, she won several competitions and performed with Kharkov Philharmonic Orchestra. An accomplished pianist, she has performed solo and chamber recitals throughout Ukraine and Russia and has served as an accompanist for the National Opera Competitions in Moscow, Odessa, Lviv, and Kiev. She was a former faculty of the Kharkov Conservatory. An avid chamber musician, Ms. Obukovsky frequently collaborates with fellow musicians in cello- piano duos, as well as in 4-8 hands piano ensembles. Ms. Obukovsky is currently a member of the Suzuki Association of Americas, the Music Teachers National Association, and the Associated Music Teachers League.

Ann Schein’s career has earned her worldwide praise, from her first recordings with Kapp Records and her Carnegie Hall recital debut, to her lifetime achievement awards. Ms. Schein has performed with notable conductors with major orchestras including the New York Philharmonic, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Baltimore Symphony, the Washington National Symphony, the London Philharmonic, the London Symphony, and the BBC Symphony Orchestra. Over her many years performing in London she appeared repeatedly in the Promenade Concerts in Albert Hall, including several Last Nights, when favorite soloists are invited to perform. In 1963 she was invited to perform at the White House during the Kennedy administration. In the 1980-81 season, Ms. Schein performed six concerts of the major Chopin repertoire in Lincoln Center’s Alice Tully Hall throughout an entire season to outstanding reviews and sold-out houses, the first Chopin cycle presented in New York in thirty-five years. From 1982-1987 she performed with the American Chamber Players, and made several tours throughout the U.S. and Brazil with the great soprano Jessye Norman. They recorded Berg and Schoenberg songs for Sony Classical. Her recent recordings include an album of all-Schumann for Ivory Classics and an all-Chopin recording of the Opus 28 Preludes and the b minor Sonata, Opus 58 for MSR Classics. An American album, also for MSR Classics, includes the 1945-46 Elliott Carter Piano Sonata and the Piano Variations of Aaron Copland. An upcoming MSR release will include works of Chopin, Debussy, and Ravel. Ms. Schein was on the piano faculty of the Peabody Conservatory and in 2012, they honored her with a Distinguished Alumni Award. She was an Artist-Faculty member of the Aspen Music Festival and School, a Visiting Faculty member at Indiana University, a Visiting Professor at the Eastman School of Music, and she was invited to join the piano faculty of the Mannes School. Ann Schein has received many distinguished honors for her Chopin performances, beginning with her first recordings in 1958. Ms. Schein has been featured in numerous publications, and been honored with lifetime achievement awards by Steinway and the National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington D. C., along with other celebrations of her long and prolific career. She and her violinist husband, Earl Carlyss, have performed countless chamber music performances both as a duo and in other works with many distinguished colleagues.
The distinguished panel which selected the winning composers for 2022 and 2023 included William Braun, Robert Carl, and Steve Gryc.

**ELEMENTARY/MIDDLE SCHOOL DIVISION**

Max Vinetz’s music draws inspiration from various intersections between improvisatory, popular, and classical forms and aesthetics. His recent and upcoming projects are primarily concerned with the relationships between narrative, object, and artifact as they relate to music and other media, structures that circumvent linear narratives, the various interconnectivities between memory, desire, and the self.

Max is a recipient of a Fromm Foundation Commission, ASCAP’s Morton Gould Award, the Paul and Christiane Cooper Prize, and the Gardner Prize from the American Viola Society, amongst other awards. His music has been featured at numerous festivals around the world, including Norfolk New Music Workshop, Fontainebleau (FR), New Music On the Point, Brevard Music Center, California Summer Music, Red Note New Music Festival, Nebula Ensemble Summer Festival, nief-norf, Valencia International Performance Academy, and highSCORE.

As a Yale undergraduate, Max won the Beekman Cannon Friends Prize, the Abraham Beekman Cox Prize, and was also awarded the Lewis P. Curtis Fellowship, the Tristan Perlroth Prize, and the R.J.R. Cohen Fellowship for Musical Performance.

Max’s works have been performed and recorded by Bearthoven, Bergamot Quartet, arx Duo, Vicky Chow, Contemporaneous, DITHER, Variant 6, Sō Percussion, The Shepherd School Symphony Orchestra, Arditti Quartet, Ensemble Dal Niente, Miranda Cuckson, NUNC, Ensemble for New Music Tallinn, Hear&Now, Copland House Chamber Players, DeCoda, Mivos Quartet, unassisted fold, Yale Symphony Orchestra, New York Youth Symphony, Icarus Duo, members of Yale Voxtet, and Yale Schola Cantorum, among others. Upcoming projects include works for Alarm Will Sound, Yarn/Wire, and panSonus.

A graduate of both Yale and Rice University’s Shepherd School of Music, Max is currently pursuing his PhD in Composition at Princeton University as a Naumburg Doctoral Fellow.
Bracha Bdil, composer, conductor and pianist, has a B.Ed. in Music Education from Levinsky College and a Master’s degree in Music Education and Composition from the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance. Bracha studied classical voice, classical piano, jazz, and piano chamber music. Bracha won the first prize in the Wolf Durmashkin Composition Award, Germany, and the first prize in the Yardena Alotin Composition Competition, Bar-Ilan University, Israel. Her repertoire includes orchestral music, chamber, vocal and electronic music, as well as music for dance and theater.

Bracha’s musical compositions and edited works have been performed around the world: The International Holocaust Remembrance Day “Rossi Fest”, Serbia; RDU SAI, United States; Festival Ecos Urbanos, Mexico; Festival DME, Portugal; WOCMAT, Taiwan; Asian Composers League Conference and Festival, Taiwan; Simpósio Internacional de Música Nova, Brazil; China International Choir Festival; International Youth Art Festival, China; Belt and Road World Choir Festival, China; BIMCC, Philippines; International Jewish-German Festival, Germany; UWGB MUSIC, United States; Bezanson Recital Hallon, United States; The Schnitke Festival, Russia; UNK New Music Festival, United States; Société de Concerts de Montréal; Concrete Timbre and Fifteen Minutes of Fame, United States; Australian Percussion Gathering; and One Minute Project, Greece. With her composition “Yizkerem”, for a cappella choir, Bracha was chosen as one of the composers in presenting Israel at the Asian Composers League Festival, Taiwan. The same composition won a prize in the International Choral Writing Competition in Moscow.

In Israel, her works are broadcast on the Israel Radio Voice of Music program and were performed at various events, including: Voice of Music Young Artist competition, Israeli Music Festival, Zimriya Festival, Israel Festival, Piano Festival, a series of Excellence – the future generation, Eden-Tamir Music Center, Ein Kerem, and a series of Singing with the Sinfonietta, Performing Arts Center, Be’er Sheva.

Bracha is a member of the Israel Composers’ League and her works are published by the Israel Music Institute. She has been a lecturer at the Levinsky College of Music Education, the Jerusalem College and at the Ron Shulamit Conservatory where she is still a member of management. She is the artistic director and chief conductor of the women’s “Zmora” orchestra in Jerusalem.
Neighborhood Music School (NMS) was founded in 1911 as part of the settlement house movement dedicated to serving the needs of the urban poor, born of a commitment to enhancing our neighborhood and local community. At that time, in the early twentieth century, a small group of teachers from Yale School of Music and New Haven Symphony provided classical music lessons and instruments for a handful of immigrants seeking education, social opportunities, and jobs. Today, NMS serves nearly 2,500 students of all ages, races, and ethnicities from across the region, offering lessons, classes, and ensembles in the performing arts and an arts-infused preschool and middle school, plus after school and summer programs focused on development of twenty-first century life skills.

The city of New Haven has an incredibly rich history of local culture and strong commitment to the arts. Over the past several years, In an effort to better serve the needs of our community, NMS has organized community conversations, coordinated surveys, done market research, and participated in panel discussions. As a result, we have heard loud and clear from our community that access to arts education is crucial.

Throughout our history, NMS has remained true to our mission: to deepen the human experience and build connections through the learning, practice, and presentation of the performing arts. Our core values of performing arts, educational excellence, diverse community, equity, and joy are reflected in everything we do. Our interdisciplinary programs focus on a wide range of the performing arts within five key areas: Music Education, Dance and Wellness, Arts-Infused School, Creative Youth Development, and Creative Aging. While most of our programming takes place at our main branch in downtown New Haven, ten additional satellite locations extend our impact across the state. Our 35,000 square foot facility has 32 music studios, a large dance studio, a STEM lab, a 150-person Recital Hall which holds nearly 300 events each year, and the adjacent Park of the Arts for outdoor classrooms, performances, and community gatherings. Our highly experienced, international faculty of 110 teaching artists have collectively taught at NMS for nearly 2,000 years. These talented and passionate teaching artists engage our students' interests and enthusiasm, providing the tools they need for each to reach their unique potential.