

SALON 2/8/20

Artists' Bios

The first American in four decades and youngest musician ever to win First Prize at the International Tchaikovsky Competition Cello Division, **Zlatomir Fung** is poised to become one of the preeminent cellists of our time. Astounding audiences with his boundless virtuosity and exquisite sensitivity, the 20-year-old has already proven himself to be a star among the next generation of world-class musicians. Fung's impeccable technique demonstrates a mastery of the canon and exceptional insight into the depths of contemporary repertoire.

In the 2019-2020 season, Fung performs with orchestra and in recital in all corners of North America. He returns to the Ann Arbor Symphony Orchestra, and debuts with Asheville and Aiken Symphony Orchestras, Plymouth Philharmonic, and Symphony Pro Musica in Hudson, Massachusetts. He performs at Carnegie Hall's Zankel Hall in a joint recital with fellow Tchaikovsky Competition winners in October, following a recital at Friends of Music in Sleepy Hollow, NY. Other recitals include Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory in New York, Wengler Center for the Arts at Pepperdine University in Malibu, Syrinx Concerts in Toronto, The Embassy Series in Washington DC, Salon de Virtuosi and Bulgarian Concert Evenings in New York City, Chamber on the Mountain in Ojai, Evergreen Museum & Library in Baltimore, and Mainly Mozart in Coral Gables. At the Artist Series of Sarasota, Fung will perform the complete works for cello and piano by Beethoven.

As a chamber musician, Fung performs around the world, opening the season with IMS Prussia Cove on Tour to London's Wigmore Hall, Cornwall, Cambridge, West Sussex, and Somerset. He closes the season at Dresdner Musikfestspiele. New York City chamber music engagements include the Aspect Foundation and Jupiter Chamber Players. During the summer of 2019, Fung performs at Musique de Chambre à Giverny, a chamber music festival in northern France.

Zlatomir Fung started his career with Young Concert Artists. A winner of the 2017 Young Concert Artists International Auditions and the 2017 Astral National Auditions, Fung has taken the top prizes at the 2018 Alice and Eleonore

Schoenfeld International String Competition, 2016 George Enescu International Cello Competition, 2015 Johansen International Competition for Young String Players, 2014 Stulberg International String Competition, and 2014 Irving Klein International Competition. He was selected as a 2016 U.S. Presidential Scholar for the Arts and was awarded the 2016 Landgrave von Hesse Prize at the Kronberg Academy Cello Masterclasses.

Of Bulgarian-Chinese heritage, Zlatomir Fung began playing cello at age three and earned fellowships at Ravinia's Steans Music Institute, Heifetz International Music Institute, MusicAlp, and the Aspen Music Festival and School. A proud recipient of the Kovner Fellowship, Fung currently studies at The Juilliard School under the tutelage of Richard Aaron and Timothy Eddy. Fung has been featured on NPR's *Performance Today* and has appeared on *From the Top* six times. Fung plays a W. E. Hill and Sons cello from 1905. In addition to music, he enjoys cinema, reading, and blitz chess.

“The cellist showed a mastery of his instrument that was truly a thing to behold... He executed his pure talent, maneuvering the strings with exquisite control as he created his own musical mosaic.

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— Benicia Herald

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Trumpeter **Ansel Norris** has distinguished himself as a soloist, orchestral and chamber musician of enthusiasm and diverse taste. In 2019 he was the first ever American prizewinner in the 16th International Tchaikovsky Competition's Brass division, placing first in the trumpet category. Prior to this he was twice the first-prize winner at the National Trumpet Competition, a Young ARTS Gold Award recipient and a winner of the New World Symphony's Concerto Competition, among others. Mr. Norris loves to perform as a soloist with orchestras, and he has enjoyed performances in front of the Mariinsky Orchestra, New World Symphony and his hometown Madison Symphony Orchestra, to name a few. He has been inspired by the relationship of music to storytelling, and likes to explore this relationship in recital format. Mr. Norris finds particular resonance in the palette of moods and colors that gave life to romantic art song and the poetry that inspired it. He looks forward to finding new ways to design recitals that captures the special intimacy of this music.

Mr. Norris has a great love for the sound of the orchestra and has given performances with the Chicago and Boston symphonies, spent two summers as a fellow at the Tanglewood Music Center and completed two-year periods as a member of both the New World Symphony and the Civic Orchestra of Chicago. In 2018, he became the Assistant Principal/2nd Trumpet of the Naples Philharmonic of Naples, Florida. As a founding member of the Lincoln Chamber Brass, Mr. Norris competed in the Fischhoff International Chamber Music Competition of 2014, earning a bronze medal. In 2016 he graduated from Northwestern University. He is deeply grateful for the mentors who have helped him find his voice, including Barbara Butler, John Aley, Charles Geyer, Thomas Rolfs, Christopher Martin, Stephen Burns and Robert Sullivan, to name just a few.

Mr. Norris has interests in playing basketball, reading, hiking, playing ping pong and practicing yoga, in no particular order. He hopes to explore all of these interests, in addition to many great musical opportunities, with a curious mind and an open heart.

Praised by the critics for her "technically fluid, dramatically convincing, and sonically full-bodied supportive collaborations" (Boston Globe) - **Milana Strezeva** is a Moldovan-American pianist. At the age of 11 she began playing chamber music with her clarinetist father and her mother, a renowned soprano. Milana's love for family collaboration eventually grew into a passionate advocacy of vocal and instrumental chamber music.

A founding member of the award-winning **Manhattan Piano Trio**, one of the most creative and dynamic young ensembles in America, Milana has performed with them in over 30 American states, in Australia, South Africa and Italy, and in venues such as Alice Tully Hall, Merkin Hall, and the Ravinia Festival. The Washington Post described the Trio as "impressive" and "outstanding", while the Sarasota Herald Tribune said "one seldom is privileged to enjoy music of such a wide range of styles performed with self-effacing skill and relaxed assurance." A CD of Schumann and Chopin trios in honor of the composers bicentennials, was successfully released on the Marquis Classics label in 2009.

Milana is a recipient of Grand Prizes at the Plowman Chamber Music Competition, Yellow Springs Chamber Music Competition; Australian Broadcasting Corporation Listeners Choice Award in Melbourne, IBLA International Competition as a vocal collaborator, and Arts Recognition and Talent Search Award. Among the prominent venues in which she has performed are - Carnegie Hall (New York), Jordan Hall (Boston), Kravis Center (West Palm Beach), Gusman Hall (Miami); Shenzhen Concert Hall (China), South Melbourne Town Hall (Australia), Linder Auditorium (South Africa).

Some of the internationally acclaimed artists with whom Milana has concertized include members of the former Vermeer Quartet - Schmuël Ashkenasi, Mathias Tacke, Marc Johnson; flutist **Eugenia Zukerman**, clarinetists Franklin Cohen and **Alexander Fiterstein**, **Amernet Quartet**, violists Karen Dreyfus and Michael Klotz, cellists **Sophie Shao** and **Dmitry Kouzov**, and new music ensemble in Miami - **Nu Deco Ensemble**.

Milana's most enduring and treasured collaboration is with her mother, the renowned Soprano, Svetlana Strezeva (a.k.a. "The Russian Nightingale" and winner of the 1982 Tchaikovsky Competition). With programs that reflect their love of Russian vocal literature, they have given recitals across the US as well as in Italy, Denmark, Germany, Ukraine, Romania, Moldova, and China.

A consummate vocal coach, Milana has been part of several opera productions including Dicapo Opera (NYC), Sorg Opera (OH), and American Opera Company (NYC). She has collaborated with conductors Paul Nadler, Bruno Rigacci, Enrique Carreón-Robledo, Curtis Tucker, Elaine Rinaldi, and

Luis Salemno. While leaving in NY, Milana has worked in voice studios of Anna Moffo, Dody Protero, Joshua Hecht, Doris Yarrick – Cross, Richard Cross, Antonia Lavan, Patricia McAffrey and played for voice lessons at the Juilliard School, Mannes College, Brooklyn College, and Hofstra University.

Having studied piano with Bella Davidovich, Julian Martin, Boris Lvov, and Tatiana Gershfeld, Milana has also studied chamber music with Bruce Brubacker, Felix Galimir, Jonathan Feldman, Seymour Lipkin, Joseph Kalichstein, Joel Krosnik, Jacob Lateiner, Charles Neidich, Toby Appel, and song repertoire with Brian Zeger and Thomas Grubb.

Milana received her Bachelor and Master degrees from **The Juilliard School** on a full scholarship.

Currently, Milana lives in Naples, FL and is a Co-Founder and Artistic Director of **Grand Piano Series**.