



## Four Avery Fisher Career Grants Awarded for 2026

On March 24 at The Jerome L. Greene Performance Space at WQXR  
Deborah Borda, Program Chair, Nancy Fisher, and Charles Avery Fisher  
announce four 2026 Avery Fisher Career Grant recipients:

**LELAND KO, cellist**  
**NATHAN MELTZER, violinist**  
**KEILA WAKAO, violinist**  
**DMITRY YUDIN, pianist**



On Tuesday, March 24, 2026, at 6 p.m., four 2026 Avery Fisher Career Grants are being announced by Deborah Borda, Avery Fisher Artist Program Chair, along with Nancy Fisher and Charles Avery Fisher, children of the late Avery and Janet Fisher. The recipients being honored at The Jerome L. Greene Performance Space at WQXR are **Leland Ko, cellist; Nathan Meltzer, violinist; Keila Wakao, violinist; and Dmitry Yudin, pianist.**

Performances by all four Career Grant recipients for an invited audience will follow the announcement. Hosted by WQXR's Elliott Forrest, the Career Grant performances will also be webcast live by WQXR, New York's only all-classical music station, at [www.wqxr.org](http://www.wqxr.org), and broadcast on Thursday, April 16 at 8 p.m. and again on Saturday, April 18 at 9 p.m. on 105.9 FM.

The 2026 Career Grants award ceremony continues a tradition established over five decades ago by Avery Fisher, and WQXR has been a broadcast partner of these festivities since the first Career Grants were awarded in 1976. *Great Performances* on PBS will feature the 2026 Career Grant recipients on [Taking Note](#), a digital series launched in 2024 to spotlight rising instrumentalists who have received Career Grant Awards from the Avery Fisher Artist Program.

Since 1976, **183 Career Grants have been awarded** (including this year's grants), and all recipients maintain active music careers. Former Career Grant recipients include pianists Jonathan Biss and Yuja Wang; cellists Carter Brey and Zlatomir Fung; violinists Sarah Chang and Paul Huang; violist Matthew Lipman; double bassist Nina Bernat; and the Calidore String Quartet.

**The Avery Fisher Artist Program was established in 1974 by the late Avery Fisher as part of a major gift to Lincoln Center** and serves as a monument to Mr. Fisher's philanthropy and love of classical music. The Career

Grants exemplify his commitment to nurturing young artists and embody his philosophy to give back to the world what music had given to him. The Program supporting instrumentalists and chamber ensembles who must be U.S. citizens or permanent U.S. residents provides recognition in two categories: the Career Grants, given annually, and the Prize, given less frequently as the highest form of recognition for outstanding achievement and leadership in classical music. Final selections are made by the Program's Executive Committee and award recipients are chosen based on outstanding artistic merit.

**Avery Fisher Career Grants of the Avery Fisher Artist Program** are designed to give professional assistance and recognition to talented instrumentalists, as well as small chamber ensembles, who the Recommendation Board and Executive Committee of the Avery Fisher Artist Program believe to have great potential for major careers in classical music. Each recipient receives an award of \$25,000, to be used for specific needs in advancing a career. Additionally, the Career Grant ceremony performances are professionally recorded for the recipients' unrestricted use, archived on the Program's website, webcast live and later broadcast and streamed by WQXR, and featured on the digital series *Taking Note* from *Great Performances* on PBS. As of 2016, recipients receive a custom-designed rosette as a symbol of the Career Grant award. Up to five Avery Fisher Career Grants may be given each year. Recipients are nominated by the Program's Recommendation Board, made up of nationally known instrumentalists, conductors, composers, music educators, managers, and presenters.

**The Executive Committee** currently comprises Emanuel Ax, pianist; Deborah Borda, Chair, Avery Fisher Artist Program, Founder of BordaArts, and New York Philharmonic President Emerita; Mary Lou Falcone, M.L. Falcone, Public Relations; David Finckel and Wu Han, Artistic Directors, Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center; Henry Fogel, Dean Emeritus and Distinguished Professor of the Arts at Roosevelt University's Chicago College of Performing Arts; Anthony Fogg, Vice President of Artistic Planning, Boston Symphony Orchestra; Pamela Frank, violinist; Jeremy Geffen, Executive and Artistic Director, Cal Performances; Ara Guzelimian, Artistic and Executive Director, Ojai Music Festival and Special Advisor, The Juilliard School; Yo-Yo Ma, cellist; Anthony McGill, clarinetist; Mariko Silver, President and CEO, Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts; Chad Smith, President and CEO, Boston Symphony Orchestra; Matías Tarnopolsky, President and CEO, New York Philharmonic; and Shanta Thake, Ehrenkranz Chief Artistic Officer, Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts. Charles Avery Fisher, Nancy Fisher, and Philip Avery Kirschner are advisors to the Program. The Avery Fisher Artist Program is proud to be a constituent of Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts. We also acknowledge our gratitude to WQXR for being a broadcast partner in presenting the 2026 Avery Fisher Career Grant awards.

**Career Grant Recipient Biographies attached separately. Imagery of this year's recipients may be accessed [here](#).**

**Website: [www.averyfisherartistprogram.org](http://www.averyfisherartistprogram.org)**

Photo credits (L to R): Leland Ko by Tam Lan Truong; Nathan Meltzer by Tam Lan Truong; Keila Wakao by Junichiro Matsuo; Dmitry Yudin by Vladimir Kolesnikov.