

Avery Fisher Career Grants – Recipient Biographies

Leland Ko
*Cello***Born:** Boston, MA
Resides: Boston, MA

Cellist Leland Philip Ko (b. 1998) is the kind of person who is always asking “why” — American-born but of Chinese-Canadian descent, schooled at both university and conservatory, and extremely thorough in any number of activities ranging from competitive tennis and distance-running to home-baking and origami, he seeks to find the similarities between seemingly disparate things, and in doing so hopes to find something human in everything.

Described as someone with “disarming charisma” (*South Florida Classical Review*), yet simultaneously as someone “Byronic” and “excelling in both poetic longing and dramatic outbursts” (*Boston Classical Review*), Leland has performed as a soloist and chamber musician in venues across America and abroad. He is a First Prize winner of the Concours Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal, the Concert Artists Guild Louis and Susan Meisel Competition, and the Walter W. Naumburg International Cello Competition.

Season highlights for the 2025-2026 season include debuts with the Orchestre Symphonique de Sherbrooke and the DuPage Symphony, as well as at the Caramoor Center for Music and the Arts, Kaufman Center’s Merkin Hall, and Carnegie’s Weill Recital Hall.

Leland was a long-time student of Kirsten Peltz, Ronald Lowry, and Paul Katz before attending Princeton University, where he graduated with an A.B. in German Literature. He went on to complete an M.M. at The Juilliard School under the teaching of Minhye Clara Kim, Timothy Eddy, and Natasha Brofsky, and then earned an Artist Diploma from the New England Conservatory under the guidance of Laurence Lesser, Yeesun Kim, and Donald Weilerstein. He resides in Boston with his 14-year-old cat, Ham.

Website: www.lelandko.com**Management:** *Concert Artists Guild***Nathan Meltzer**
*Violin***Born:** Kirkland, WA
Resides: New York, NY

Winner of the 2023 Concert Artists Guild Competition and major prize winner at the 2022 Sibelius and Singapore International Violin Competitions, violinist Nathan Meltzer (b. 2000) is establishing a holistic and multifaceted career as both a soloist and chamber musician, with a passion for both standard and contemporary repertoire.

Nathan has performed as a soloist with major orchestras around the world, including the Orchestre national d’Île-de-France, Philharmonia Orchestra, Royal Northern Sinfonia, Finnish RSO, Helsinki Philharmonic, and the Aalborg, Alabama, Charlotte, Indianapolis, Montréal, North Carolina, and Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestras, among others. He has performed across Europe, Asia, and North and South America.

As a recitalist and chamber musician, Nathan has appeared at the Chamber Music Society of Palm Beach, Dresden Musikfestspiele, Hawaii Concert Society, Heidelberger Frühling, Honolulu Chamber Music Series, Jupiter Symphony Chamber Players, Kallos Chamber Music Series, Merkin Hall, New Canaan Chamber Music, Parlance Chamber Concerts, Princeton Sound Kitchen, and Midori’s Partners in Performance, and at festivals including ChamberFest Cleveland, IMS Prussia Cove, Krzyzowa Music, La Jolla SummerFest, the Montreal and Moritzburg Chamber Music Festivals, Music@Menlo’s International Program, Newport Classical, Ravinia Festival Institute, Perlman Music Program, Verbier Festival Academy, and Yellow Barn.

Nathan is co-Founder and Artistic Director of The Green Room Ensemble, a non-profit chamber music organization dedicated to new music and historically unexplored works by composers from a variety of backgrounds and heritages. The Ensemble’s 2026-27 season will include a North American tour of Eleanor Alberga’s String Quartet Cycle and will feature the world premiere of her Second Piano Quintet, performed with the composer herself at the piano.

Nathan is a graduate of The Juilliard School, where he studied with Itzhak Perlman and Li Lin.

Website: www.nathanmeltzer.com**Management:** *Concert Artists Guild*
(continued)

Keila Wakao
Violin

Born: Chestnut Hill, MA
Resides: Chestnut Hill, MA

Keila Wakao made her Boston Symphony Orchestra debut at the BSO's Season Opening Night Gala in September 2024 under the direction of Andris Nelsons. She was also invited to be the sole performer at the unveiling of Seiji Ozawa's sculpture at Ozawa Hall in Tanglewood in July 2025, an event attended by members of Seiji Ozawa's family, John Williams, and other distinguished guests. In November 2025, Keila premiered Bobby Ge's Violin Concerto with Maestro David Allan Miller and the Albany Symphony. In January 2026, she recorded her debut album with Octavia Records, scheduled for release later this year. In July, Keila will be making her Tanglewood Music Festival debut with Andris Nelsons and the Boston Symphony Orchestra, performing the Barber Violin Concerto.

Keila won the 2021 Menuhin Violin Competition Junior Division, along with the Composer Award (best interpretation of the commissioned piece), and was awarded the Gold Medal and Bach Prize at the 2021 Stulberg String Competition. In 2023, she received the Aoyama Music Foundation Award in Japan, and the Salon de Virtuosi Career Grant. Keila also received the 2024 Next Generation Distinguished Cultural Achievement Award from the Japan Society of Boston.

Born in 2006, Keila began playing the violin at age three and studied with Donald Weilerstein from age nine. Currently, she is studying at the New England Conservatory on a Starling Foundation Full Scholarship with Miriam Fried. Keila has performed worldwide at venues such as Symphony Hall (Boston), Cadogan Hall (London), Victoria Concert Hall (Singapore), and Carnegie's Weill Recital Hall (New York). She made her solo debut with an orchestra at age nine and has performed with ensembles including the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Tokyo Philharmonic, Baden-Baden Philharmonic, Baltimore Chamber Orchestra, and Richmond Symphony Orchestra. In 2017, Keila performed and spoke at TEDxBoston. She also participated in the Perlman Music Program during the summers of 2018 through 2022.

Keila plays on the Cremona 1690 "Theodor" Stradivarius violin, on loan from the Ryuji Ueno Foundation and Rare Violins *In Consortium*, Artists and Benefactors Collaborative.

Website: www.keilawakao.com

Dmitry Yudin
Piano

Born: Moscow, Russia
Resides: New York, NY

Dmitry Yudin (b. 2001) is a Russian-born pianist whose artistry combines intellectual depth with compelling virtuosity. He began his musical training at the Moscow Gnessin School of Music at the age of five, studying with Professor Lydia Grigoryeva from 2008 to 2019, before relocating to the United States to further his education and career.

Yudin entered the Manhattan School of Music in 2019 as a full-scholarship student, studying under the mentorship of Horacio Gutiérrez. During this period, including the pandemic years, he remained an active performer, presenting multiple solo recitals both live and online. His performances have taken him across the United States, Europe, and Russia.

Recent seasons have marked Dmitry's rapid rise on the international stage. Highlights of 2025 included his debut at the Miami International Piano Festival, where he was praised as having "surpassed all expectations ... creating one of the most memorable debuts in the festival's history." The same year also saw Yudin's collaboration with the Verbier Festival Chamber Orchestra under Gábor Takács-Nagy at Zürich's Tonhalle Hall. In 2024, Yudin was the Second Prize recipient at the prestigious Géza Anda International Piano Competition in Zürich, where Martha Argerich was a jury member, and Paavo Järvi conducted the final concert. Additional awards include Second Prize and the audience award at Germany's Kissinger KlavierOlymp in 2025, and the HMA Foote Award in Boston, Third Prize at the New York Concert Artists Auditions, and Second Prize at the Wideman Concerto Competition in Louisiana in 2023.

In his musical career, Yudin has worked with leading artists including Evgeni Koroliov, Boris Berezovsky, Richard Goode, Steven Kovacevich, Jerome Rose, and Mikhail Voskresensky. He is currently studying with Stanislav Ioudenitch at Park University in Kansas City.

Management: *Géza Anda-Foundation*