

Artist Biographies for April 19, 2022 Music for Food Houston Concert

Wayne Brooks, viola

Wayne Brooks served as the Principal Viola of the Houston Symphony from 1985 through 2020. He joined the orchestra in 1977 as Associate Principal Viola after graduating from the Curtis Institute of Music. As Principal, he was a frequent soloist with the orchestra and gave the Houston premiere of Alfred Schnittke's Viola Concerto with Christoph Eschenbach conducting and performed the world premiere of La Llorona: Tone Poem for Viola and Orchestra, a Houston Symphony Orchestra commission for him by composer Gabriela Lena Frank. He appeared in chamber music performances with Joseph Silverstein, Lynn Harrell, Yefim Bronfman, Garrick Ohlsson and Christoph Eschenbach, among others, and participated in concerts of chamber music in the Houston Symphony's INNOVA series, in performances with Da Camera of Houston, Greenbriar Consortium and Mukuru "Arts for AIDS" Series.

As violist of the Houston Symphony Chamber Players, he served on the faculty of Japan's Pacific Music Festival and toured Japan and Europe. He appeared with them at Chicago's Ravinia Festival and recorded works with them of Webern and Berg. Before joining the faculty of the Moores School of Music, he was an associate professor of viola at Rice University's Shepherd School of Music. His former students perform in the New World, Charlotte, Richmond and Detroit Symphonies, and also the Hong Kong Philharmonic. They can be found in the Chiara, Arianna and Borromeo Quartets and serve on the faculties of Creighton University, the University of Idaho and Sam Houston State University.

Eunghee Cho, cello

Korean-American cellist Eunghee Cho was awarded Second Prize and the special award for Outstanding Chinese New Piece Performance at the Schoenfeld International String Competition in Harbin, China. He also earned top prizes at the Chamber Music Yellow Springs Competition and Gustav Mahler Prize Cello Competition among other international competitions. He has appeared as soloist with ensembles around the country and formerly held Principal Cello positions with Atlantic Symphony Orchestra and Boston Festival Orchestra. Eunghee has collaborated in performances with artists such as Midori Goto, Inon Barnatan, David Shifrin, Elton John, François Salque, and with members of the Borromeo String Quartet, St. Lawrence String Quartet, Calder String Quartet, A Far Cry, and Aaron Diehl Trio.

Eunghee nurtures a vibrant cello studio in Houston where he serves on the faculty of University of Houston's Moores School of Music. He has been invited to present cello masterclasses for Towson University, La Jolla Music Society, Walnut Hill School for the Arts, and Martha's Vineyard Chamber Music Society, and is the Artistic Director of Mellon Music Festival in Davis, CA as well as the Houston Chapter of Music for Food. Eunghee received his B.M. from University of Southern California and subsequently completed M.M. and D.M.A. degrees at New England Conservatory under the tutelage of Laurence Lesser and Paul Katz.

Cheng-Wei Hsieh, violin

Born in Kaohsiung, Taiwan, the versatile musician Cheng-Wei Hsieh is active in solo, chamber, and orchestral realms. He appears on many concert series in the Houston area, including the University of Houston faculty chamber music concert, the Clear Lake Chamber Ensemble, Cantare Houston, Southeast Texas Symphony Orchestra, Shreveport Symphony Orchestra as well as a variety of Chamber Music Outreach performances. Hsieh regularly led the Moores School Symphony Orchestra, Opera Orchestra, and Ballet Orchestra as a concertmaster. Besides his classical training, Hsieh also specializes in Baroque violin. In 2019, Hsieh and his friends founded the La Joie Trio, a violin/flute/harpsichord baroque ensemble dedicated to the performance of early music.

In addition to performing, Hsieh is also passionate about teaching and coaching chamber music having previously served as a Teacher Assistant for the string area at the University of Houston Moores School of Music from 2016-19. During the assistantship, he taught violin private lessons, group technique class, and chamber music at undergraduate level. Currently, Hsieh maintains a private studio in the Houston metropolitan area, working with students of all ages and levels. Since 2017, Hsieh has been invited to teach and perform as a violin faculty in the Encuentro Anual de Cuerdas, a pedagogical outreach program based in Tegucigalpa, Honduras. Hsieh holds his Bachelor of Music degree in Violin Performance from Tunghai University in Taichung, Taiwan, Master of Music degree from the University of North Texas, and Doctor of Musical Arts degree at the University of Houston Moores School of Music. He was under the tutelage of Dr. Kirsten Yon, Dr. Felix Olschofka, Dr. Ming-Shi Du and Dr. Ping-Yu Chuang.

MuChen Hsieh, violin

MuChen Hsieh, from Taiwan, joined the Houston Symphony as Principal Second Violin in 2017. Prior to her appointment at Houston Symphony, she has worked with conductors such as Thomas Ades, Charles Dutoit, Larry Rachleff, David Robertson, Joshua Weilerstein, and Hugh Wolff, among others. She studied with Kathleen Winkler, Malcolm Lowe, and Masuko Ushioda at Shepherd School of Music at Rice University and New England Conservatory of Music.

MuChen performs regularly in the US and Taiwan. Most recently, she appeared as a soloist with the Houston Symphony in 2019, 2020, and 2022. As an avid chamber musician, she has collaborated with James Dunham, Cho-Liang Lin, Jon Kimura Parker, Gil Shaham, and Kathleen Winkler. When MuChen is home in Taiwan every summer, she enjoys playing chamber concerts with friends and coaching string orchestras.

Suzanne LeFevre, viola

Suzanne LeFevre has led an active orchestral career and chamber life music life, which has involved playing in numerous orchestras and ensembles in the US, as well as Europe, including Principal Viola of the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra, Assistant Principal Viola of the Charlotte Symphony, Principal Viola of Mercury Baroque, Nederlands Philharmonic Orchestra,

Granada Symphony Orchestra, Milwaukee Ballet Orchestra, and New Haven Symphony. Ms. LeFevre spends the summers participating in the Grand Teton Music Festival, Texas Strings Camp and Peninsula Music Festival in Door County, Wisconsin, her native state.

After spending 20 months in Antwerp Belgium, in 2005, Ms. LeFevre moved to Houston Texas, where she is currently plays with ROCO, and Houston Grand Opera and Houston Symphony. She has been a member of the faculty at the University of Houston, Moores School of Music since 2012.

Henna Mohamed, cello

Henna Mohamed originally hails from Fairfield, Connecticut and is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Music Performance degree at the Moores School of Music. Henna has been the recipient of numerous awards which include the Music For Youth Malafrente Scholarship and the Greenwich Symphony's Music Award and Scholarship. She has been a finalist of several competitions including the Lyra Music Competition, the Stamford Young Artists competition, the Norwalk Symphony Orchestra Concerto Competition, and the Williams Chorale Bacardi Fallon Scholarship Competition. With a passion for chamber music and working with young musicians, she has completed internships with Chamber Music Central and the Young Talent Chamber Music Inc. Henna has also served as faculty for the Young Artists Philharmonic of Stamford, Connecticut. Henna has participated in masterclasses with Allison Eldridge, Ole Akahoshi, Fred Edelen, and the Modigliani String Quartet.

Andreea Muț, piano

Dr. Andreea Muț is a prolific collaborative pianist and educator based in Houston, TX. She has performed recitals throughout Romania, France, Spain, Colombia, Mexico and the United States, and won numerous prizes in national and international competitions in her native Romania. She moved to Texas in 2009, and completed her Doctorate in Collaborative Arts at the University of Houston in 2015. Dr. Muț holds the keyboard chair for ROCO Houston, and has enjoyed collaborations with organizations such as Da Camera Houston, APERIO - Music of the Americas, Opera in the Heights, the Foundation for Modern Music, the Texas New Music Ensemble, Houston Symphony Chorus, the Texas Music Festival, Opera San Antonio, Houston Youth Symphony, Songs by Heart Foundation, and the Classical Music Institute in San Antonio, Texas. She also performs regularly as part of the Gerling-Muț duo in the Harmony in the Air series at the Hobby Airport, along with violinist Dr. Ingrid Gerling.

In addition to her numerous performance obligations, Dr. Muț is currently serving as staff pianist and vocal coach at the University of Houston, organist and pianist at St. Stephen's United Methodist Church, Houston, and pianist for the Grammy-winning Houston Chamber Choir. Dr. Muț is a Shigeru Kawai Artist since August 2021.

Kirsten Yon, violin

Dr. Kirsten Yon is Associate Professor of Violin and Head of the String Division at the University of Houston Moores School of Music. Former faculty at Texas Tech University, she received her DMA from Rice University, MM from the Cleveland Institute of Music, and BM from the University of Michigan. Her career includes outstanding accolades for recital engagements, concerto performances, and masterclasses throughout the United States (including Carnegie Hall, Weill Recital Hall), Brazil, Czech Republic, England, South Korea, Honduras, Mexico, Germany, France, Iceland, and Norway. She has taught at summer festivals including Interlochen, ARIA International Summer Summer Academy, Texas Music Festival, Center Stage Strings (University of Michigan), International Music Academy Pilsen (Czech Republic), Nathan Schwartzman String Festival (Brazil), Naolinco (Mexico), and the Cambridge International String Academy (England). Dedicated to musical outreach at both the community and international levels, Yon is Founder/Artistic Director of Annual Encuentro de Cuerdas, a long-standing pedagogical program in Tegucigalpa, Honduras.

Dr. Yon has held concertmaster chairs with Bayou City Chamber Orchestra, Lubbock Symphony Orchestra, Caprock Pro Musica Sinfonietta, Ballet Lubbock and Cypress Symphony, and performed with River Oaks Chamber Orchestra, Ars Lyrica, and Musiq. She currently enjoys performing as Concertmaster of the Shreveport Symphony (Louisiana) with conductor Michael Butterman. As a lauded chamber musician, Yon founded the Champlain Piano Trio, the Archiano Ensemble, the Karlin Trio, and the Botticelli String Quartet. Major teachers included Stephen Shipp, William Preucil, David Updegraff, and Kathleen Winkler. Her debut recording on Centaur Records with cellist Jeffrey Lastrapes was released in 2015. When not teaching and playing the violin, she is likely spending time with her two rescue puppies, Bella and Jasper!

Yuxuan Zhang, viola

Yuxuan Zhang comes from Beijing, China, and she is pursue certificate in music performance in University of Houston studying with Wayne Brooks. Zhang began her studies of viola at the age of 13 in per college of China Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing and she received her bachelor's degree from Kant State university, as well as a performance diploma at Indiana University's Jacob school of music. Her previous mentors have included Shaowu Wang, Fei Cao, Yu Jin and Atar Arad. Yuxuan Zhang is an alumna of National Repertoire Orchestra and Aspen Music Festival and she has been a violist of Canton Symphony Orchestra and Owensboro Symphony Orchestra.

Members of Tomatz Quartet

Luis Osorio, violin (Tomatz Quartet)

Luis Osorio began his professional studies at the University of Antioquia under the tutelage of Dr. Ana Maria Trujillo. Later in 2014, he was awarded a scholarship to continue his professional studies at Northwestern State University of Louisiana under the guidance of Dr. Andrej Kurti. During his time at NSU, Luis served as concertmaster and assistant concertmaster in the violin

section of the NN Symphony Orchestra. Luis was selected from the strings category to play an honors recital as a soloist in Colombia in the McCutcheon Honors Recital in 2017. In terms of orchestral experience, Luis Osorio has been part of the violin sections of several orchestras throughout Louisiana and East Texas, such as Rapides Symphony Orchestra, Acadiana Symphony Orchestra, Longview Symphony Orchestra, Marshall Symphony Orchestra, Northeast Texas Symphony Orchestra, South Arkansas Symphony Orchestra among others. After graduating from Northwestern State University of Louisiana, Luis Osorio served as orchestra director at Austin ISD. Now, Luis is working to complete his graduate degree at the University of Houston under the guidance of Dr. Kirsten Yon.

Marcio Martinez, violin (Tomatz Quartet)

Marcio Martinez is an Honduran native violinist who began studies in the Escuela de Música music school in his birth city of Tegucigalpa. After graduating as one of the top string in the school, he began his professional career as a musician for the Philharmonic Orchestra of Honduras and then he won the audition to be part of Chamber Orchestra of the National University of Honduras in which he grew until becomes concertmaster. In 2017 Marcio completed his undergraduate in the National Autonomous University of Honduras in Tegucigalpa. Marcio also played in numerous Operas with the orchestra of Musical Foundation of Honduras, operas like Tosca, Pagliacci, Madame Butterfly and others. Marcio has garnered teaching experiences with violin and chamber music while he was working in the Music School for short period of time. Marcio is currently studying at the University of Houston.

Nathan Smith, viola (Tomatz Quartet)

Nathan Smith is a violinist and violist from Austin, Texas. After graduating from Oberlin Conservatory with a bachelors in violin performance in 2020, he began his masters studies at University of Houston with Suzanne Lefevre. Nathan has also attended many classical music festivals, such as Interlochen, Orford, Encore academy, and Round Top festival institute. He is currently a member of the Tomatz string quartet and is studying hard to prepare for professional auditions and finish earning his masters degree.

Hannah Deplazes, cello (Tomatz Quartet)

Originally from North Dakota, Hannah graduated from Minot State University in 2021 with a degree in Cello Performance. She has studied cello since the age of 8 with multiple teachers in the United States and Germany. Hannah has attended summer festivals including the Eastman Cello Institute, Dakota Chamber Music, University of Utah Chamber Music Workshop, High Peaks Music Festival, and Texas Music Festival: Orchestral Institute. She has also competed in several competitions like MTNA, the national Jugend Musiziert Wettbewerb, and won two solo competitions which resulted in solo performances with the Minot Symphony Orchestra.

Currently, Hannah is studying for her MM in Cello Performance at the University of Houston's Moores School of Music where she is an active solo performer and a member of the Tomatz String Quartet.