



Composition/ Conducting

1950s

José Serebrier (Composition '58) recently published several compositions for solo instruments, choir, band, and orchestra for the publishers Peermusic and Wise Music Group.

1960s

The National Library of Australia in December published *The Excellencies of Musick*, which gathers highlights from the print collection of musicologists **Michael Kassler** (Composition '60) and his wife Jamie Kassler. Included are music manuscripts, libretti, engraved tickets, advertisements, and portraits, among other items.

1980s

Paul Brantley's (Composition '85) piece *KITHARA* was performed in October by classical guitarist Dan Lippel at Columbia University and on the South Huntington Library chamber music series in Huntington Station, N.Y.

Mark Russell Smith

(Conducting '87) in February conducted performances of Michael Abels and Rhiannon Giddens' *Omar's Journey*, a concert adaptation of their Pulitzer Prize-winning opera, with the Quad City Symphony Orchestra, where he is music director. The next month, Mr. Smith led the second U.S. performance of Bright Sheng's

viola concerto *Of Time and Love*, co-commissioned by Curtis and performed by Curtis President and CEO Roberto Díaz (Viola '84).

The Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra led by JoAnn Falletta released *Contemporary Landscapes*, an album of new American works, which includes *Symphony in Three Movements (For Clyfford Still)* by **Russell Platt** (Composition '88), on its Beau Fleuve label. An all-Platt album featuring the Borromeo String Quartet and tenor Paul Appleby is planned for the Bridge Records later this year.



In March **Paavo Järvi** (Conducting '88) and the Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich kicked off a complete Mahler symphony cycle for Alpha Classics, starting with a recording of the composer's Fifth Symphony. Last November, Warner Classics released a box set of all of Mr. Järvi's recordings on the label to date, numbering 30 CDs in all.



Strings

1970s

Mi-Young Park-Mostovoy (Violin '71) is the subject of an online documentary film, *A*

Milestones



→ **Mari Yoshinaga** (Timpani and Percussion '12) and Noah Geller welcomed their first child, Jonah Masayuki Geller, on February 17 in Seattle.

→ **Robin Kesselman** (Double Bass '15) and Allegra Lilly welcomed the birth of their daughter, Dylan Jane Kesselman, on December 17. She weighs six pounds, one ounce.

Musical Journey of Distinction: Mi-Young and Pong-Hi Park. Tracing the sibling violin and piano duo's 50-year career, starting in South Korea and continuing in America, the film highlights Curtis' significant role in Mi-Young Park's early life.

1980s



Michael Ludwig (Violin '82) was named director and conductor of Pysm Strings New Jersey, a training program based in Cherry Hill, N.J.

1990s

Wilhelmina Smith (Cello '90) released *Sweetgrass*, an album of solo cello music by Dawn Avery, a Grammy-nominated composer of Mohawk Kanièn-keha descent, on the Azica label in May.

2000s

Karina Canellakis (Violin '04) in April renewed her contract as chief conductor of the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra through 2031.

2010s

Rachel Yonan (Viola '11) and pianist Kwan Yi released their album *Kiss on Wood* in April on the Sono Luminus label. The program reflects on the contrast of light and darkness in works by Arvo Pärt, James MacMillan, and Robert Schumann.

Brandon Garbot (Violin '18) has joined the Geneva-based Aviv Quartet as its second violinist.

The Aizuri Quartet (String Quartet '16), Curtis' Quartet in Residence from 2014–16, has disbanded. Founded in 2012, the quartet was recognized for its creative programming and numerous commissions and premieres, including works by Jennifer Higdon (Composition '88), David Serkin Ludwig (Composition '01), and Gabriella Smith (Composition

'13 and '16). It won several prizes during its 13-year run, including the Cleveland Quartet Award in two consecutive seasons.

**Winds/Brass****2000s**

Shea Scruggs (Oboe '04) has been named director of the John J. Cali School of Music at Montclair State University. Familiar to many alumni, Mr. Scruggs has been Curtis' director of institutional research and musician experience, a post that he will hold until early this summer. He is also a co-founder of the Black Orchestral Network, a nonprofit organization that advocates for Black orchestral musicians.

2020s

James Vaughen (Trumpet '23) has been named principal trumpet of Minnesota Orchestra starting with the 2025–26 season. He succeeds Manny Laureano, who retires after 44 seasons. Mr. Vaughen is currently assistant principal trumpet at the Detroit Symphony Orchestra.

**Percussion****1960s**

An essay titled *Steve Reich Taught Me Yoga* by **Russell Hartenberger** (Percussion

'66) is featured in an extensive booklet accompanying Nonesuch Records' *Steve Reich Collected Works*, a 27-CD box set released in March.

**Piano/
Accompanying****1980s**

In October, New Focus Recordings released *belletude* by **Ketty Nez** (Piano '83) on the album *Boston Etudes* by pianist Jihye Chang.

1990s

Min Kwon (Piano '90) is performing a recital tour for her ongoing project *America/Beautiful*, in which she commissioned music by 76 American composers, including David Serkin Ludwig ('01), retiring Curtis faculty member Richard Danielpour, Jonathan Bailey Holland ('96), and Viet Cuong ('19). A five-CD album will be released by Delos this year.

2000s

Jonathan Biss (Piano '01) has joined the roster of Colbert Artists Management for North and South American management. He spoke about management in the Spring 2023 issue of *Overtones*, describing how trust and creativity are essential traits in a manager.

Roman Rabinovich (Piano '08) made his concerto debut with the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra in January. He returned to Israel in April for

a recital tour and concerto performances with the Haifa Symphony Orchestra and plans to release a recording of Bach's *Goldberg Variations* in May.

2010s

In March **Haochen Zhang** (Piano '12) released an album on BIS Records of Beethoven's *Hammerklavier* Sonata and Liszt's Sonata in B minor.

**Organ****2000s**

Paul Jacobs (Organ '00) was a soloist with the Philadelphia Orchestra for performances of Alfredo Casella's *Concerto Romano* and with the Seattle Symphony for performances of Francis Poulenc's *Organ Concerto*. He also gave a solo recital presented by the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

**Voice/Opera****1960s**

Daniel Eby (Voice '66) has organized a classical voice competition in Toronto for young singers to celebrate his 40th year of teaching classical voice.

Mary Lou Falcone (Voice '66) was an executive producer, along with Renée Fleming, Suzie and Bruce

Viano Quartet Wins a Fisher Grant



The **Viano Quartet** (String Quartet '23) in March was named one of three recipients of a 2025 Avery Fisher Career Grant. Awarded by the Avery Fisher Artist Program, the grants support exceptional instrumentalists and chamber groups who are citizens or permanent residents of the U.S. Formed in 2015 at the Colburn School, the Viano Quartet is currently a resident ensemble in the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center's Bowers Program, for up-and-coming artists, a post it will hold through 2027.

"When we got the call, we were just awestruck," said cellist Tate Zawadiuk at an awards reception and performance at the Jerome L. Greene Performance Space in New York. "There are so many incredible artists who we look up to that have won this award. To be a part of that group is really special."

Kovner, Yo-Yo Ma, and David Hyde Pierce on *Facing the Wind*, a documentary film directed by Deirdre Fishel that tells the stories of caregivers for their spouses with

Lewy body dementia. Ms. Falcone previously explored the topic in her 2023 memoir, *I Didn't See It Coming: Scenes of Love, Loss and Lewy Body Dementia*.

1990s

Mezzo-soprano **Misoon Ghim** (Opera '95) was a soloist in performances of Bach's *St. John's Passion* at Lotte Concert Hall in Seoul, South Korea, in Han-

del's *Messiah* at the Seoul Arts Center, and Lili Boulanger's *Pie Jesu* at the Saint-Philippe-du-Roule Church in Paris.

2000s

Karen Slack (Opera '02) and **Michelle Cann** (Piano '13) in February won a Grammy Award for Best Classical Solo Vocal Album for *Beyond the Years: Unpublished Songs of Florence Price*. It features 19 unpublished songs by Price, including 16 world premiere recordings.

Charles Suk Chul Kim (Opera '02) presented Schubert's *Winterreise* with pianist Kyungsook Lee at the Seoul Art Center in a concert celebrating Curtis' centennial.

Students

Soprano **Sarah Fleiss** (Voice '23, Opera '25) is the first-ever vocalist to win the 2025 Arthur W. Foote Award from the Harvard Musical Association. Along with the \$3,500 prize, she will present a concert in Boston with her recital partner and fellow Curtis student, pianist Delvan Lin.



Bass-baritone **Evan Gray** (Voice '23, Opera '25) has joined the roster of IMG Artists for general management. He will be represented by Matthew Horner and Noah Sesling.



Cellist **Jiayin He** ('23) in March was appointed to the cello section of the Philadelphia Orchestra. The master's student has served as principal cello of the Curtis Symphony Orchestra.



Violinist **Himari Yoshimura** was named one of Classic FM's Rising Stars, the broadcaster's annual listing of 30 musicians under age 30 to watch. The 13-year-old violinist, who is known professionally as Himari, in March signed with Decca Classics, becoming the youngest-ever female artist to join the British label.

Faculty/Staff

Yannick Nézet-Séguin in February won a Grammy for Best Compilation Soundtrack for Visual Media for *Maestro: Music by Leonard Bernstein*. He shares the award with producer Bradley Cooper and the London Symphony Orchestra.



Blair Bollinger (Trombone '86) presented an all-star trombone concert at the Glencairn Museum in Bryn Athyn, Pa. in honor of former faculty member Glenn Dodson (Trombone '53). Several of his former trombone students performed, including Joseph Alessi ('81), Achilles Liarmakopoulos ('08), Joseph McEttrick ('00), and Darrin Milling ('90), as well as current Curtis faculty member Matthew Vaughn.

Curtis Symphony Orchestra's performance at David Geffen Hall was generously underwritten by the alumni of the Curtis Institute of Music, including:

Teddy Abrams ('08)	Young Uck Kim ('70)
Benjamin Beilman ('12)	Kyu Yeon Kim ('09)
Blair Bollinger ('86)	Kyung Sook Lee ('67)
J'Nai Bridges ('12)	Michele Levin ('65)
Michelle Cann ('13)	Daniel Matsukawa ('92)
Dukju Kim Chang ('67)	Robert McDonald ('76)
Elissa Koljonen ('94) and Roberto Díaz ('84)	Anthony McGill ('00)
Mary Lou Falcone ('66)	Demarre McGill ('96)
Avery Gaglano ('24)	Sandra Miller ('72)
Richard Goode ('64)	Alan Morrison ('93)
Daniel Heifetz ('71) and Janne Heifetz	Zina Schiff ('69)
William A. Horn, M.D. ('70)	Jane Shaulis ('75) and Joseph Gasperec
Bella Hristova ('08) and David Serkin Ludwig ('01)	David Shifrin ('71)
Marsha Hunter ('77)	Robert Spano ('85)
Andrew Jacobs ('93)	Lawrence Tarlow ('74)
Erin Keefe ('03)	Yuja Wang ('08)
	Peter Wiley ('74)
	Amy Yang ('06)

October 13, 2025 Founder's Day

Join us as we celebrate Founder's Day with a special Giving Day for Curtis. This is a unique opportunity to honor our past, support our present, and invest in the future of Curtis.

Visit curtis.edu/give for more details on how you can make an impact!



THOSE WE HAVE LOST



Longtime trustee **Peter Benoliel** died on February 17 at his home in St. Davids, Pa. at age 93. He served on Curtis' board of trustees from 1982 to 1996 and was then named a trustee emeritus.

A chemist, Mr. Benoliel was the longtime president and CEO of Quaker Chemical Corporation, a Conshohocken, Pa.-based chemicals company built by his father and uncle in the 1930s.

In addition to his Curtis service, Mr. Benoliel was board chair of the Philadelphia Orchestra from 1995 to 2000 and was involved for nearly seven decades with the Settlement

Music School, joining its board in 1957. Last year, the school renamed its Germantown Avenue site the Peter A. Benoliel Germantown Branch.

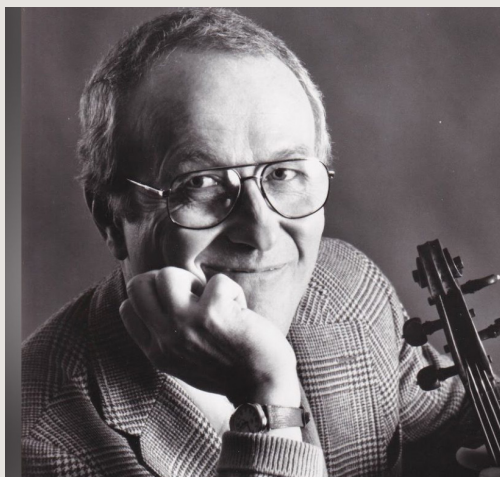
As board chair of the Philadelphia Orchestra, he led the institution through a difficult period that included a 64-day musicians' strike. He identified Sidney Kimmel as a prospective donor for what would become the Kimmel Center, and he was instrumental in securing a \$10 million gift in 2000 from Walter and Leonore Annenberg to endow the music director position. An amateur violinist himself, Mr.

Benoliel endowed three second violin positions.

Mr. Benoliel was born in Philadelphia in 1932 and raised by parents who were themselves patrons of the city's cultural organizations. He graduated from Princeton University in 1953 with a degree in philosophy and a minor in chemistry before serving as a naval officer during the Korean War. He joined the family business in 1957 as a chemist. From 1966 to 1992, he was president and CEO of Quaker Chemical. In 2019, the company became Quaker Houghton in a \$1.6 billion merger.

Mr. Benoliel sat on over a dozen corporate and nonprofit boards and served as chair of the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia board from 1989 to 1992. With an inquisitive zeal, he nurtured interests in literature, philosophy, Japanese history and art, and astrophysics. He loved to play chamber music, including as part of a pickup string quartet. "Music," Mr. Benoliel once wrote, "is the deepest source of my spiritual life."

Mr. Benoliel is survived by his third wife, Willo Carey, along with his sister, children, and grandchildren.



Scott Nickrenz ('58), a violist and impresario who directed chamber music series at several prominent festivals and institutions, died at his home in Boston on March 17. He was 87 years old.

In a career that spanned more than five decades, Mr. Nickrenz was especially prolific as a presenter, serving as the director of chamber music at the Brooklyn Academy of Music (1975–88) and director of chamber music for the Spoleto Festivals in both Spoleto, Italy, and Charleston, S.C. (a role he shared with his wife, flutist Paula Robison, starting in 1978).

His longest affiliation was with the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston, whose music series he curated for 26 years. During that time, he oversaw the construction of the museum's acclaimed Calderwood Hall, a "sonic cube" designed by architect Renzo Piano and acoustician Yasuhisa Toyota that placed musicians at the center with listeners on all four sides.

Beyond managerial roles, Mr. Nickrenz performed with several ensembles. He co-founded the Lenox String Quartet, the Orpheus Trio, and the Vermeer Quartet, and

was a near-annual guest artist with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center during the 1970s and '80s. As an educator, he served on the faculty of the New England Conservatory (NEC) and was the chamber music director for the New World Symphony in Miami. Mr. Nickrenz considered teaching his life's most consistent purpose.

Born in Buffalo, N.Y., Roy Scott Nickrenz studied piano and violin before switching to viola on the recommendation of his teacher, the noted violinist Alexander Schneider. Years later, Mr. Nickrenz studied at Curtis with Max Aronoff (Viola and Chamber Music '24), and following graduation, he became a fellow at Tanglewood, where he worked with musicians including Elliott Carter, Leon Kirchner, Gunther Schuller, John Cage, and Aaron Copland.

Mr. Nickrenz enjoyed cigars, martinis, and poker, and in high school held the title of New York State tennis champion. He is survived by his wife, his daughters—pianist Erika Nickrenz and psychologist and singer-songwriter Elizabeth Nickrenz Fein—along with extended family.



Allison Nelson Loebbaka (Piano '49), a pianist and educator who was a member of the duo piano team Nelson and Neal, died on March 31. She was 97 years old.

For nearly two decades, Ms. Loebbaka performed extensively as a member of the piano duo with her first husband, Harry L. Neal ('48). After his sudden death from an apparent heart attack in 1968, she focused on a second career as a university professor and author of several method books.

Born Allison Nelson in Adelaide, Australia, her musical talents were recognized at age seven, and by age ten, she was performing in public and on Australian radio. After conductor Eugene Ormandy heard her on a tour of Australia in 1944, she was admitted to Curtis, where she studied with Rudolf Serkin. During this time, she met Mr. Neal, and the two formed the Nelson and Neal piano duo in 1949. Together, the couple toured

North America in a custom-built motor home, which carried eight people and two grand pianos. They logged as many as 40,000 miles a year. With their three children, they appeared on the TV show *This Is Your Life* in 1959.

After Mr. Neal's death in 1968, at age 40, Ms. Loebbaka began a second career as artist-in-residence and professor at the University of Tennessee at Martin (UTM). There, she helped to set up the Bachelor of Music in piano performance program and founded the UTM Piano Ensemble, before retiring in 1989. Ms. Loebbaka wrote a series of instruction books for beginner- and intermediate-level pianists, which are still in use today. In 2018, UTM introduced the Allison Nelson Guest Artist Series.

Ms. Loebbaka is survived by her second husband, Dr. David Loebbaka, three children, and extended family.