

Avery Fisher Career Grants – Recipient Biographies

Steven Banks
Saxophone

Born: Winston-Salem, NC
July 9, 1993
Resides: Freeville, NY

Recognized for his “deeply felt lyricism” and “expert shaping of a dramatic arc” (*Cleveland Classical*), Steven Banks is an ambassador for the classical saxophone. He is establishing himself as both a compelling and charismatic soloist, dedicated to showcasing the vast capabilities of the instrument, and an advocate for expanding its repertoire. As an artist with a commitment to rethinking the boundaries of classical music, Banks “has the potential to be one of the transformational artists of the twenty-first century” (*Seen and Heard International*). Steven Banks has been chosen to join WQXR’s 2022 Artist Propulsion Lab.

Recent highlights include John Adams’ Saxophone Concerto under the direction of Peter Oundjian with the Colorado Symphony and appearing on subscription concerts with The Cleveland Orchestra at Severance Hall performing Philip Glass’ *Façades* under the baton of John Adams. This performance received such accolades as “the mournful line of his soprano sax soared over a gently throbbing orchestra, changing colors with every harmonic shift bewitching listeners like the flute of a snake charmer” (Zachary Lewis, cleveland.com).

In the 22-23 season, Steven Banks will premiere and perform a new saxophone concerto, written for him by Grammy Award winning pianist/composer Billy Childs, with the Kansas City Symphony, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Chautauqua Institution and the Aspen Music Festival and School.

Steven Banks is the first saxophonist to earn a place on the Young Concert Artists roster in its 60-year history, capturing First Prize at the 2019 Young Concert Artists International Auditions. Last season, his critically acclaimed recital debut was streamed from Merkin Concert Hall, and co-sponsored by Washington Performing Arts featuring world premieres by Carlos Simon, Saad Haddad and one of Banks’ own compositions.

Mr. Banks is an advocate for diversity and inclusion in music education, performance, and newly commissioned works in the classical realm. He gave a talk at the TEDxNorthwesternU 2017 conference presenting an approach to dismantling institutionalized prejudices against women and people of color. He co-created the Learning to Listen roundtable, a discussion on the nuances of the Black experience in classical music and beyond. In partnership with the Sphinx Organization, he also co-created the Illuminate! series, which opened three essential conversations on the subject of music education, artist activism, and the LGBTQIA+ community in classical music.

Website: www.steven-banks.com

Management: *Young Concert Artists, Inc.*

Randall Goosby
Violin

Born: San Diego, CA
July 6, 1996
Resides: New York, NY

“For me, personally, music has been a way to inspire others” – Randall Goosby’s own words sum up perfectly his commitment to being an artist who makes a difference.

Signed exclusively to Decca Classics in 2020 at the age of 24, American violinist Randall Goosby is acclaimed for the sensitivity and intensity of his musicianship alongside his determination to make music more inclusive and accessible, as well as to bring the music of under-represented composers to light.

Highlights of Randall Goosby’s 2021-22 season include debuts with the Los Angeles Philharmonic under Gustavo Dudamel at the Hollywood Bowl, Baltimore Symphony under Dalia Stasevska, Detroit Symphony under Jader Bignamini, London Philharmonic Orchestra and Philharmonia Orchestra. He makes recital appearances at London’s Wigmore Hall, New York’s 92nd Street Y, San Francisco Symphony’s Davies Symphony Hall and Boston’s Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum.

Randall Goosby has performed with orchestras across the United States including the New York Philharmonic, Cleveland Orchestra, Nashville Symphony and New World Symphony. Recital appearances have included the Kennedy Center, Kravis Center and Wigmore Hall. Randall Goosby was First Prize Winner in the 2018 Young Concert Artists International Auditions. In 2019, he was named the inaugural Robey Artist by Young Classical Artists Trust in partnership with Music Masters in London; and in 2020 he became an Ambassador for Music Masters, a role that sees him mentoring and inspiring students in schools around the United Kingdom.

Goosby made his debut with the Jacksonville Symphony at age nine. At age 13, he performed with the New York Philharmonic on a Young People’s Concert at Lincoln Center’s Avery Fisher Hall and became the youngest recipient ever to win the Sphinx Concerto Competition. He is a recipient of Sphinx’s Isaac Stern Award and of a career advancement grant from the Bagby Foundation. A graduate of The Juilliard School, he is pursuing an Artist Diploma under Itzhak Perlman and Catherine Cho. An active chamber musician, he has spent his summers studying at the Perlman Music Program, Verbier Festival Academy and Mozarteum Summer Academy, among others. Randall Goosby plays a 1735 Giuseppe Guameri del Gesù on generous loan from the Stradivari Society. Randall Goosby appears courtesy of Decca Classics. **Website:** www.randallgoosby.com **Joint General Management:** *Primo Artists and Harrison Parrott*

Ji Su Jung
Marimba and Solo Percussion

Born: Cheongju, SK
December 1, 1992
Resides: Washington, DC

Percussion soloist Ji Su Jung has a distinctive voice that is instantly recognizable for its lyricism and sincerity. Her artistic breadth carries her with equal ease from the solo marimba medium to multiple percussion solos and European theatrical performance pieces. Born in South Korea, Jung is a rarity in the world of percussion having begun her studies at the age of four. Her exceptional talent was
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recognized early on and led to recitals and concerto performances at such a young age that she needed a small platform to stand upon just to reach the keyboard of the instrument. That platform was soon left behind as her stature and musical voice matured and numerous solo performances throughout her native country followed. In 2011, she moved to the United States where she completed her undergraduate studies at the Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University and later received her Masters and Artist Diploma from the Yale School of Music.

Her exceptional potential quickly blossomed into professional success leading to concerto performances with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Colorado Music Festival, Aspen Festival Orchestra, Houston Symphony, the Romanian Symphony Orchestra, Grand Rapids Symphony and the Windsor Symphony in Canada. Recitals across America have won over new audiences for the marimba and her appearance at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. resulted in an unexpected invitation to join the faculty at The Peabody Institute of Johns Hopkins University. Miss Jung was the first percussionist in 26 years to win the First Prize at the 2018 Ima Hogg Competition of the Houston Symphony where she also garnered the Audience Choice Award. NPR radio host Fred Childs invited her to be a young artist in residence on his nationally syndicated program, Performance Today. Ji Su has presented master classes at the Curtis Institute of Music, New York University, The Shepherd School of Music at Rice University, and the Beijing Conservatory in China. In 2015, she was a laureate at the renown International Marimba Competition in Linz, Austria.

Website: www.jisujung.com

Mackenzie Melemed
Piano

Born: Newton, MA
February 27, 1995
Resides: Holyoke, MA

Winner of The Juilliard School's 2019 Leo B. Ruiz Carnegie Hall Recital Prize, 2018 Arthur Rubinstein Prize, the Jade Medal at the 2019 China International Music Competition, and the first prize and chamber music prize at Finland's 2017 Maj Lind International Piano Competition, 27-year-old Mackenzie Melemed's international career continues to flourish. Praised by the New York Times as an "excellent young pianist" Melemed has performed at The White House (2004-2008), Carnegie Hall, Beijing's National Performing Arts Center, Warsaw Philharmonic Hall, and the Helsinki Music Center. Notable concerto performances include Rachmaninoff with Yannick Nézet-Séguin and the Philadelphia Orchestra, Barber with Pablo Gonzalez and the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra, and Scriabin with Leif Segerstam and the Turku Philharmonic Orchestra.

This season, Melemed returns to the Helsinki Philharmonic with Mei-Ann Chen and Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 2 and will make debuts stateside with Rossen Milanov and the Princeton Symphony, and with Michael Stern and the Stamford Symphony. In Europe, Melemed will perform Avner Dorman's Piano Concerto No. 3 with Markus Huber and the Thüringen Philharmonic (world-premiere) and Chopin's Piano Concerto No. 2 with Lohja City Orchestra (Finland). Melemed performs solo and chamber music programs in Estonia, Finland, France, and Mexico.

Melemed is a recipient of The Juilliard School's Career Advancement Grant and was named a laureate of the 2021 American Pianists Awards, a distinction that came with a \$50,000 cash prize. Melemed's discography includes world-premiere recordings of Avner Dorman's *Three Etudes* on the Steinway and Sons label, and Jeajoon Ryu's Piano Concerto (2017) with Ralf Gothoni and Sinfonia Varsovia on the Warner Classics label. Melemed attended The Juilliard School, receiving his Bachelor of Music, accelerated Master of Music, and Artist Diploma with Robert McDonald and Emanuel Ax. Melemed is a Steinway Artist and is represented in Finland by Fazer Artists. **Website:** www.mackenziemelemed.com

Management: *Fazer Artists' Management, Inc.*

Jonathan Swensen
Cello

Born: Copenhagen, DK
September 27, 1996
Resides: Allston, MA

Jonathan Swensen is a First Prize winner of the 2018 Young Concert Artists International Auditions, 2018 Khachaturian International Cello Competition and the 2019 Windsor International String Competition. In his native Denmark he was also a recipient of the 2020 Musikanmelderringens Artist Prize, 2019 Jacob Gades Scholarship, 2017 Léonie Sonning Talent Prize and received First Prize at the 2016 Danish String Competition.

Jonathan Swensen made his concerto debut in March 2017, performing the Elgar Cello Concerto with the Orquestra Sinfónica do Porto Casa da Música. Since then, he has performed with orchestras including the Philharmonia Orchestra, the Orquesta Ciudad de Granada, the Copenhagen Philharmonic, Iceland Symphony Orchestra, Aarhus Symphony Orchestra, the NFM Leopoldinum Orchestra, the Armenian State Symphony Orchestra and the Sun Symphony Orchestra in Hanoi, Vietnam. He has upcoming concerto debuts with the Odense Symfoniorkester, Greenville Symphony Orchestra and the Mobile Symphony Orchestra. He is also a frequent performer at festivals in Denmark and further afield, appearing among others at the Tivoli Festival, the Copenhagen Summer Festival, the Hindsgavl Summer Festival, Oremandsgaard Kammermusikfest, and the Usedomer Musikfestival. He has played together with artists like Leonidas Kavakos, Nikolaj Znaider, Trio con Brio Copenhagen, Danish String Quartet, Enrico Pace, Antoine Tamestit, Andrej Bielow, Quartetto Cremona, and many others.

Jonathan also co-created the classical music festival called Festival & Friends, and was artistic director of this festival in 2020. A graduate of the Royal Danish Academy of Music, Jonathan Swensen also studied with Professor Torleif Thedéen, and is currently studying with Laurence Lesser at The New England Conservatory, commencing his Artist Diploma in fall of 2022.

Website: www.jonathanswensen.com **Management:** *Young Concert Artists, Inc. (U.S.); Victoria Rowsell Artist Management (Worldwide)*