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June 12-19, 2016

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## 2015 Piano Competition Participants

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**Seoyun Baek**, age 15, began her piano studies over six years ago, with Kijung Han at the National School of Music for talented young musicians in Korea. Seoyun has been a student of MIC artist faculty member, Elaine Felder, since arriving in Chicago in September 2008. Currently she studies with Myunghee Chung. In 2009 she was the first place winner in the Sejong Competition(also best interpretation of the Korean piece), and an MIC Merit Scholarship award winner. In January of 2010 Seoyun performed the first movement of Mozart Concerto K.414 with the Oistrakh orchestra, a winner of the DePaul University Community School Concerto Competition. She was invited to perform at both the Sejong Cultural Society Benefit Concert and the GIRF gala at the Museum of Science and Industry in 2010. Seoyun participates in the Midwest Young Artist's chamber program and is a freshman at the Adlai E. Stevenson High School.

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**Baron Cao** began his piano study in 2008 at age 7, and one year later he won first prize at the Duquesne Young Artist National Competition (2009). He went on to receive many other first prizes, including the West Chester University National Pre-College Piano Competition (2013, 2014), the Golden Era of Romantic Music International Competition (2012), the American Fine Arts Festival (2010, 2011, 2012), and the National Young Musicians Showcase Competition (2010, 2011). As the winner of the Pennsylvania Music Teachers Association (PMTA) Junior Piano competition (2014), he represented the state of Pennsylvania to participate in the MTNA Junior Piano Regional Competition (2015) and received the second prize. Baron also won third prize at The 3rd International Chopin Piano Competition in CT, USA (2012). He is an alumni of the Aspen Music Festival and School (2014), and received master classes from Garrick Ohlsson and Vivian Weilerstein. Baron has performed at Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, Harris Concert Hall in Aspen, PNC Recital Hall, Esber Recital Hall, and various other venues. He currently studies with Dea Baba.

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**Hans Chan**, a sophomore at Ladue Horton Watkins High School, began his piano education at the age of eight. Currently he studies with Ms. Annette Burkhart. Even at such a young age, Hans is already an accomplished performer and a prize winner of many prestigious competitions. Some of his awards include First Place in the 2014-2015 Music Teacher National Association (MTNA) Missouri State Piano Competition and Second Place in the 2014-2015 MTNA West Central Division Piano Competition. In 2014, he played in the prestigious Shepley Concert Series. Hans was also a Gold Medalist in the 2013 St. Louis Young Artist Competition. In 2012, he was a First Place winner in the 2012 Missouri Music Teachers Association auditions. Hans attended International Institute for Young Musicians in 2014 on a \$1000 scholarship, where he had the opportunity to study with esteemed teachers and pianists such as Chenggang Yang and Jack Winerock. Hans plans to attend the International Institute for Young Musicians again in the summer of 2015. He will also have the chance to travel to Perugia, Italy to attend the annual Music Fest Perugia Festival, where he will have the opportunity to perform with an orchestra.

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**Derek Chung** is freshman at Adlai Stevenson High School in Lincolnshire, IL. He studies piano with Sueanne Metz. Derek's recent accomplishments include first prizes at the Luminarts Cultural Foundation for Classical Music, DePaul University Young Artist, US New Star Piano, the American Fine Arts International Concerto, and the Los Angeles Young Musician International Competitions where he was awarded overall Best Romantic Performance. He won second place at the Aloha International Piano, Bradshaw & Buono International Piano, and the Crain-Maling Chicago Symphony Orchestra Concerto Competitions. He was also a winner of Best Early Music Award at Walgreens National Concerto Competition and the bronze medal winner at Seattle International Piano Festival Competitions.

Derek has had the honor of performing in musical venues such as Nordstrom Recital Hall at Benaroya Hall in Seattle, Bennett-Gordon Hall at Ravinia, Chicago Symphony Orchestra Hall, and Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall in New York. He has participated in master classes with Robert Shannon, Scott McBride-Smith, Haewon Song, Steven Spooner, Stella Sick, Jack Winerock, and John Bayless. Outside of music, Derek enjoys reading books and running cross-country. He is also a member of the elite mathematics team for Stevenson.

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**Matthew Figel**, 18, is from Midland, Texas and is a student at Interlochen Arts Academy. As a First Prize Winner of the Bradshaw & Buono International Piano Competition, Matthew made his Carnegie Hall Debut in 2014. Among his other awards are first prize in the Texas State Young Artist Piano Competition, second prize in the David D. Dubois International Piano Competition, and runner-up in the Interlochen Arts Academy Concerto Competition. Matthew was chosen as the annual Benjamin Schore Piano Scholar for two consecutive years. He has appeared on Interlochen Public Radio's nationally broadcast programs Live from Studio A and Collage. Last summer, Matthew made his international orchestral debut in Italy with the Philharmonic Orchestra of the University of Alicante. He has performed in masterclasses taught by Ilana Vered, Pavlina Dokovska, Peter Takács, Michel Dalberto, and Anton Nel, among others. He studied previously under Dr. Mark Puckett, professor of piano at Hardin-Simmons University. As a chamber musician, he has collaborated with members from trio FUGU and has been coached by Nancy Stagnitta and Michael Coonrod. This summer he will also be attending Aspen Music Festival, studying with Ann Schein. Matthew currently is a student of Dr. Thomas Lymenstull.

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13-year old Washingtonian **Avery Gagliano** is a Jack Kent Cook Honors recipient and a Young Scholar of the Lang Lang International Music Foundation. At age nine she had her orchestral debut with the Maryland Classic Youth Orchestra (MCO) at Strathmore Concert Hall and performed at Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall in New York. The following year, Avery was invited to performed on the National Public Radio's (NPR) From The Top. Among her honors are her most recent wins of First Prize at the International Young Artist Piano Competition in Washington, DC and Grand Prix at the Chopin International Piano Competition in Hartford, Connecticut. In 2013, Avery studied and performed at the Aspen Music Festival under the direction of Dr. Veda Kaplinsky. In 2014, she performed as a soloist with the Midwest Young Artists (MYA) Symphony Orchestra at the renowned Ravinia Pavilion in Chicago. In the recent past, Avery has collaborated with the Capital City Symphony and The National Chamber Ensemble. She has performed at major concert venues including, Greene Space at WQXR, the United Nations Headquarters, the Millennium Stage at the Kennedy Center, the Atlas Performing Arts Center and Ward Recital Hall at the Catholic University.

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**David Godar**, 15, is from Cincinnati, OH. He is one of the four instrumental finalists of the Overture Awards and the winner of both the district and state level of the Pre-College Buckeye Auditions. Other awards include an Honorable Mention at the International Young Artist Piano Competition in Washington, D.C., second place at the Brookline Music School Competition and first prize at the Clifton Music Club Piano Competition. He made his orchestral debut with Blue Ash/Montgomery Symphony Orchestra in 2012 and played again with them as a winner of their Young Artist Concerto Competition. After an audition with Carmon DeLeone, David was offered to play a full concerto with Middletown Symphony Orchestra during their 2013-14 season. Aside from competitions and numerous solo performances, David participated in a chamber music program where he, with various groups, played for children at a hospital and an afterschool program, and also at retirement homes. He studies with Edward Neeman.

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**David Hou**, 14 years old, fellowship recipient and member of the Music Institute of Chicago's Academy Program for pre-collegiate musicians where he studies piano with MIC Academic artist faculty member Alan Chow. David made his solo debut with Fox Valley Symphony Orchestra in February 2012, in Appleton, Wisconsin, received high praise for his outstanding performance on Franz Liszt's "Piano Concerto No. 1 in E-flat Major". David has performed concerts in major Chicago music venues, such as Chicago Symphony Orchestra Hall, Harris Theater, and Ravinia Bennett-Gordon Hall; and has given personal concerts for many retirement homes across the Chicago area. David is the winner of 2010 Walgreens National Concerto Competition junior piano open division, 2011 Chicago Steinway Young Artist solo competition, and the winner of 2009 ISMTA State district audition elementary division. He was also a contestant for the Gina Bachauer International Piano Competition in 2012. Over 300 pianists around the world auditioned for this high level event in Salt Lake City, Utah, with only 34 talented young pianists being accepted. He is one of the seven 2015 CSO youth audition finalists. Besides playing piano, David enjoys playing sports and being outdoors.

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**Christopher Jessup** is a pianist, composer, and vocalist. Studying under Victoria Mushkatkol of the Juilliard School, he has been chosen as a first place winner in both the American Protégé International Music Talent Competition and the American Protégé International Competition of Romantic Music. He was also chosen as the 'alternate' in the MTNA Connecticut Competition and received the Fine Arts Award from Interlochen Center for the Arts. Christopher has performed in music festivals including MusicFest Perugia in Italy, the Marian Garcia Piano Festival in Pennsylvania, and Interlochen Center for the Arts in Michigan. As a composer he has composed numerous works for a wide variety of instruments including two piano concerti. As a vocalist, Christopher has played the lead, Amahl, in the opera "Amahl and the Night Visitors" by Menotti and was a featured soloist in Mendelssohn's oratorio "Elijah." Outside of music, Christopher is an honor roll student and competitive cross-country runner.

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**Timothy Jones** was born in 1997 and started his musical studies at the age of five. He began with guitar but then moved onto piano one year later, at the age of six. He taught himself his first year then started studying with Brenda Bruce of Cary, North Carolina. Timothy studied with Brenda Bruce for six years until his acceptance into University of North Carolina School of the Arts in 2012 to study with Eric Larsen. Timothy has also taken lessons from Sheila Paige, William Wellborn, Adam Wibrowski, Douglas Buys, Angelin Chang and Polish pianist Wojciech Kocyan. He has also participated in master classes taught by Sheila Paige, Douglas Buys, Thomas Otten, and Wojciech Kocyan. In the summer of 2012 Timothy made his orchestral debut with the Wiener Neustädter Instrumentalisten in Vienna, Neunkirchen and Perchtelsdorf. Timothy has won first place prizes in competitions in North Carolina such as the NCMTA Junior Division and East Carolina University Young Artist Competition. He was also awarded an Honors Laureate at the UNC-Chapel Hill Liszt Festival. Timothy performs in outreach and benefit concerts in North Carolina and has also played concerts in California and Virginia. He currently studies with Eric Larsen.

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**Leyla Kabuli** (15) is a Pre-College Division scholarship student at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, studying piano (with John McCarthy), and also violin, bassoon, and chamber music. She has performed at Carnegie Hall (2012, 2014), Kennedy Center (2013), Ventfort Mansion Lenox, MA (2014), Peninsula Symphony Family Concert (2013), and Junior Bach Festival (2010). She has won first prizes Sylvia Ghiglieri, Classical Masters, Marilyn Mindell, California Association of Professional Music Teachers Honors State, East Bay, Etude Club Berkeley Maria Homem scholarship, CAPMT Contemporary State, Music Teachers of California North, International American Protégé, East Bay Contemporary, and several US Open Music Competitions. She also receive Pacific Musical Society Competition Dita Pepin Piano Award, and won other top prizes in Henry and Carol Zelter Piano, World Pianist Invitational, and MTNA Southwest Regional Senior Piano Duet Competitions. She participated in the Boston University Tanglewood Institute Young Artists Piano Program in 2014, and she performed in masterclasses and has been coached by John Perry, Boaz Sharon, Gila Goldstein, Anton Nel, Ivan Sokolov, Eduardo Monteiro, Clara Shin, and Tamara Loring. She plays violin in the University of California, Davis Symphony Orchestra, and regularly participates in community outreach, benefit and service programs.

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**Brian Le**, 17, is a rising senior in the Magnet program at Montgomery Blair High School in Silver Spring, MD. He was awarded first prizes in the 2014 MTNA National Piano Duet Competition and 27th International Young Artists Piano Competition, and second prizes in the 2014 ILYM International Piano Competition and Lee University International Piano Competition. He also received first place in the Robert Spencer Concerto Competition, Yida Novik Concerto Competition, and VMTA Concerto Competition. As a finalist in the National Symphony Orchestra Young Soloists' Competition, he performed at the Kennedy Center's Concert Hall and received Honorable Mention. In addition to the Concert Hall, he has also performed at Kennedy Center's Millennium Stage and Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall. He is the president of his school's Young Artists Club and plays at various retirement centers throughout the DC metropolitan area. He studies with Nancy O'Neill Breth and Boris Slutsky.

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16-year-old **Adrian Liao**, from San Diego, California, made her concerto debut with the USD Symphony at age 11 and has soloed with the San Diego Symphony, Mount Orchestra, South Coast Symphony and the Seraphim Symphony. Adrian was the winner of the 2013 H.B. Goodlin Scholarship Competition, and the Grand Prize winner of the 2014 Glendale Piano Competition and the 2015 LA Music Center Spotlight Awards. She has performed at the Kennedy Center in Washington DC, Carnegie Recital Hall in New York and in other benefit concerts and recitals. Adrian was first exposed to piano music when she heard her brother practicing at a young age. She asked her mother to let her learn and began her musical career at age six. She plays the violin as well and has participated in her school's advanced orchestra along with other chamber ensembles. In her free time, Adrian also enjoys photography, baking and writing stories.

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**Vincent Liu**, 16, a sophomore at Dougherty Valley High School in San Ramon, California, currently studies piano with Professor Hans Boepple of Santa Clara University. As a concerto competition winner, Vincent has performed with the Livermore-Amador Symphony, the Peninsula Symphony, the Palo Alto Philharmonic Orchestra, and the El Camino Youth Symphony. Vincent has also won the Young Pianist's Beethoven Competition, the San Jose International Piano Competition, the US Open Music Competition, Music Teacher Association of California (MTAC) all state Concerto Competition, and California Association of Professional Music Teacher (CAPMT) state Honors Audition and CAPMT all state Concerto Competition, the Menuhin-Dowling Competition and three times (2008, 2010, 2013) 1st place at East Bay Music Festival Solo Competition. In 2012, he attended Colburn School Young Artists Summer Academy.

An excellent athlete, Vincent plays competitive soccer for a club team and his high school varsity team. This year, he is a state Olympiad Development Program (ODP) player. He also excels in school, and received a Distinguished Honor Roll for scoring top 1% nationally at the American Mathematics Competition (AMC) and was two times qualifier for the American Invitational Mathematics Examination (AIME).

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**Jonathan Reichenberger** is 14 years old and in the 8th grade. Since 2006, Jonathan has received numerous local and state awards and honors in the Florida Federation of Music Clubs (FFMC) and Florida State Music Teachers Association (FSMTA). In the Pompano Beach Children in the Arts Piano Competition, Jonathan was a first place winner for six consecutive years, winning the final category, Advanced II, in February 2013 at the age of 12. In May 2011, he was the first place winner in the FSMTA State concerto competition in Tallahassee in the Intermediate division (ages 13-15). Jonathan was the first place winner of the Florida District VI Concerto Competition, Senior Division in 2012. In March 2012, Jonathan was a winner of the International Young Musicians Festival and performed at the Carnegie Hall in New York. At the 2013 MTNA Southern Division Junior Piano Performance Competition in North Carolina, Jonathan was awarded Alternate. At the 2014 and 2015 MTNA Southern Division Junior Piano Competition, he was awarded HM. This past October, Jonathan was the first place winner in the Louisiana International Piano Junior Competition. Jonathan and his brother recently were awarded Alternate in the MTNA Southern Division Senior Duet Piano Competition.

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**John Schindler** began his piano studies at age 6, when he was drawn to the possibility of expressing himself through his music. As a pianist, he has been recognized in several competitions. Two of the highlights of John's performing experiences were to play with the Milwaukee Symphony and the Wisconsin Chamber orchestras in the 2013-2014 season, and he will perform with the Wisconsin Philharmonic in 2015. Last June, he was selected as a first-year scholarship recipient by the Chopin Foundation of the United States, and he has been the winner of both the junior and senior divisions of the Chopin Youth Piano Competition in Milwaukee. In 2013, he was awarded third prize at the national finals of the MTNA Junior Piano competition. For the past two summers John attended the Brevard Music Center in North Carolina, where he studied with Norman Krieger. John highly values the master classes he has participated in with Joseph Kalichstein, Yoheved Kaplinsky, Julian Martin, and Nelita True, among others. John currently lives in Hartland, Wisconsin, where he studies piano with Margarita Kontorovsky.

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**Kevin Takeda**, 16, is a senior at Interlochen Arts Academy. He has been a prizewinner in many competitions such as the Riverside Young Artists Competition, MTNA, the EMF Concerto Competition performing Prokofiev's 3rd Concerto, and was a finalist in the Mondavi National Young Artists Competition. At age 15, Kevin was the youngest person to ever win the EMF International Solo Competition. Recently, he won 2nd Prize in the David Dubois National Piano Competition. Other than solo works, Kevin has performed many other ensemble works, most notably Prokofiev's Third Concerto, and many pieces for chamber ensemble. Kevin has performed on Interlochen Public Radio several times and has performed in venues such as the Detroit Symphony Hall and the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. He has attended, on scholarship, Interlochen Arts Camp, Eastern Music Festival, Texas State International Piano Festival, Bowdoin Music Festival, the Southeastern Piano Festival and Arthur Fraser International Piano Competition, and

recently was invited to study at Aspen Music Festival and School. He has performed for and worked with many world reknowned musicians such as Nelita True, Vadym Kholodenko, Boris Slutsky, William Wolfram, Jonathan Biss, and Jeremy Denk. He currently studies with Dr. Thomas Lymenstull.

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**Shane VanNeerden** has been studying piano for nine years. He attends Cab Calloway School of the Arts in Wilmington, Delaware and has been the recipient of many honors. In 2011 and 2012, he participated in the DSMTA Theory Festival winning superior honors in all four categories both years consisting of keyboard, site reading, aural, and written theory tests. Shane has also performed in the DSTMA Piano Solo Festival each year from 2011-2013. Due to his Superior + performance given by the judges in the 3 years he attended the Solo Festival, he was invited to perform in the Honors Recital each year. Shane has competed in the Music Teacher's National Association competition for the last two years. In 2013, he was the Junior Division State Winner and in 2014, he was the Senior Division State Winner. He has also participated in the Lansdowne Symphony Orchestra Competition, the West Chester University Piano Competition, and the Oberlin Conservatory Festival Competition. In addition to piano, Shane is often found with a book studying French, German, Latin, and other languages. He received straight A's through middle school and is currently taking all honors courses for 9th grade with a GPA of 4.0.

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**Annabelle Yang** gave her first solo recital at age 10. She was winner of SC MTNA in Junior Piano Division in 2013, was named alternate in 2010, 2011 and 2012, and was awarded honorable mention in Senior Division in 2014. She is the winner of First Prize in the first annual SC Governor School of the Arts and Humanities Junior Piano Competition. At 8, she was the third place winner in the Carolina Youth Symphony concerto competition as the youngest prize recipient, she was the first place winner in 2013 and performed 1st movement of Chopin Piano Concerto No 1 with Carolina Youth Symphony. Annabelle also won the Clemson University Symphony Orchestra 2014 concerto competition and performed 3rd movement of Chopin Piano Concerto No 1 with the Clemson University Symphony Orchestra. Annabelle was awarded Honorable Mention in the 2014 Texas State International Piano Festival. She was featured on South Carolina ETV Radio twice in August 2012 and in March 2014. Annabelle performed in master class or had lessons with Leon Fleisher, Boris Slutsky, Douglas Weeks, Enrico Elisi, Washington Garcia, Jason Kwak, and Sohyoung Park.

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**Yue (Catherine) Zeng**, 17, attends Dreyfoos School of the Arts and currently studies with Roberta Rust from Lynn Conservatory. She won the EMF concerto competition, played Prokofiev's 2nd concerto to a standing ovation, and was a finalist in the EMF piano competition. She won 1st place in the Florida State Byrd Memorial Competition, 1st in the PBCMTA judged musical, 1st in the PBCMTA Scholarship Competition, 1st in the Boca Delray Music Competition, 1st in the Federation Music Club of the Palm Beaches Music Competition, and was PBAU preparatory program's artist of the year in 2008. She has also gone to the PBAU International Piano festival (2012, 2013, 2014, 2015) Eastern Music festival (2014), and FSU piano institute (2013). Catherine is also an avid composer. Recently, she arranged the Blue Danube Fantasy for 2 pianos, premiered in the Kravis Center. Catherine is also the Public Relations Manager of the DSOA Piano department, where she started the Steinway Project, raising \$150,000 for new Steinways at Dreyfoos. Catherine has also been a part of Kretzer's kid's organization for 5 years with whom she performs concerts at local nursing homes, and was hired as desk manager for the 2013 Kretzer Thanksgiving piano sale.

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