

# The Friday Morning MUSIC CLUB



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## Student Profile: Evelyn Song

The following is an edited version of Christine Kharazian's interview of former student member Evelyn Song:

### 1. Do you remember your first encounter with the violin? When and how you chose to become a violinist?

I was introduced to the violin shortly before I turned six years old. The music teacher at my school brought in a few instruments at the beginning of the year, played each one for the class, and let us decide which instrument we wanted to learn. When my mom came to pick me up later that day, I said to her, "I want to play the violin because it's pretty!" I was already learning piano at the time and was excited to add violin lessons to my musical activities. By middle school, I knew that I wanted to study music in college. During high school I was given a lot of violin performance opportunities, and the more time I spent with the violin, the more I fell in love with its voice. It was then that I decided, without a doubt, that I wanted to be a violinist.

### 2. You love connecting stories with violin performances. Can you tell us more about that?

When I was attending the New England Conservatory of Music, I was heavily involved in the school's Community Performances and Partnerships Program, through which we reached a large population in the surrounding communities. My areas of focus were musical storytelling in schools and performing themed recitals at senior homes. I loved the idea of getting young students excited about music at an early age by interweaving music with the reading of children's books. I saw that the residents of senior homes were very engaged when I shared an interesting fact about a piece before playing it or when I suggested something that they could listen



Evelyn Song

for while I played. The young students joyfully sang along, and their eyes brightened when they realized that the sounds from my violin were part of the story. The residents at senior homes laughed, cried, reflected on old memories, and listened with smiling faces and sometimes closed eyes as if they had traveled to a different time and place. After a musical storytelling event, a kindergartener asked if she could climb into my violin case and travel with me. At another school, I had the pleasure of discussing my work with a group of students after a reading of children's books accompanied by my music. When I was playing bedside concerts at a hospital, one patient, who had been unable to speak because of excruciating pain, was so delighted by what she heard that she carried on long conversations with me. She later told me that, while listening to me play the violin, she had forgotten that she was hurting. These very special per-

sonal connections are at the heart of my community engagement work, and the transformations that I witness inspire me to continue this work.

### 3. When thinking about your teachers what are things you are especially grateful for?

I have been blessed with many wonderful teachers. I am extremely grateful for their unwavering dedication to helping me reach my fullest potential. They constantly challenged me to explore new facets of music-making, to bring my playing to another level, and to never stop experimenting and learning. They did all of that with care, patience, generosity, and enthusiasm. Not only did I learn musically from them, but I also learned much from observing their humility, integrity, and impeccable work ethics. I am thankful to have been taught by such outstanding educators.

*continued on page 3*

#### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- |   |                                |
|---|--------------------------------|
| 2 | From the President             |
| 2 | Who's Who                      |
| 3 | Avanti Orchestra               |
| 3 | Raise Your Hand, Please        |
| 4 | Outreach in Action             |
| 4 | FMMC Concert Calendar          |
| 5 | From the Foundation Director   |
| 5 | High School String Competition |
| 6 | From the Managing Director     |



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## From the President

Leslie Luxemburg

Welcome back to the start of another rewarding year making and sharing music together. I'm happy to report that our membership remains robust. If you haven't already taken advantage of this benefit, I encourage you to interact with more of your colleagues. This will provide new and exciting ways to collaborate, both musically and in support of our venerable organization.

One of the most intriguing tasks ahead of us this year will be the selection of a successor for Pablo Saelzer as music director of the Avanti Orchestra. The diligent efforts on the part of the orchestra selection committee, led by Carol Bartholomew and Sarah Hover, have produced four outstanding and diverse candidates, each of whom has been assigned a performance slot. All of the concerts will feature a soloist taken from the ranks of recent winners of one of our international competitions. Audience members will have the chance to participate in the selection process by sharing their input after each concert. I recommend making

plans to attend all four to allow for making fair comparisons and maximizing the value of your contribution. The dates of the concerts are September 30, November 18, March 9, and May 4. These are all Saturday evenings, and all will be held at the Montgomery College Cultural Arts Center in Silver Spring. Please make a note of the dates and watch for reminders with specifics on participants and repertoire.

The chamber music program under the diligent direction of Yooni Lee, and the Arioso Chorale, led by Paul Leavitt, promise especially strong seasons as well. Though it took longer than anticipated, our FMMC piano has finally found a new home at the Woman's Club of Chevy Chase. Our December concert and holiday gathering will be taking place there on December 15, as will our annual meeting and luncheon on May 3, 2024.



We also plan to have several chamber music concerts there. Since it is a lovely facility, may I suggest looking into having your own musical events there. Not only will they be housing our FMMC Steinway, but the presence of another Steinway grand piano there lends itself to the possibility of two piano collaborations, coaching sessions, student recitals, and other creative ideas. It is conveniently located on Connecticut Avenue near the Beltway, with ample, free parking.

I look forward to seeing many of you in the coming months, as we embark on another year of musical adventures together! 🎶

*Leslie*

## Who's Who?

Since its inception, the Finance Committee has been creative, thoughtful, and good listeners. Former FMMC board member Albert Hunt initiated the committee to look at FMMC's financial future picture. Current board members Anne Zim, Finance Director, and Richard Sawyer, Treasurer, have been on the committee since its inception. Both Newsletter Editor Carol Fromboluti and President Leslie Luxemburg were also involved from the start, although both now serve as advisors as needed. Managing Director Laila Linden is an integral part of the committee's discussions. How about you? 🎶

*Student Profile...continued from page 1*

#### 4. What is your advice for young FMMC student members?

I would encourage young FMMC student members to accept as many performance opportunities as possible. Performing at a variety of venues helps one to become a more versatile musician, but more importantly, it also gives one the chance to see the profound impact that music has on its listeners. Seeing this repeatedly can provide one of the greatest motivations for us to continue pursuing excellence in music and sharing our art with the communities around us. The world is eager to hear your music!

#### 5. What are your plans for the future?

I have moved back to Maryland and am very excited about all the possibilities that the D.C. area has to offer. I envision community engagement work to be a significant part of my career, with a special emphasis on musical storytelling in

schools and performing at senior living facilities, and hope to form meaningful local partnerships. For community engagement work at schools, it would be wonderful to establish a musical storytelling hour where students can enjoy music with good stories and learn about the violin. For senior living facilities, I would regularly provide exciting music programs for the residents, bringing the concert hall experience directly to them. Maybe one day I can take my community engagement work to different parts of the country! I also have a deep love for chamber music and have been toying with the idea of starting a chamber music concert series in the future. In addition, I really enjoy working with young students. My immediate plan is to build a small private studio with the goal of helping my students develop smart practice habits and a lifelong appreciation of music. 🎵

## Raise Your Hand, Please

Mary Alice Davidson

Over the summer, you may have taken time to unplug from your FMMC commitments, especially after you paid your dues and made a thoughtful donation. But did FMMC take a break from you?

Well, no. Many members of the FMMC leadership carved out time to plan for the 2023–2024 season. One example is the newly formed Fundraising Committee, which became official last June. This committee has been meeting ad hoc since 2021 to examine FMMC's fundraising position from many angles, including marketing, strategic planning, and PR. Over the summer, the committee revised its initial findings, many of which were now outdated. Thankfully, through unexpected major donations and a generous grant from the DC Commission on the Arts & Humanities, FMMC's financial position is on the uptick. But...

The committee needs more volunteers willing to contribute ideas and contacts to continue this trend. As we all know, in our current economy, balancing any budget takes creative thinking. All of us use

products and services within and outside of our musical community who could be potential donors. The committee has written FMMC Vision and Mission statements (see sidebar) to educate and bring these donors to FMMC's doorstep. What's needed is volunteers willing to brainstorm and open a conversation with them. Will you help?

Today, we're all ready to step back into our FMMC roles. But we also need to join forces to ensure FMMC's financial future. If you are interested in being part of that future, please contact Laila Linden at: [manage@fnmc.org](mailto:manage@fnmc.org).

Is there more? Of course! As you scan your 2023–2024 Yearbook, you'll notice other committees and programs that could use the support of volunteers. If you have an expertise that will help, please let Laila know at [manage@fnmc.org](mailto:manage@fnmc.org), and she will contact the appropriate FMMC leader.

Finally...thank you for continuing to make FMMC thrive! 🎵

Mary Alice Davidson  
Chair, Fundraising Committee

## Avanti Orchestra

Angelina Wong

As we bid a fond farewell to former Avanti Music Director Pablo Saelzer, we give a welcome invitation to our four conductor candidates: Shun Yao, Dietrich Paredes Baralt, Jamie Reeves, and Chi-Yuan Lin. Thank you to the Conductor Search Committee, which was made up largely of Avanti Orchestra volunteers.

Avanti's 2023–2024 concert season will have a unique setup with all concerts occurring at the Montgomery College Cultural Arts Center in Silver Spring at 7:30 p.m. Please consider bringing a food donation for the college's Fuel for Success Food Campaign! Avanti will still perform four public concerts, but each will feature a different conductor and soloist from a past Washington International Competition or Johansen International Competition. Audience feedback will be a major consideration when the Conductor Search Committee determines who will be Avanti's new Music Director.

Our first concert will be on September 30 with Conductor Shun Yao and soprano Adia Evans. The program has a 20th century piece by Unsuk Chin, a recital-style interlude with Adia Evans, and Mahler's *Symphony No. 4*.

Our second concert on November 18 will welcome Conductor Dietrich Paredes Baralt and violinist Youjin Lee. Together, they will perform a Mozart overture, Mendelssohn's *Violin Concerto in E minor*, and Beethoven's *Symphony No. 7*.

On March 9, our third concert will feature Conductor Jamie Reeves and pianist Yi-Yang Chen. This program includes a short piece by contemporary composer George Walker, Beethoven's *Piano Concerto No. 3*, and Brahms' *Symphony No. 3*.

Our final concert on May 4 with Conductor Chi-Yuan Lin and cellist Brannon Cho has a pending program. Stay tuned to find out what it will be!

This is an exciting time, and we look forward to hearing these highly qualified candidates as they lead and collaborate with our orchestra. Please join us—and participate in the selection process. 🎵

## Outreach in Action

Clarinetist Karin Caifa and pianist Ashlei Peoples presented works by Copland, Tailleferre, Vaughan Williams, Jessie Montgomery, and Florence Price to an appreciative audience (and a dog or two!) at the Providence at Fairfax. Thank you Karin and Ashlei! 🎶



### FMMC Vision Statement

FMMC is a welcoming community for all classical music lovers—enthusiasts to professionals—to make and share music together in countless ways. FMMC envisions a future that builds on its legacy and opens new avenues for musical excellence.

### FMMC Mission Statement

FMMC provides a gateway to musicians at all levels to perform classical music for diverse audiences throughout the Metropolitan DC area. The organization offers a range of musical and educational opportunities through its large and small ensembles, chamber concerts, solo appearances, and student programs and competitions that deliver classical music at a variety of venues at no cost to audiences.

## FMMC Concert Calendar - September

### Friday, September 15, 12pm, at Live! at 10th & G

- Haydn: Sonata in C minor, Hob. XVI/20. **Simon Finlow**, piano
- C.P.E. Bach: Sonata in A Minor for Flute. **Takeaki Miyamae**, flute
- H. Büsser: Prelude et Scherzo for Flute and Piano, op. 35. **Takeaki Miyamae**, flute
- Schubert and Lang: Lieder on Goethe texts, *Heidenröslein, Lied der Mignon, Mignons Klage, Gretchen am Spinnrade, Sie liebt mich*. **Polly Baldrige**, soprano; **Victoria Bragin**, piano

### Friday, September 29, 12pm, at Woman's Club of Chevy Chase

- J.S. Bach: Concerto in the Italian Style, BWV 971. **Steven Schwarz**, piano
- Schubert and Lang: Lieder on Goethe texts: *Heidenröslein, Lied der Mignon, Mignons Klage, Gretchen am Spinnrade, Sie liebt mich*. **Polly Baldrige**, soprano; **Victoria Bragin**, piano
- Baghdassarian: *Rhapsody*. **Christine Kharazian**; Violin; **Andrew Kraus**, piano

### Saturday, September 30, 7:30 pm, at the Montgomery College Cultural Arts Center

- Avanti Orchestra**, Shun Yao, conductor
- Unsuk Chin: *Subito con forza*
  - Mahler: Symphony No. 4. **Adia Evans**, soprano

### VENUES

**Live! at 10th & G**  
First Congregational United Church of Christ  
945 G St., NW  
Washington, DC  
(Metro: Gallery Place 9<sup>th</sup> St. exit or Metro Center)

### Montgomery College Cultural Arts Center

7995 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD

### Woman's Club of Chevy Chase

7931 Connecticut Ave  
Chevy Chase, MD

## From the Foundation Director

Grace McFarlane

### Looking back ~ Looking forward

Reflecting on the tremendous success of the 2023 WIC Voice Competition, I would like to take the opportunity here to once again thank our incredible Competition Chair, Chen-Li Tzeng, whose diligent and expert organizational and management skills made this competition run smoothly and efficiently. Our distinguished panel of jurors – James Morris, Sylvia McNair and Antony Walker – were impressed by the high quality of performances from the 16 semifinalists, who were chosen by five preliminary judges: Robert Baker, Jerome Barry, Thomas Reilly, Nancy McArthur Smith, and Deborah Thurlow. We are most grateful to our friends at George Washington University School of Music for providing their facilities for our use in the semifinal round of the competition.

The outstanding performances of the six finalists in the Terrace Theater on May 28 were enthusiastically received by an engaged audience. Matthew Hill, tenor, won the First Prize, named in honor of longtime FMMC member Louise McClelland Urban, as well as the Audience Prize. Magdalena Kužma, soprano, won Second Prize, and the Third Prize was tied between Adia Evans, soprano, and Nathaniel Sullivan, baritone. Erik Grendahl, baritone, and Helena Colindres, soprano, won Finalist Awards. The soloists were supported by the excellent collaboration and artistry of pianists Joy Schreier and Hui-Chuan Chen.

I am honored to serve another year as Director of the FMMC Foundation, working with wonderful colleagues on the board of Trustees as we plan for this

year's WIC Piano Competition, led by this year's Competition Chair, Simon Finlow, and Yuri Chayama, Assistant Competition Chair. Applications will open on September 15<sup>th</sup>, and we anticipate another successful competition.

Please note that the next JIC competition will take place in 2025.

#### Mark your Calendars:

**Friday, September 22 &**

**Saturday, September 23, 2023, 7:30 pm**

It's always a thrill to follow the developing careers of the talented artist-winners of the Washington International Competition (WIC) and Johansen International Competition for Young String Players (JIC), sponsored by the Foundation. We are delighted that **Julian Rhee**, first-prize violin winner of the 2018 JIC, will be returning to the DC area this Fall to perform the Tchaikovsky Concerto with the Washington Chamber Orchestra, under the baton of Jun Kim. FMMC members might recall that Maestro Kim and his orchestra accompanied our finalists in the 2019 WIC Voice Competition. Julian continues to garner accolades and high critical acclaim as his career blossoms. *The Strad* magazine praised his "Sophisticated, assured tone, superb intonation, and the kind of poise and showmanship that thrills audiences." He was awarded the Silver Medal in the 2022 Indianapolis Violin Competition and Second Prize in the Elmar Oliveira International Violin Competition, amongst many other awards. As soloist and chamber musician he has performed with major orchestras throughout the US and abroad and in notable



chamber music festivals and venues. Julian is presently a member of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center's Bowers Program. We are proud to recognize his extraordinary talent and achievement as a past winner of the JIC and will continue to be counted amongst his most ardent supporters.

**Friday, September 22, 2023**

**7:30 pm**

Shrine of St. Jude Catholic Church  
12701 Veirs Mill Road  
Rockville, MD 20853

**Saturday, September 23, 2023**

**7:30 pm**

Providence Presbyterian Church  
9019 Little River Turnpike  
Fairfax, VA 22031

Please join me in celebrating the start of our new season together. I look forward to seeing you at one of our upcoming performances. Happy music-making! 🎶

*Grace*

## High School String Competition

Jeongseon Choi

The high school string competition is scheduled to be held online again this year. The deadline for registration is midnight Saturday November 4. Applicants can submit their videos until midnight Saturday November 11. The winners will be chosen no later than November 18. Please string teachers, encourage students to apply. For question contact [highschoolstrings@fmmc.org](mailto:highschoolstrings@fmmc.org). 🎶



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## *From the Managing Director*

Laila Linden

Welcome back to the start of a new season. I am thrilled to now be a part of FMMC and its vibrant musical community. As I start my first full season as the FMMC Managing Director, I'd like to let you know what has been going on over the summer. While our programs were idle, we in FMMC's administration were working hard to get things ready for the new season. My first official task was attending the Annual Meeting and Spring luncheon at DACOR Bacon House. I can't imagine a better way to start a position in a beautiful DC historic house being entertained by a fabulous young cellist, Romain-Oliver Gray. Even more special was the opportunity to meet many of you and I appreciate your warm welcome. I look forward to meeting and connecting with many more of you in the coming years.

Since then, and in close collaboration with Joanna Taylor, we launched the Spring Membership Campaign to much success. We are so grateful to all that have renewed, made donations, and continue to support our efforts. During the summer months, we focused on the 2023-24 Annual Membership Yearbook (what a great resource), updated the FMMC website, and started preparing for the many upcoming events and activities in the Fall!

As we step into the new season, one of my main priorities will be securing corporate sponsorships and grants to fund FMMC's operations and variety of programs. Fundraising and raising public awareness will also be priorities in the coming months. I have been actively involved in both FMMC's committees and impressed with all the dedicated work that is being done.



I am very excited for the coming year and embarking on this musical journey with you all! Stay tuned for updates on concerts, events, and initiatives through our newsletter and following us on social media. If I can be of service, please don't hesitate to contact me by email at [manage@fmnc.org](mailto:manage@fmnc.org).

*Laila*