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**Piano Cleveland announces First Round contestants for its 2026 Cleveland International Piano Competition for Young Artists**

**CLEVELAND, OH** – Piano Cleveland, host of the Cleveland International Piano Competition for Young Artists, has announced the 50 contestants, ages 10-18, who will play during its First Round this March. The Preliminary Jury, a diverse panel of leading figures in the piano world comprised of concert pianists and renowned professors, reviewed the applications and audition videos of 311 contestants to select the 50 young pianists who will compete in the competition's three age divisions: Rising Stars (ages 10-12), Juniors (ages 13-15), and Seniors (ages 16-18).

“The Cleveland International Piano Competition for Young Artists showcases the best emerging artists in the classical piano world,” says Piano Cleveland Artistic Director, Yaron Kohlberg. “Our competition allows audiences to see tomorrow’s pianists today.”

Indeed, past Cleveland International Piano Competition for Young Artists medalists include Yunchan Lim, Eva Gevorgyan, and Ryan Wang—each of whom is now a known world-class pianist. Piano Cleveland also maintains close ties to its laureates. For example, this May, Cleveland International Piano Competition for Young Artists 2015 medalist Chaeyoung Park will return to Cleveland as part of the organization’s music series, Piano Cleveland Live. According to Kohlberg, it’s one of the many ways the competition has a lasting impact on the careers of its contestants.

First Round contestants will record a solo recital in one of three locations: Cleveland, Ohio; Hamburg, Germany; and Beijing, China. The First Round recordings will be broadcast on the Piano Cleveland website, [pianocleveland.org](http://pianocleveland.org), and its YouTube channel from March 26-29. Thirteen young artists will advance to the Semi-Final Round held in Cleveland this July: three contestants from the Rising Star division and five pianists from each of the Junior and Senior divisions. All Semi-Finalists will have the unique opportunity to perform solo recitals and collaborate with professional chamber musicians.

Competition innovation has become the hallmark of Piano Cleveland’s competitions. “Our audiences expect us to offer new competition practices,” says Kohlberg. “We’re excited to offer a Final Masterclass Round with Jean Yves-Thibaudet—a first in the piano competition sphere.” Thibaudet, one of the world’s leading classical piano luminaries, has his competition roots in Cleveland, winning second prize at the Robert Casadesus International Piano Competition (later rebranded as the Cleveland International Piano Competition) in 1979.



Six finalists – three from the Junior Division and three from the Senior Division – will participate in the one-of-a-kind Masterclass with Jean-Yves Thibaudet on July 29, as well as perform concerto movements with The Canton Symphony Orchestra on July 31. The Final Round with Orchestra will be broadcast on Amadeus.tv as well as [pianocleveland.org](http://pianocleveland.org).

The First Round contestants are as follows:

#### **Rising Stars**

Winnie (Weitong) Geng, 12, Canada  
Miyabi Haseo, 12, Japan  
Wilson Liu, 12, United States  
Lanxi Mao, 11, China  
Chenghong Wang, 12, China  
Ethan Wang, 11, Canada  
Natalie Wang, 12, United States  
Khloe Wu, 11, Canada  
Yimeng Xu, 10, China  
Wenqian Zheng, 10, China

#### **Junior**

HyeonSeo Cho, 14, South Korea  
Jeffrey Dong, 15, Australia  
Ken Hu, 13, United States  
Junye Huang, 14, China  
Ryan Huang, 15, Canada / United States  
Haram Jeon, 14, South Korea  
Pei-Heng Jiang, 15, China  
Dana Kim, 15, South Korea  
Jueon Lee, 14, South Korea  
Yusuke Nagayoshi, 14, Japan  
Yixin Shen, 15, China  
Yong-En Teng, 14, China Taiwan  
Adriana Vasilski, 14, Germany  
Eva Wang, 15, Austria  
Tian Xia, 14, China  
Haozhe Yang, 13, China  
Yuri Yasui, 15, Japan  
Zirui Yin, 13, China  
Wenbo Zheng, 13, China  
Xiaotong Zhou, 15, China



### **Senior**

Kenneth Chen, 17, Canada  
JiYuan DengHou, 16, China  
Chenxu Han, 17, China  
Guillermo Hernández Barrocal, 18, Spain  
Minwoo Hong, 18, South Korea  
Yurim Kim, 17, South Korea  
Evelina Kleczek, 17, United States / Poland  
Deni Kokhanovskii, 16, Russia  
Jeremy (Zhehao) Li, 17, China  
Zongxuan Li, 16, China  
Ian Lin, 17, United States  
YiCai Liu, 16, China  
Yuqin Lu, 17, China  
Deva Mira Sperandio, 18, Spain  
Hiroki Nakayama, 16, Japan  
Ye seo Nam, 16, South Korea  
Christina D. Sung, 16, United States / South Korea  
Sizhe Wang, 17, China  
Yenfei Wang, 18, China Taiwan  
Tianlang Xu, 17, Canada

Contestant biographical information, First Round repertoire, and a full timeline of the Semi-Final and Final Rounds taking place from July 24 – August 1, in Cleveland, Ohio, is available on [pianocleveland.org/](http://pianocleveland.org/).

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### **About Piano Cleveland**

Piano Cleveland promotes Cleveland as a premier piano destination by presenting world-class programming, community engagement, and education initiatives. The organization's four major programs and events include the Cleveland International Piano Competition, the CIPC for Young Artists, a mixed-genre piano festival, and year-round education and community engagement programming.