

2018 BAY STATE CONTEST JUDGES' BIOGRAPHIES

Sully Hall

Roberto Poli

Hailing from Venice, Italy, Roberto Poli has established himself on- and off-stage as an eloquent communicator, in particular of the works of Fryderyk Chopin, which he has performed around the world and is currently recording for the European labels On Classical and Piano Classics. He holds an Artist Diploma from New England Conservatory, where he is a faculty member of the Preparatory School. He also teaches the Piano Literature course at The Boston Conservatory. Roberto Poli's first critically acclaimed book, "The Secret Life of Musical Notation," focuses on research of the original sources of Chopin's works. A second book, "It's about Time," is in the making, and discusses the roles of rhythm, tempo, and rubato in their historical contexts, and how by looking at past practices we can create a musical language for the future.

Spencer Myer

Lauded for "superb playing" and "poised, alert musicianship" by the *Boston Globe*, American pianist SPENCER MYER is one of the most respected and sought-after artists on today's concert stage. He has been soloist with The Cleveland Orchestra, the Cape Town and Rhode Island Philharmonics, the Indianapolis, New Haven and Phoenix Symphony Orchestras and Beijing's China National Symphony. An in-demand chamber musician, he has appeared with cellists Lynn Harrell and Ralph Kirshbaum, clarinetist David Shifrin, and performs annually with the Miami String Quartet at the Kent/Blossom Music Festival. His career was launched with three important prizes: First Prize in the 2004 UNISA International Piano Competition in South Africa, the 2006 Christel DeHaan Classical Fellowship from the American Pianists Association and the Gold Medal from the 2008 New Orleans International Piano Competition. He was a member of Astral Artists' performance roster from 2003-2010.

A graduate of the Oberlin Conservatory, The Juilliard School and Stony Brook University, Spencer Myer is currently Artist-Teacher of Piano and Collaborative Piano at Boston's Longy School of Music of Bard College. His latest recordings — Piano Rags by William Bolcom and the two Brahms Cello Sonatas with cellist Brian Thornton — were released in 2017 on the *Steinway & Sons* label. He is a Steinway Artist. www.spencermoyer.com

Houston Hall

Konstantinos Papadakis

Konstantinos Papadakis has been described by the press as “one of the greatest hopes of music” as well as a “spontaneous, honest artist.” The Boston Globe wrote: "Papadakis gave a stunning performance displaying great variety of attack, poetic lyricism, and wrists of carbon steel." Mr. Papadakis has performed in recitals and has collaborated with chamber ensembles and orchestras in the world's major concert halls and famous artistic centers. Currently he holds the Motoko and Gordon Deane Principal Chair of Atlantic Symphony Orchestra. He is also on the piano faculties of Boston University's College of Fine Arts and the New England Conservatory's Pre-College and Continuing Education Division. He also directs the Summer Piano Academy in Athens, Greece

Gila Goldstein

Pianist Gila Goldstein is a member of the piano faculty and the chair of the piano department at Boston University School of Music and the director of the Young Artists Piano Program at Boston University School of Music.

An international performer and a recording artist (Centaur label), Gila Goldstein has performed throughout the USA as well as in Israel, Canada, Mexico, the Philippines, Korea and China. She has also given master classes and adjudicated national and International competitions in the USA, Israel, China and Korea.

Gila is a board member of the American Liszt Society and the founder-president of the ALS NY Chapter.

T401

Mana Tokuno

Pianist Mana Tokuno has received widespread acclaim for her sensitive and insightful interpretations and her brilliant virtuosity. She is a prize winner of numerous awards and international competitions, and has performed widely as soloist and chamber musician in the U.S., Europe, and her native Japan. She graduated from Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music with Honors, and holds Masters degree (solo piano) and Graduate Diploma (collaborative piano) from New England Conservatory. She was formerly on the faculty of Phillips Academy in Andover, and is currently at the New England Conservatory Preparatory School in Boston and International Music Academy in Cremona, Italy.

Franco Leon

My passion for music and piano is something that I look forward to sharing with others every day, be it when teaching or performing. It is truly wonderful to be by my

students' sides and see them grow from the very first steps of musical understanding, to independent and fulfilled performers. Music is a very important complement of life, and I believe that everyone who feels like expressing him or herself through this wonderful and rich medium, should be able to do so.

Pianist Franco Leon received his B.M and M.M in piano performance from The Boston Conservatory. His principal teachers include Jonathan Bass, Max Levinson and Luisa Guembes-Buchanan. Franco has been with the Brookline Music School since 2009, and is also currently a faculty member of the Quincy Point Music Academy and Chamber Players. He previously taught at the Bell Music Academy and Page Music Center between 2006 and 2009. Mr. Leon specializes in a wide variety of musical styles ranging from Classical to Jazz, and teaches students of all ages and levels.

A graduate of The Boston Conservatory and winner of the Bela Bartok Latin American Piano Competition at age 8, Franco Leon has performed throughout Europe, North, and South America. He has appeared at the King's School of Canterbury, Churton House in Wales, Voorburg in Holland, and in many venues in his native Peru, where he has been broadcast in national radio. As a soloist with orchestra, he has given concerts at Markham College, interpreting works by Mozart, Haydn and Beethoven. Franco enjoys performing regularly for the local community around Boston. He is currently a faculty member of both the Brookline Music School and Quincy Point Music Academy, where he enjoys teaching since 2009. B.M., Magna Cum Laude, Piano Performance, Boston Conservatory; M.M., Piano Performance, Boston Conservatory

Opera Studio 406

Yoshiko Kline

Yoshiko Kline performs as recitalist, soloist, and chamber musician throughout Asia and the New England area. Her most recent travels brought her to Shenzhen China where she performed at the Steinway Concert Hall. In addition to her classical interests, she excels as contemporary artist performing and premiering new works for numerous emerging composers, artists and ensembles. Yoshiko has also been fortunate enough to educate a diverse group of all ages in both private and classroom settings. She is currently a faculty member at Winchester Community Music School, The Winsor School and Rivers School Conservatory while continuing an extensive private piano studio. Yoshiko received her BM at Toho-Gakuen Conservatory of Music and MM, with honors, at New England Conservatory of Music.

Sonya Ovrutsky Fensome

Ms. Ovrutsky Fensome gained international recognition upon winning the International Competition in Senigalia, Italy, at age 15. Subsequently, she was invited to study at the Juilliard School of Music as a full scholarship recipient, where she completed her BM and MM, studying with legendary teachers Herbert Stessin for piano and Felix Galimir for chamber music. Throughout her career, Ms. Ovrutsky Fensome has performed in major art centers in the United States including Weill Carnegie Concert Hall, Lincoln Center Alice Tully Hall and Merkin Hall in New York, Philadelphia Kimmel Center, and the Aspen Music Festival. Her European tours have taken her to Palace de Beaux Arts of Brussels, Lucerne Music Festival, Moscow Conservatory Hall, Moscow Philharmonic Hall and Rachmaninoff Concert Hall in Russia, and the Musical Festival of Santander, as well as concert halls of Madrid, Zaragoza, Barcelona, Pamplona, Brussels and Rome. She performed as soloist with Aspen Festival Orchestra, Reno Philharmonic, LeHigh Valley Orchestra, Kingsport Philharmonic, KwaZulu-Natal Philharmonic Orchestra in South Africa, and Neuchatel Festival Orchestra in Switzerland. Ms. Ovrutsky Fensome's numerous competition awards include Aspen Music Festival Concerto Competition, Studio Club Competition in New York, Lehigh Valley –Juilliard Concerto Competition, the Elizabeth Harper Vaugh Competition in Kingsport, and New York Municipal Concert Award. Ms. Ovrutsky Fensome resides in Harvard, MA with her husband and son. She has been appointed Director of Piano Academy and Artist in Residence at M.Steinert and Sons in Natick since 2014.

Studio T406

Jenny Tang

Jenny Tang, piano, performs in solo and chamber music recitals throughout the US. Her engagements include such venues as Jordan Hall, Sanders Theatre, Symphony Hall, Berklee College of Music, Wellesley College and the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC. Jenny was born in Hong Kong and began her musical studies with her mother, Chow Lai-Hah. At age fourteen she was awarded the Licentiate Diploma from the Royal Schools of Music (UK) in piano performance and the following year was honored as a Fellow of the Trinity College of Music in London. Subsequently, Jenny received her Master of Music degree with academic honors and distinction in piano performance from the New England Conservatory of Music under the guidance of Veronica Jochum, and she continued her doctoral studies in piano performance with Randall Hodgkinson. Jenny is a Lecturer at Wellesley College teaching music theory and piano performance. She is also the Co-Director of Wellesley College Chamber Music Society, and frequently collaborates with the Theatre Department at the college as music director.

Heather Riley

Voted as Massachusetts Music Teachers Association's 2017 Music Teacher of the Year, Heather Rogers Riley is distinguished by her remarkable enthusiasm and outstanding commitment to excellence in music education. She has created a flourishing career, driven by her life-long passions of piano and teaching, and is in demand as both a solo and chamber instructor, performance coach, masterclass clinician, and an adjudicator.

Heather's students frequently stand out for their accomplishments, with many receiving the highest marks in the state from the Royal Conservatory of Music, and winning awards in notable competitions such as the MMTA Judged Festival, MMTA Bay State Contest, and the American Protege International Piano Competition with performances at Carnegie Hall in NYC.

Heather has run a thriving private piano studio for 20 years, currently in Jamaica Plain, MA. Also on the faculty at Indian Hill Music School in Littleton, MA since 2002, she was Chair of the Piano Department there in 2004-2015, and co-founder of the SummerDayMusic program. Heather is a very active member of NEPTA and MMTA, volunteering on recital committees and as a board member. Past positions include State Representative for The Royal Conservatory of Music, and Assistant Director of the Piano Preparatory Division at Walla Walla University.

Winner of the 1999 Oregon East Symphony Concerto Competition, Heather's performing experience also includes: concerts of Spanish piano and guitar music with husband Will Riley; soloist with the Indian Hill Chamber Orchestra; and solo and chamber recitals in the Boston area, California, Texas, and Washington. She holds a B.M., Piano Performance, *summa cum laude*, Walla Walla University; and M.M., Piano Performance, The Boston Conservatory. Principal teachers: Leonard Richter, Debra Backland & Jonathan Bass.

Piano Studio 306

Deborah Nemko

Though established as an interpreter of 20th and 21st century music, pianist Deborah Nemko is at home playing the music of Ravel and Glass or Brahms and Beethoven. She regularly appears in concert throughout the United States and abroad as soloist and collaborative artist. Nemko has performed in prestigious venues including Carnegie Hall in New York, the Shanghai Oriental Arts Center Shanghai and the Bethanienklooster in Amsterdam. Reviews of her performances describe her "beautiful and incisive playing." After completing her 2015 Fulbright Fellowship to the Netherlands for her project, "Suppressed and Forgotten Dutch Composers of World War II," she developed innovative recitals and workshops. In Taipei, Taiwan, Nemko was recognized by the *Taipei Times* for her outreach concert in the remote Taiwanese village of Alisan. Nemko is a frequent recording artist; her recordings of

the piano music of Dianne Goolkasian Rahbee and Grazyna Bacewicz are compelling.

Deborah has given lecture recitals internationally on the music of Tania Leon, Dianne Goolkasian Rahbee, and Grazyna Bacewicz. In conjunction with the University of Pennsylvania Design Institute-Paris she presented “Le Corbusier and Xenakis’s Methods of Composition and Rhythmic Structures, Spanning Between Architecture and Music” with University of Pennsylvania faculty.

A committed educator, Dr. Nemko has served as visiting faculty at Utrecht Conservatory and is currently Professor of Music at Bridgewater State University and faculty member of New England Conservatory’s Piano Preparatory School. In addition, Deborah served on the faculty of the International Master Classes in Belgium and the Grumo International Music Festival.

Michael Becker

Michael Becker is on the piano faculty of the All Newton Music School. He accompanies the Arlington-Belmont Chorale of the Philharmonic Society of Arlington and is a staff pianist at the Boston Conservatory at Berklee. He is also on the faculty of the Vocal Arts Program of the Handel and Haydn Society, where he accompanies the Young Women’s Chorus and Young Women’s Chamber Choir. Michael has served as a faculty member and music director at Riverside Theatre Works, and has been a pianist for *Urban Voices*, an educational outreach program of the Metropolitan Opera Guild.

Michael is a graduate of the New England Conservatory of Music, where he earned a Master of Music degree in Collaborative Piano. He also holds a Bachelor of Arts and a Master of Music in Piano Performance from Towson University in Maryland, with additional studies at the Eastman School of Music and the Longy School of Music Piano Pedagogy Institute.

Room 303

Paul Jacobs

Pianist Paul Jacobs has performed across the U.S. as a soloist and chamber musician in a variety of venues including Bruno Walter Auditorium at Lincoln Center; Queens Library, NY; The Art Complex Museum, Duxbury, MA; The Lilypad, Cambridge, MA; Hill Hall, UNC; and University Capitol Centre Recital Hall, UI. . He is a member of the Thoreau Piano Trio, which has a concert series at Chelmsford Center for the arts. His repertoire covers a wide range of music with an affinity for 20th century and new works. Solo performances have featured Ives’s Concord Sonata, selections of Ligeti Etudes, and Philip Glass’s Metamorphosis.

As a champion of new music, Mr. Jacobs has collaborated with currently active American composers Allen Anderson, Martin Boykin, Steve Rouse, and Yehudi

Wyner. In 2017 Mr. Jacobs was the soloist for a recording of Mary Bichner's piano concerto, *Early Spring*, commissioned by Mount Auburn Cemetery. He has also recorded with Juventas New Music Ensemble on the Navano label. Mr. Jacobs Holds an A.D. from Longy School of Music, M.M. from Michigan State University, and B.M. from Hope College. His former teachers include Randall Hodgkinson, Deborah Moriarty, Joan Conway, and Arlene Warners.

Rasa Vitkauskaite

Winner of the Grand Prix at the Mendelssohn Cup Piano Competition in Italy, Rasa Vitkauskaite has won top prizes at numerous prestigious international piano competitions including First Prizes at Les Rencontres Internationales des Jeunes Pianistes (Belgium), the competition in Taurisano (Italy), and the Rubinstein Piano Competition (Paris). In 2014, Ongaku Records published Ms. Vitkauskaite's debut solo CD *Reflections* to great critical acclaim in *Gramophone*, *Fanfare* and *MusicWeb International*. The last season featured her debut recording as soloist with orchestra performing Liszt/Weber *Polonaise brillante* recorded at the Hungarian National Radio. She has performed as soloist with the Kaunas, Latvian, Kaliningrad Philharmonic Orchestras, I Solisti di Perugia, Franz Liszt Chamber Orchestra and the Boston Conservatory Orchestra. Her most recent concert engagements include performances in China, South Korea, Venezuela, Brazil, Argentina, Spain, Italy, Hungary, and the United States. Ms. Vitkauskaite is also the winner of the Westmont Fellowship at the Montecito International Music Festival in Santa Barbara, California, and the Kathryn Wasserman Davis \$10,000 grant that supported her tour in Israel.

Ms. Vitkauskaite performs regularly with world-renowned clarinetist Jonathan Cohler. The duo recorded three CDs - *Rhapsodie Française*, *Romanza* and *American Tribute*. She has also collaborated with Tchaikovsky gold medal violinist Ilya Kaler, cellist Julia Bruskin of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, and long-time Cleveland Orchestra principal clarinetist Franklin Cohen among many others. Ms. Vitkauskaite is the pianist of the Boston Philharmonic Orchestra and the Meiningen Trio.

In addition to her active performing career, Ms. Vitkauskaite is a dedicated teacher and adjudicator. She has many students both at the Concord Conservatory of Music, where she is on the faculty, and in her private studio. Ms. Vitkauskaite is a frequent guest teacher around the globe. Recently, she has given masterclasses, private lessons and coachings at the Ohio University, University of Akron, National University of Rosario in Argentina, Carlos Gomes State Institute in Belém, Brazil, Longy School of Music of Bard College and New England Conservatory Preparatory program.

