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Contact: Zack French, Director of Communications and Artist Advancement
Email: french@violin.org

Karisa Chiu Wins Gold Medal at 12th Quadrennial International Violin Competition of Indianapolis

INDIANAPOLIS – Moments ago at the Hilbert Circle Theatre in downtown Indianapolis, IVCI Jury President Jaime Laredo announced the winning order of the six Finalists for the 12th Quadrennial International Violin Competition of Indianapolis.

Karisa Chiu
United States
Gold Medalist

Elli Choi
United States
Silver Medalist

Aozhe Zhang
China
Bronze Medalist

Xunyue Zhang
China
Fourth Place Laureate

Yesong Sophie Lee
United States
Fifth Place Laureate

Lina Nakano
Japan
Sixth Place Laureate

Over the course of four rounds including the Preliminaries, Semi-Finals (Sponsored by David Whitman and Donna Reynolds), Classical Finals (Presented by The Family of Michael D. O’Brien and Associate Sponsors AMPG and Sapient) and the Finals (presented by Title Sponsor Lilly), all 38 Participants were ranked by the nine-member jury including Jaime Laredo, David Chan, Jinjoo Cho (2014 Gold Medalist), Pamela Frank, Yuzuko Horigome, Bella Hristova (2006 Laureate), Dong-Suk Kang, Cho-Liang Lin and Svetlin Roussev (1998 Laureate).

All six 2026 Laureates will be honored at the Gala Awards Ceremony Sunday, October 4 at the Scottish Rite Cathedral. Special guests include Scott Hoke as Master of Ceremonies, and the Indy Voice Choir of the Indianapolis Children’s Choir.

Announcement of all Special Prizes will also take place at the Ceremony, which begins at 4:00 PM, with a reception to follow for all ticket holders. Tickets may be purchased at the door for \$30.

Biographies of the six Laureates are below in alphabetical order:

Karisa Chiu | United States, Age 27
Recognized for her “distinctive and fascinating intellect” and “easy virtuosity” (Spokesman Review; Cleveland Classical), **Karisa Chiu** gained international recognition after winning the 2021 Isangyun Violin Competition. She has since performed at major venues such as Carnegie Hall, Severance Hall and Casals Forum, and is a top prize winner at the Singapore, Menuhin and Leopold Mozart competitions. Karisa’s debut album, *Home*, released in collaboration with pianist Zhu Wang and Cedille Records to critical acclaim.

Elli Choi | United States, Age 25
Award-winning violinist **Elli Choi** is quickly establishing herself as one of the most captivating violinists of her generation. Choi has performed throughout North America, Europe, Asia and the Middle East at esteemed venues such as Carnegie Hall, David Geffen Hall, the Berliner Philharmonie, Het Concertgebouw, Maison Symphonique de Montréal, Tonhalle Zürich, Rudolfinum Dvorák Hall in Prague, the Emirates Palace, and Beijing’s National Center for the Performing Arts, appearing with major orchestras such as the Orchestre Philharmonique de Monte-Carlo, the Belgian National Orchestra, the Novosibirsk Philharmonic Orchestra, Sofia Philharmonic Orchestra, Orchestre Philharmonique Royal de Liège, and Ulster Orchestra.

Yesong Sophie Lee | United States, Age 22
After winning First Prize at the 2016 Menuhin International Violin Competition, **Yesong Sophie Lee** gained international recognition as a leading young artist of her generation. She is a prize winner of the Sibelius, Seoul and Montreal international violin competitions, where she received the Prize for Best Virtuoso Work. She is a recipient of Salon de Virtuosi’s Charlotte White Career Grant. Lee has appeared as soloist with the Helsinki Philharmonic, London Philharmonia Orchestra, Konzerthaus Orchester Berlin, Cameristi della Scala, and others throughout Europe and North America.

Lina Nakano | Japan, Age 21
Lina Nakano is currently studying at The Juilliard School as a proud recipient of the Kovner Fellowship, after studying at Toho Gakuen School of Music in Japan. She gained international recognition as the youngest-ever First Prize laureate of the Sendai International Music Competition. As a soloist, Lina has appeared with leading orchestras in Japan and abroad, including the NHK Symphony Orchestra. She performs on the 1702 Stradivarius “Lyll,” generously loaned by the ITOH Foundation.

Aozhe Zhang | China, Age 18
Aozhe Zhang is a second-level senior at the Music Middle School Affiliated to the Shanghai Conservatory of Music. He began learning the violin at the age of three and a half, and at seventeen won First Prize at the 58th Premio Paganini International Violin Competition. He has since been invited to perform in numerous cities across China and Europe, earning widespread acclaim for his performances.

Xunyue Zhang | China, Age 22
Berlin-based **Xunyue Zhang** is the First Prize winner of the Mozart International Violin Competition Salzburg (2026), and a Prize Winner of the Michael Hill, Henri Marteau, and the Lipizer international violin competitions. As a soloist, she has performed with orchestras including the Munich Chamber Orchestra and Hofer Symphoniker, appearing in venues such as the Elbphilharmonie Hamburg and Victoria Hall Geneva.

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The International Violin Competition of Indianapolis (IVCI) recognizes, rewards and promotes the world’s finest young classical violinists and encourages understanding, appreciation and support of the violin repertoire by a large and diverse audience. The IVCI utilizes its world prominence to bring international attention to Indianapolis and maintains its efforts to be a visible and collaborative member of the arts communities in Indianapolis and Indiana.



For information about the IVCI, visit www.violin.org.

*32 E Washington Street • Suite 1320 • Indianapolis, IN 46204 U.S.A.
Telephone: 317.637.4574 • Email: ivci@violin.org*

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