

EASTMAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC
GRADUATION CEREMONY



Honors and Awards

FRIDAY, MAY 15, 2026

Alfred Mann Dissertation Award

Established in honor of the distinguished musicologist and professor emeritus at the Eastman School of Music, the Alfred Mann Award recognizes a student in the department of musicology or theory for a dissertation of unusual distinction.

Emma Louise Hartwell St. Amand

Andrew J. Bogiages Memorial Prize in Bassoon

Established to commemorate the life and musical contributions of a talented young Eastman student; awarded to a deserving undergraduate or graduate bassoon student.

Michael Deresz, Alistair Picken

Anne T. Cummins Prize

Established in memory of a well-loved professor of French who taught at the Eastman School of Music from 1924 to 1966; awarded to graduating seniors who have distinguished themselves in humanities classes.

Caroline Margaret Barata, Lucy Violet Chugh

Barbara M. H. Koeng Award

Established to honor the memory of a beloved staff member at the Eastman School of Music; recognizes the achievements of accompanying majors who share Mrs. Koeng's passion for working with singers.

Andrew Chen, Calvin Daniel Guse

Barr Award in Accompanying

Established in 1997, the Barr Award honors graduating Accompanying majors who have distinguished themselves at Eastman and who show outstanding promise for future success in the profession.

Derek Hamersly, Gregory Scott Smith

Belle S. Gitelman Award

Established in memory of Belle Gitelman and the contributions she made to the artistic life of Rochester; presented to students whose compositions have been declared worthy of recognition.

Niyayesh Bagheri, Ko Muramatsu

Bernard Rogers Memorial Prize

Established in memory of the renowned Eastman faculty composer; awarded to worthy composition students selected by the faculty.

Nattakon Lertwattanaruk

Dr. James B. Cochran Endowed Organ Prize

The James B. Cochran Organ Prize fund was established to honor the life's work of Eastman graduate James Cochran '80E (MM), '92E (DMA) and given by Dr. Cochran and Mr. & Mrs. Robert W. Martin. Dr. Cochran received Master of Music and Doctor of Musical Arts degrees in Organ Performance and Literature from the Eastman School of Music. He has been Director of Music and Organist at Vanderbilt Presbyterian Church for more than 25 years.

Alexander Little

Elsa T. Johnson Fellowship

Awarded to a deserving musicology student, in order to make it possible for that student to devote their time to the writing of the PhD dissertation.

Paul David Flood

Excellence in Accompanying Award

Recognizes students who have particularly distinguished themselves through their work as collaborative pianists.

Chaeun Lee, Ka Ming Leung, Yuhan Wang

Friends of Eastman Opera Voice Competition Prizes

Funded by the Friends of Eastman Opera, an organization which supports students, programs, and productions of the Eastman Opera Theatre.

Lynne Clarke Vocal Prize

Established to honor the memory of Lynne Clarke; awarded to recognize a vocalist who shows outstanding talent and musicality through their first-prize performance in the Friends of Eastman Opera Voice Competition.

Jason Chandler Garcia-Kakuk

Annabel Muentzer Vocal Prize

Established to honor the memory of Annabel Muentzer; awarded to the second-prize performance in the Friends of Eastman Opera Voice Competition.

Emily Rose Krasinski

Third Place Vocal Prize

Mara Claireth Davis

Honorable Mention Vocal Prize

Karynna Abagayle Jaelle Moore-Sobel

Glenn and Frances Harris Cello Prize

Established in 2007, the Glenn and Frances Harris Cello Prize recognizes one or more students who have distinguished themselves in cello performance.

Ethan Hess, Ryan Andrew Post

Glenn Watkins Traveling Fellowship

Established by a distinguished Eastman alumnus '53E (PhD); awarded to support dissertation research travel for a doctoral student in musicology.

Nicholas William Anderson

Henry Cobos Endowed Piano Prize

Established to commemorate the memory of the life and musical contributions of a talented Eastman graduate and ex-emeritus; honors students who have demonstrated exceptional achievement in the study and performance of piano.

Jihyung Youn

Howard Hanson Ensemble Prize

Given in honor of Howard Hanson; awarded to a student who composes an original and distinguishable ensemble piece.

Haoyi Zhang

Howard Hanson Orchestral Prize

Given in honor of Howard Hanson, distinguished composer, conductor, and Director of the Eastman School of Music from 1924 to 1964; awarded in recognition of a student who composes an original and distinguishable orchestral piece.

Adil Köprülü

Jessie Kneisel Lieder Competition

With the establishment of the Jessie Kneisel Prize in 1981, Eastman began a tradition of celebrating Dr. Kneisel's rich contributions to the school and her life-long love of German and Austrian culture. An annual competition determines the winners of the Kneisel Prize for outstanding performances of German lieder by singers and collaborative pianists.

Jessie Kneisel Lieder Prize

Established in memory of a distinguished Eastman professor of German; awarded to Eastman voice students who in the judgement of the faculty best exemplify high musical ideals in the performance of German lieder.

Singers

First Place: Nicole Isabelle Khouzami

Second Place: Marlana Annette St. Jean

Third Place: Jessica Layne Kodsi

Collaborative Pianists

First Place: Derek Hamersly

Second Place: Derek Hamersly

Third Place: Veniamin Blokh

Ann C. Fehn Memorial Award for the Accompaniment of German Lieder

Established to honor the memory of Ann C. Fehn; awarded to an outstanding pianist who has collaborated with a singer in a performance of German lieder.

Derek Hamersly

Jim and Jamie Self Tuba Award

Awarded to an outstanding tuba student who demonstrates a high level of performance proficiency and a record of leadership and service to the school and/or broader community.

Nathanael Subodh Kumar

John Celentano Award for Excellence in Chamber Music

Established to celebrate the outstanding contributions of Professor Emeritus John Celentano; honors students who have demonstrated exceptional achievement in the study and performance of chamber music.

Vivian Li, Amelia Rose Posner-Hess, Elin Augustus Schlichting, Margaret Adams Slap

The Lazuli Quartet: Claire Chien, Ariun-Enerel Gantumur,

Vivienne Nicole Lyda Lucier, Kellen Mikesell

The Yoji Quartet: Simon Cheng, Mackinnley Richard Jones, Kaylynn Li,

Clara Luciana Schultz

Lecture Recital Prize

Recognizes and celebrates DMA/PRL students at the Eastman School of Music who present exemplary lecture recitals within a given calendar year.

Emily Dianne Skilling

Linda Muise Student Life Award

Established in honor of Eastman's former Assistant Dean for Residential Life; presented to a graduating senior who has shown dedication, enthusiasm, collaboration, and leadership traits that promote and maintain a strong quality of life for all.

Sofia Alejandra Martinez

Louis Lane Prize

Named for an Eastman composer and alumnus;
awarded to a student who has shown excellence in composition.

Endong Li

Milton Schlesinger Percussion Prize

Established in honor of the distinguished music education faculty member
at the Eastman School of Music.

John Dawson, Izaiah Kai Gonzales

Ornest Award

The Ornest Fund provides for an annual award for up to four undergraduate students,
enrolled in any degree program, who have completed at least one year of study at the
Eastman School of Music and whose primary instrument is voice.

Liam Robert Blecha, Christine Marie Kelly, John Kenneth Leslie

Peter Salaff Prize

Established to honor the Eastman alumnus, faculty violinist,
and founding member of the Cleveland Quartet; awarded to a graduating senior violinist,
violinist, cellist, or pianist who exemplifies the beloved and
rare combination of outstanding artist, collaborator, and passionate
humanitarian that characterizes Peter Salaff.

Liliana Ahern Mahave

The Presser Foundation Undergraduate Scholarship

Funded by a grant from the Presser Foundation; awarded to an undergraduate
music student in recognition of outstanding achievement.

Nichole Waligóra

The Presser Music Award (Graduate Student)

Funded by a grant from the Presser Foundation;
presented to a graduate student demonstrating excellence and outstanding promise for
a distinguished career in the field of music.

Chenxin Han

Ray Wright Prize

Established by alumni to honor the legacy of their teacher and mentor,
Rayburn Wright, legendary composer, arranger, conductor, and professor of Jazz
Studies and Contemporary Media at the Eastman School of Music (1970 to 1990), the
Ray Wright Prize is awarded to students in the Eastman jazz program who embody Ray's
spirit of artistry, dedication, versatility, and entrepreneurship.

Daniel Atkinson, Israel Jordan Stone

Raymond and Maxine Schirmer Prize in Jazz Composition (or Performance)

Awarded to students in the Department of Jazz Studies and Contemporary Media for
excellence in jazz composition or performance.

Reyna Mia Machado, Danica Fe De Justo Rebudiao, Daniel P. Zawel

Rebecca McCord Piano Scholarship

Awarded to students majoring in piano who demonstrate extraordinary musicianship,
technical development, balanced repertoire, and
successful performances.

Wanyue Zhao

Runyan-Monfort Charles Warren Fox Award

Established in memory of the distinguished musicologist and former Eastman School of
Music Professor Charles Warren Fox, presented to a graduate musicology
student in recognition of a special academic accomplishment.

Sheridan Nicholas Zahl

Steve Witser Memorial Fund

One or more annual awards to Eastman trombone major(s) at the discretion of the Dean of the Eastman School of Music or the Winds, Brass and Percussion department chair.

Charles Leising Hibscheiler, Joshua Cooper Hunt

Sidney Mear Trumpet Prize

Given in honor of Sidney Mear; awarded to outstanding senior trumpet students in addition to honoring all who teach, play and study trumpet.

Theodore Frederick Ekstrand

Sigma Alpha Iota Scholastic Award

Sigma Alpha Iota is an organization which promotes interaction among those who share a commitment to music. Members of Sigma Alpha Iota are active in all areas of campus music and campus life, working closely with faculty, administration, campus and community groups, music professionals, and patrons. The Scholastic Award is given for the highest GPA among chapter members.

Maya Elizabeth Watters

Sigma Alpha Iota Collegiate Honor Award

Sigma Alpha Iota is an organization which promotes interaction among those who share a commitment to music. Members of Sigma Alpha Iota are active in all areas of campus music and campus life, working closely with faculty, administration, campus and community groups, music professionals, and patrons. The Collegiate Honor Award is given for contributions to the chapter.

Konstantina Gotouhidis

Tal Perkes Flute Prize Fund

Established in memory of Tallon Sterling Perkes '84E; awarded to students who have demonstrated exceptional achievement in the study of flute.

Honor Hickman

Teaching Assistant Prizes

Awarded to students who distinguish themselves for teaching excellence.

Kelton Robert Burnside, Bruno Guedea Fonseca, Lauren Paula Ganger, Luke R. Honeck, Ryan Harris Jones, Aihun Zheng

Verdehr Award

Established by Dr. Elsa Ludewig-Verdehr '58E (MM) '64E (DMA) and Dr. Walter Verdehr to enrich audiences through the performance of Verdehr Trio repertoire created for the violin-clarinet-piano trio. Awarded to three students who perform an annual concert of violin-clarinet-piano music consisting of Verdehr Trio commissioned repertoire.

Ingrid A Buschkopf, Harrison Kim, Christopher Michael Tavernier

Walter Hagen Conducting Prize

Established in 1984 to honor the memory of Walter Hagen; awarded to a student of conducting.

Peiwen Zou

Wayne Brewster Barlow Prize

Awarded to students who have shown excellence in composition.

Anak Baiharn

Willow Hall Press Award for Harp

Established in memory of Jane B. Weidensaul, PhD, harpist, scholar and teacher; awarded to a harp performance major entering today's music profession.

Kathleen Yingqian Miao