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## **ASPEN MUSIC FESTIVAL AND SCHOOL ANNOUNCES FULL FELLOWSHIPS FOR ALL SOLO PIANO STUDENTS AT NEW PAULSON CENTER FOR PIANO STUDIES**

*Applications are open now for the inaugural 2027 season of the Paulson Center, opening access and opportunity to study in Aspen to superlative young talent from anywhere in the world, regardless of financial circumstance.*

*A lead gift of the Aspen Music Festival and School's Aspen Promises campaign, which has raised \$73 million to date, the \$11 million donation from the Paulson Family Foundation furthers the AMFS's commitment to a larger vision of arts stewardship in our time.*

ASPEN, COLO. — The Aspen Music Festival and School (AMFS) announced today that beginning in summer 2027, all students in the solo piano program will receive a full fellowship covering 100% of tuition, room and board, thanks to a transformative \$11 million endowment gift from the Paulson Family Foundation. The gift establishes the Paulson Center for Piano Studies and provides full fellowships, in perpetuity, to all participants in the solo piano program and endows the faculty position of Yoheved (Veda) Kaplinsky as the Veda Kaplinsky Piano Faculty Chair. Kaplinsky has been an AMFS faculty member since 2004 and is also the chair of the piano department at The Juilliard School and one of the world's most sought-after piano pedagogues.

Each summer 50 young pianists are admitted to study in Aspen, coming from as many as 20 different countries, with an unparalleled roster of international piano faculty talent. The distinguished faculty includes Kaplinsky, Hung-Kuan Chen, Anton Nel, Julian Martin, Boris Slutsky, HaeSun Paik and Arie Vardi\*, who are drawn from the elite faculties of The Juilliard School, The Royal Conservatory of Music (Toronto), the Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University, the

University of Texas at Austin, New England Conservatory, Hochschule für Musik in Hanover, Buchmann-Mehta School of Music at Tel Aviv University and Yale University.

John Paulson, who is also the owner of Steinway & Sons and a part-time Aspen resident, noted the gift reflects his conviction that musical talent should not be constrained by financial circumstance and that great teaching deserves lasting institutional support. "This endowment will ensure that the most talented young pianists in the world, regardless of financial means, will be able to study in Aspen with the finest teachers, musicians and facilities," said Paulson. "The new chair in piano, named in honor of Veda Kaplinsky, recognizes her lifelong devotion to teaching the next generation of great pianists."

Kaplinsky expressed her gratitude for this faith in the AMFS's educational mission and foresees this gift will significantly increase access to young artists everywhere. "The Paulson Family Foundation's immense generosity will empower gifted pianists worldwide to apply for an inspiring and transformative experience," Kaplinsky said. "In Aspen, students of the Paulson Center for Piano Studies will immerse themselves in all aspects of music at the highest level, within a state-of-the-art campus equipped with the finest Steinway pianos. This opportunity will be set against the backdrop of breathtaking natural beauty."

As a lead gift of the AMFS's Aspen Promises campaign, which has raised \$73 million to date, this endowment gift highlights the institution's larger vision to sustain and increase artistic excellence, scholarship and access.

Said AMFS board chair Alexandra Munroe, "There are moments an institution makes a leap forward in stewarding its mission, together with its visionary partners. The Aspen Music Festival and School has long been a beacon of artistic talent, performance and creation, and with the Paulson Family Foundation's magnificent gift leading the Aspen Promises campaign, the AMFS moves to the next level of international stewardship of the arts in our time. We are so grateful to John Paulson for his tremendous belief in the power of music and in the AMFS."

Aspen's piano program, already regarded as one of the world's finest, enters a new chapter with this transformational gift. "With the leadership of Veda, Aspen's piano program has long been among the finest in the world," said Alan Fletcher, who is now President Emeritus of the Aspen Music Festival and School. "With John's visionary and extraordinary gift, the program enters a

brilliant new phase as the Paulson Center for Piano Studies, which will be unsurpassed in its global reach and achievement.”

The Paulson Center for Piano Studies carries forward an already notable history in Aspen of educating generations of piano talent. Alumni of the AMFS solo piano studies program include Yuja Wang, Conrad Tao, Jeremy Denk, Wu Han, Orli Shaham and Joyce Yang.

Applications for the inaugural 2027 season are now open. Visit [aspenmusicfestival.com](https://aspenmusicfestival.com) to learn more and apply.

*\* Note Arie Vardi will be on leave in 2027.*

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## **ABOUT THE ASPEN MUSIC FESTIVAL AND SCHOOL**

The AMFS is the United States’ premier classical music center for performance and education, presenting more than 400 musical events during its eight-week summer season in Aspen. Under the leadership of President and CEO Meghan Umber and Music Director Robert Spano, the organization draws top classical musicians from around the world for a rich combination of performances of orchestral works, opera, chamber music, recitals, contemporary music, works by new or previously unrecognized voices, popular genres, family events, and talks, competitions, and classes.

More than 450 music students from 40 U.S. states and 40 countries come each summer to play in four orchestras, sing, conduct, compose and study with more than 100 artist-faculty members who come from the orchestras of Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, Dallas, the Metropolitan Orchestra, and the leading conservatories and music schools like The Juilliard School, The Shepherd School of Music at Rice University, and The Colburn School. Students represent the field’s best talent; many have already begun their professional careers, and others are on the cusp.

The AMFS is deeply committed to community and many events are free. Seating outside the Music Tent on the David Karetzky Music Lawn and in the Kaye Music Garden is always free.

Regular livestreams are free anywhere in the world. The AMFS also runs popular music programs in-school and after-school at most schools in Colorado's Roaring Fork Valley.

Renowned alumni include violinists Joshua Bell, Sarah Chang, Midori, Gil Shaham, and Robert McDuffie; pianists Joyce Yang, Orli Shaham, Conrad Tao, Yuja Wang, and Wu Han; conductors Marin Alsop, James Conlon, Leonard Slatkin and Joshua Weilerstein; composers William Bolcom, Philip Glass, David Lang, Augusta Read Thomas, Bright Sheng and Joan Tower; singers Isabel Leonard, Jamie Barton, Sasha Cooke, Danielle de Niese, Renée Fleming, Dawn Upshaw and Tamara Wilson; cellist Alisa Weilerstein; guitarist Sharon Isbin; bassist Edgar Meyer; and former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

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#### Event and Ticket Information

Online: [aspenmusicfestival.com](http://aspenmusicfestival.com)

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