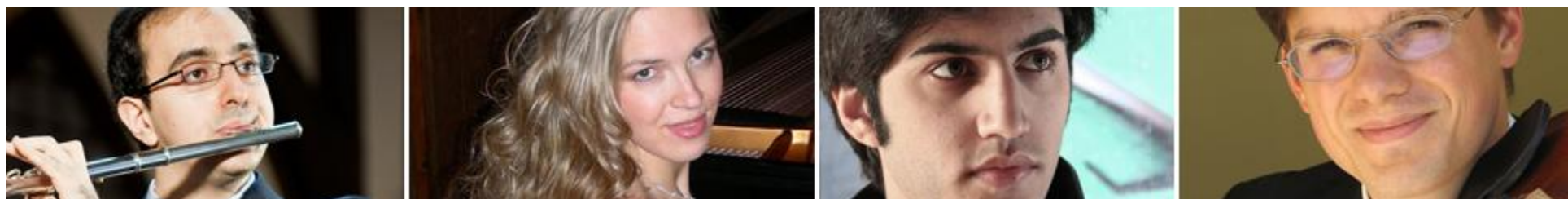


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GRAPHIC

Musical minds: A quartet of iPalpiti artists



The Festival

Maron Anis Khoury, 23 | Flute

Peter Rainer, 41 | Violin

Svetlana Smolina, 33 | Piano

Kian Soltani, 20 | Cello

The Festival

The iPalpiti Festival of International Laureates is about music, young talent and peace.

The 15th annual festival is now playing in venues all over Los Angeles, culminating in the finale on July 28 at Disney Hall. Founded by violin professor Eduard Schmieder, iPalpiti aims to bring together young musicians from all over the world to promote peace and understanding through classical music.

The 28 artists participating this year are, as you would expect, incredibly accomplished, but it is not just technical skill that Schmieder looks

for when choosing laureates. “He talks more about how music moves and how it is already in the soul, the entity of music,” said iPalpiti concertmaster Peter Rainer.

Austrian cellist Kian Soltani is coming back for his third festival. “We have so much fun together, musically and apart from that. That helps a lot when you play chamber music; if you know the people, if you love them, then you can really connect with them musically.”

Here, flutist Maron Anis Khoury, violinist Peter Rainer, pianist Svetlana Smolina and cellist Kian Soltani talk about music, life and more.

Maron Anis Khoury, 23 | Flute

From: Israel.

Studied: Curtis.

Works: Metropolitan Opera Orchestra.

How did you get started on your instrument? I started playing the piano at age 8 or 9 and the conservatory was running a special where you could learn a wind instrument for free. I wanted the trombone but my mom refused. She suggested I pick the flute because it is delicate and has a nice sweet sound. I was 11, so I did.

You can play one flute piece only for the rest of your life. What is it? Mozart Flute Concerto K. 314.

You can steal one piece from another instrument. What do you choose? There is a big clarinet solo in the second movement of Brahms' 3rd Symphony. I wish I could play something that beautiful.

What skill do you wish you had? I always wished I could be a good piano player or a composer.

You're having a dinner. There are three empty chairs. Whom do you invite? Beethoven, Steve Jobs, Pavarotti.

If you could snap your finger and fix something, what would you choose? My computer and my television. I'm very lazy when it comes to that stuff.

Peter Rainer, 41 | Violin

From: Germany.

Works: Concertmaster, Kammerakademie Potsdam. iPalpiti concertmaster since 1995.

How did you get started on the violin? I started out playing the recorder when I was 6, and there was a boy in the neighborhood who was already very accomplished on the violin, so I wanted to learn. Eight years old is quite late to start, but I already knew a little from playing the recorder.

If you could play only one violin piece for the rest of your life, what is it? Messaien, Quartet for the End of Time.

You can steal one piece from another instrument. What do you choose? Dvorak, Cello Concerto.

What skill do you wish you had? I would love to be organized. Making music always distracts you from organization.

What makes you laugh out loud? When my two boys do things that I don't expect. Also, my cat.

What makes you grumpy? When a student of mine sends me a text a half-hour before the lesson and says he can't come.

Svetlana Smolina, 33 | Piano

From: Russia.

Studied: Oberlin, Indiana University, University of Michigan, Brussels.

Works: Artist-in-residence at Westchester University.

How did you get started on your instrument? I did science and music until I was 12. I was never pushed to the music but it was my own choice. I was surrounded by kids who had no childhood and were pushed to practice. I was never like that. That's probably why I love doing it so much.

You can play one piece only for the rest of your life. What would it be? Rachmaninoff Piano Concerto No. 3.

You can steal one piece from another instrument. What do you choose? Mahler Symphony No. 5 Adagio.

What surprises you most about the piano? Every time I come and sit at the keyboard, it's like seeing a new person every morning. It can talk to you in so many different ways.

What skill do you wish you had? Writing books. I have a lot to say!

What quality do you most admire in others? Warmth of soul. Be yourself with others. It shines through.

Kian Soltani, 20 | Cello

From: Austria.

Studied: Basel Academy and Lichtenstein Academy.

How did you get started on the cello? My parents are musicians and when I was 4 they suggested I play the cello. I fell in love with it but at 8 I started playing the piano as well. My parents moved to Austria 40 years ago from Iran, so I also tried a traditional Persian instrument called the kamancheh.

What tricks did your parents use to get you to practice? When I was little, they would tell me if I practiced well then I could watch "SpongeBob SquarePants."

You can play one cello piece only for the rest of your life. What is it? Shostakovich Cello Concerto No. 1.

You can steal one piece from another instrument. What do you choose? Shostakovich Violin Concerto.

What skill do you wish you had? I'm trying to learn jazz piano, but I wish I was way better.

What matters to you most in the world? Loyalty and good friends.

Favorite L.A. restaurant? Ketchup in West Hollywood.

Credits: By Marcia Adair, Special to the Los Angeles Times | Produced by Lily Mihalik | Photo Credits: iPalpiti Artists International | Programming by [Anthony Pesce](#).

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