



2025 SILVER STATE COMPETITION



Finn Caoile

SOCIAL PIANO ADJUDICATOR

Finn Caoile acquired a Bachelor of Music degree in Piano Performance at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, under Dr. Timothy Hoft. He has been playing the piano since 2004, having participated in several local competitions and festivals in the past, such as the Charleston International Music Competition. He has also played in masterclasses for Dr. Jason Kwak and Victor Rosenbaum. Alongside the piano, he regularly plays harpsichord, flute, and piccolo with various school ensembles; he has also performed on double bass, alto saxophone, harmonica, and accordion. He currently works with various UNLV students as well as with ensembles around the Valley. In his free time, Finn creates visual art of various mediums, such as pencil, watercolour, acrylic paint, and paper (origami). He began pursuing a Master's Degree in Accompanying / Collaborative Piano at UNLV in Fall of 2024 and is expected to graduate in Spring of 2026.



Heinz Gilbert Denoyo

CLASSICAL PIANO ADJUDICATOR

Heinz Gilbert Denoyo is a *Doctor of Musical Arts (DMA)* student in Piano Performance at the *University of Nevada, Reno (UNR)*, where he studies under *Dr. James Winn* and *Dr. Cicilia Yudha*. As a Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA), Heinz currently serves as the *UNR Voice Area - Opera pianist* and fulfills various collaborative and coaching needs within the School of Music. He completed his Master of Music degree at UNR in the Spring of 2024.

During his undergraduate years at the University of Santo Tomas in the Philippines, Heinz received recognition in national and university-wide competitions, including the National Music Competition for Young Artists (NAMCYA) in 2010, the UST Conservatory of Music Concerto Competition, and the Piano Teacher's Guild of the Philippines' Filipino and Romantic Competition.

Heinz's passion for music goes beyond performing; he is deeply committed to music education, having taught in various international institutions, including the International Academy for Intercultural Development (IAID) in Doha, Qatar; the Nagaland Conservatory of Music in India; and in his home country at the University of the Visayas and Colegio de la Inmaculada Concepción.

In addition to performing solo repertoire, Heinz enjoys playing chamber music and collaborating with ensembles and soloists.



Marlene Meagher

WOODWIND ADJUDICATOR

Marlene Meagher has been a music educator for over 40 years and holds a degree in Music Education from the University of Texas at El Paso, where she majored in flute and piano. She taught instrumental and general music in grades K–12, including more than 25 years as a band director in El Paso, Texas, where her ensembles earned numerous awards.

A former flutist with the El Paso Symphony Orchestra, Mrs. Meagher now teaches private piano and wind instrument lessons to students of all ages, whose performances in recitals and competitions have received many honors and scholarships.

She is active as a clinician, mentor, and adjudicator, and is a member of the Texas Music Educators Association, Music Teachers National Association, Nevada Music Teachers Association, and Las Vegas Music Teachers Association, where she serves as Jazz Festival Chair.



Athena Mertes

VOCAL ADJUDICATOR

Athena Mertes, Soprano, is one of the Valley's most celebrated sopranos, whose opera and concert credits include Marie (The Daughter of the Regiment), Mimi (La Bohème), Musetta (La Bohème), Despina (Cosi Fan Tutte), Gretel (Hansel and Gretel), Lucy (The Telephone), Zerlina (Don Giovanni), Gianetta (L'Elisir d'Amore), Morgana (Alcina), Pamina (Die Zauberflöte), Abigail (The Crucible), Nella (Gianni Schicchi), Waldvogel

(Siegfried) and soprano soloist in Vivaldi's Gloria, Handel's Messiah, Brahms Requiem, Mozart Requiem, Beethoven's 9th and Honegger's King David. She has performed as a guest soloist with the Burbank Philharmonic, Las Vegas Philharmonic, Henderson Symphony, Opera Las Vegas, Vegas City Opera, Lexington Opera Outreach and the Southern Nevada Musical Arts Society. Some of her recent credits include Sylvia in the World Premiere of Behold the Man, Zelda in the West Coast Premiere of Ghosts of Gatsby and Alice B. Toklas in the West Coast premiere of Ricky Ian Gordon and Royce Vavrek's 27, Lyse in the West Coast Premiere of Again and Again and Again with Opera Las Vegas and she portrayed Mimi in Vegas City Opera's La BoDead and Madame de Tourvel in The Dangerous Liaisons.

She is also the Chorus Master of the Opera Las Vegas Youth Chorus and the Director of Choirs at Thurman White Academy of the Performing Arts where she has over 350 students. In 2020, she received the Teacher of the Year Award from Magnet Schools of America and is also a National Board-Certified Teacher. In March of 2024, her Choir was featured at the American Choral Directors Association Regional Conference in Pasadena, California and in April of 2024, her contemporary a cappella group was featured at the National Magnet Schools of America Conference in New York City. In March of 2025, her Choir was featured at the American Choral Director's National Conference in Dallas, TX. Athena frequently serves as a guest conductor, adjudicator and clinician for local, state and regional events.



Benjamin Porter

STRING & CHAMBER ADJUDICATOR

Originally from Bothell, Washington, Benjamin Porter began playing the violin as a nine-year-old and is currently pursuing a Doctor of Musical Arts degree at the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR), having earned his Master of Music in 2024. A member of UNR's Nightingale String Quartet, he is also a student and Graduate Teaching Assistant of Dr. Maureen Yuen. As an active professional orchestral musician, Porter has performed in the Bear Valley Music Festival Orchestra, Fresno Philharmonic, Reno Philharmonic, Reno Chamber Orchestra, Opera Modesto, Auburn Symphony, Susanville Symphony, and Firebird Light Opera, among others.

Porter was a violin fellow at the Lake George Music Festival in New York in summer 2024 and the National Music Festival in Maryland in summers 2024 and 2025. For the last three summers, he has enjoyed the opportunity to play chamber music, symphonic music, and operas at the Prague Summer Nights Young Artists Music Festival (PSN) in the Czech Republic, performing in Tabor, Kutna Hora, Jihlava, Plzeň, Vienna, and at the Rudolfinum, Estates Theatre, and Smetana Hall in Prague, with guest conductors including Marin Alsop, Laura Jackson, and Michelle Di Russo. Porter earned his Bachelor of Music and Bachelor of Science in Environmental Policy Analysis & Planning degrees from the University of California, Davis, and graduated from Inglemoor High School's International Baccalaureate Programme in Kenmore, Washington, having played in the Inglemoor Orchestra's 2015 performances at Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center. Porter has previously studied with Geoff Johnson, Pamela Liu, Jolán Friedhoff, and UNR Professor Emerita Stephanie Sant'Ambrogio, and has performed masterclasses with renowned violinists including Robert McDuffie, Chad Hoopes, Rachell Ellen Wong, and Ernest Salem.



Nikola Scepovic

CLASSICAL PIANO ADJUDICATOR

Nikola Scepovic was born in 1990 in Kragujevac. He enrolled in the University of Arts in Belgrade's piano department studies as the top candidate, graduating at the age of 19, with maximum grades in piano performance courses with Prof. Aleksandar Serdar, Prof. Nevena Popovic and Prof. Milos Mihajlovic. Two years later, he completed his graduate "specialist of music." He holds a Diploma in Audio Engineering and Music Production from SAE Institute, where he studied under Prof. Darko Velickovski and Prof. Sasa Jankovic, as well as Musical Theatre courses in the class of the recognized Broadway director Douglas Hall.

His numerous solo and accompaniment concerts and performances include places such as the Belgrade City Assembly Great Hall, Kolarac Hall, Banski dvor in Banja Luka, Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Russian Cultural Center (Veni Kultuurikeskus) in Tallinn, Estonia, the concert hall of the University South Florida, Steinway Gallery in Largo, Florida in the United States, Doc Rando, Artemus W. Ham Hall Art Walk lobby in Las Vegas, Nevada, and many others. In genres outside of classical music, performances include the "Rock Opera" with notable Yugoslavian rock band members musical at the celebration of the city of Kragujevac 2019, notable Exit festival 2013 in Novi Sad, as well as at the Bike Rock festival at Kalemegdan in Belgrade.

As for studio recording credits for engineering and producing, he collaborated with renowned artists and bands like Smoke n Soul for their album in 2013 as well as on the recording of the songs for the Rok Bulevar band's album for PGP of RTS, both made at the Pink Television Recording studio. Current engagement includes a Graduate Assistant's position while enrolled in the Doctor of Musical Arts program of the University of Nevada in Las Vegas under the

tutelage of notable pianist Dr. Mykola Suk. He attended seminars and masterclasses of many renowned pianists and piano pedagogues like John O' Connor (Ireland), Pascal Roge (France), Seann Duggan (United States of America), Albert Mamriev (Germany/Israel), Aleksandar Madzar (Belgium), Kemal Gekic (Croatia), Dorijan Leljak (Serbia) as well as many others.

As a collaborative pianist, he worked at the Allion Baltic festival, sharing skills with opera singers and professors like Monique McDonald (Metropolitan Opera New York), Tatiana Rubinskaya (Moscow National Opera), Gustavo Ahualli (Catholic University of America), Shudong Luo Braamse (Southeastern University) and many others, after attending the music school "Mokranjac" in Belgrade for vocal training with prof. Gordana Kesic and Dr. Vladimir Dinić. Recommendations and collaborations include Dr. Jose Valentino, prof. Kemal Gekic, Dr. Shudong Braamse and many others.



Nathan Tanouye

COMPOSITION ADJUDICATOR

An alumnus of UNLV, Nathan Tanouye holds a Bachelor of Music with dual concentration in Applied Trombone and Jazz Studies. He also holds a Master of Music in Trombone Performance from Texas Tech University.

Tanouye's musical endeavors are diverse, both as a trombonist and as a composer/arranger. As a freelance trombonist, he has worked with some of the biggest names in the business including Natalie Cole, Johnny Mathis, Tony Bennett, Luciano Pavarotti, Placido Domingo, Andrea Bocelli, Bette Midler, Martin Nievera, Aretha Franklin, Barbra Streisand, Alicia Keys, Usher, Jennifer Hudson, Kelly Clarkson, Maren Morris, Kanye West, Journey, The Who, The Jonas Brothers, and Josh Groban to name a few. He spent nine years as Celine Dion's trombonist, which included multiple tours in the United States, Canada, Europe, and Asia, and he spent five years playing with Lady Gaga in her Jazz & Piano show at the Park MGM. He has played Principal Trombone with the Las Vegas Philharmonic since 1998 and is Trombonist, Composer & Arranger with Santa Fe & The Fat City Horns, the internationally recognized band which was presented with the Dean's Medal Award at the 2019 Hall of Fame ceremony at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

As a composer, he has written works in a diverse range of styles for numerous types of ensembles, ranging from flute and harp duo to full symphony orchestra. Notable commissions include Kokopelli's Dance (2005), 11 Colors (2009), Loki's Revenge (2010), and Desert Flight (2015). Tanouye has also done extensive work as an arranger and orchestrator for internationally acclaimed artists like Human Nature, Bette Midler, Celine Dion, Kanye West, and The Jonas Brothers. He also arranges plays trombone for the Jazz Vegas Orchestra, which also regularly features his compositions and arrangements.

Currently, Tanouye is Professor of Jazz and Commercial Music and Studio Trombone at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. He continues to find inspiration playing, writing, and teaching music. He is a Shires Artist.