

Please share this information about the Parkening International Guitar Competition with anyone who might be interested. Thank you.

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Parkening International Guitar Competition Announces Judges for 2019 Competition

January 14, 2019 – Malibu, CA – The judges for the fifth quadrennial Parkening International Guitar Competition, to be presented by Pepperdine University in Malibu, CA, from Tuesday, May 28, to Saturday, June 1, 2019, have been announced.

Representing different areas of the classical music world, the five judges are **Mia Bongiovanni**, Assistant General Manager of Media and Presentations for the Metropolitan Opera; **Charlotte Lee**, President and Founder of Primo Artists; **Steve Schoen**, former Vice President of Sony Music Masterworks and Sony/BMG; **David Thomas**, recording producer; and **Pablo Sáinz Villegas**, classical guitar virtuoso and winner of the 2006 Parkening International Guitar Competition.

The competition, which debuted in 2006, offers the largest prize purse of any classical guitar competition in the world, with competitors vying for cash awards in excess of \$65,000 (USD). After three days of intense public performances, the winner of the Parkening International Guitar Competition receives a gold medal, the Jack Marshall Prize of \$30,000, and the most prestigious title in classical guitar.

The panel will judge 15 competitors, three of whom will advance to the final round to perform a concerto before a live audience with the Young Musicians Foundation Debut Orchestra. The gold, silver, and bronze medalists will be announced at the conclusion of the final round.

“One of the things that makes the Parkening International Guitar Competition extraordinary is the quality of our judging panel. We are thrilled to bring these five prestigious individuals to Pepperdine to serve as our esteemed judges during the 2019 competition. We know their diverse backgrounds and unique skills will help ensure that the winner has both strong technical skill and beautiful artistic expression,” said Rebecca Carson, Executive Director of the Parkening International Guitar Competition.

The Parkening Competition honors the distinguished career of the classical guitarist Christopher Parkening and his lifetime commitment to fostering musical excellence in young artists as demonstrated by his mentor, the great Spanish guitarist Andrés Segovia. Parkening is celebrated as one of the world’s preeminent virtuosos of the classical guitar and serves as Distinguished Professor of Music at Pepperdine University. A two-time Grammy nominee and a featured soloist in some of the finest orchestras in the country, his concerts and recordings have received the highest worldwide acclaim, captivating audiences around the world, from New York to Tokyo.

“The creation of this competition was one of my life-long dreams,” says Parkening, who is the Artistic Director of the Competition. “It champions and rewards the traditions of musical excellence, and fulfills my vision for a world-class guitar competition equal to the great piano and violin competitions.”

In addition to the Parkening International Guitar Competition, on **Tuesday, May 28** and **Wednesday, May 29, 2019**, the Parkening Young Guitarist Competition will be held at Pepperdine. This two-day event will help to identify outstanding young guitarists and encourage them to continue their performance careers and studies.

The 2019 Parkening International Guitar Competition is now accepting applications online. **Applications are due Wednesday, February 6, 2019.** To apply, please visit app.getacceptd.com/parkening.

The 2019 Parkening Competition is made possible by a generous grant from Howard and Roberta Ahmanson, as well as Frank Marshall and Kathleen Kennedy.

More information about competition requirements, judging, and the competition schedule are available at arts.pepperdine.edu/parkening.

Tickets to all rounds of the competition are now available for purchase. Please visit the [event page](#) for more information.

Biographies of the Judges

Mia Bongiovanni is the Assistant General Manager for Media at the Metropolitan Opera. An Emmy, Peabody, and Grammy award-winning producer, Bongiovanni oversees the production and distribution of the Met's global broadcast activities and new media initiatives, bringing the Met's performances to a worldwide audience. She is supervising producer of the Met's Live in HD series of cinema transmissions and executive producer of the *Metropolitan Opera Saturday* matinee radio program. Prior to joining the Met, Bongiovanni was Vice President of Artists and Repertoire at Sony Classical where she worked with an acclaimed roster of artists and managed the label's international recording activities.

Charlotte Lee is the President and Founder of Primo Artists, one of the leading artist management agencies in North America. Based in New York and established in 2015, Primo Artists prides itself on its selective roster of several of the world's finest classical artists, from rising stars to household names. Lee represents violinists Itzhak Perlman, Joshua Bell, and Nicola Benedetti; pianists Beatrice Rana and Seong-Jin Cho; and conductors Cristian Măcelaru and Christian Reif. A trained violinist, Lee has 20 years of experience in the music industry and prior to founding Primo Artists, she was a Senior Vice President at IMG Artists in New York where she worked for 17 years. She holds two bachelor's degrees from the University of Texas at Austin, where she graduated cum laude in 1998 with a BA in Music and a BA in Plan II Liberal Arts. Lee serves on various advisory boards including Sphinx LEAD, and she has appeared on various radio shows including NPR's *From the Top* and WQXR. In 2015, Musical America named her as one of the top “30 Professionals of the Year” for her influence in the classical music business. Lee regularly serves as juror at various competitions and gives lectures about the music business at universities and conservatories in North America.

Steve Schoen has been immersed in all phases of the music industry, with 40 years of experience including sales, marketing, promotion, distribution, analytics, research, and

reporting. Most recently he served as Vice-President-Sales at Sony Music Masterworks in New York City. Prior executive positions within the Sony Music family included Sony Masterworks-Commercial Music Group and Sony Masterworks-Sony BMG. He also served as VP-Sales at BMG Classics prior to the BMG merger with Sony Music. All of these positions were based in New York City. He also worked for Capitol Records and Capitol-EMI-Manhattan-Angel Records Distribution in Chicago. His participation in music festivals and music industry conventions have taken him to Cannes, Hong Kong, Paris, London, Frankfurt, Toronto, Zurich, Dublin, and all major US cities coast to coast. Over the course of his music career he has worked with such notable classical artists as Yo-Yo Ma, Joshua Bell, Lang Lang, Plácido Domingo, Itzhak Perlman, James Galway, Simone Dinnerstein, Jonas Kaufmann, Nigel Kennedy, Eliot Fisk, among many others. Schoen has experience working with artists across multiple genres including Dave Brubeck, Stanley Turrentine, Freddie Hubbard, Hubert Laws, Stanley Jordan, John Lee Hooker, Willie Dixon, David Bowie, John Sebastian, Al Kooper, Max Weinberg, Heart, Duran Duran, the Red Hot Chili Peppers, Etta James, M.C. Hammer, Ziggy Marley, Bonnie Raitt, Tina Turner, and Garth Brooks to name a few. Originally from Stockbridge, Wisconsin, he currently lives with his wife Diane in Middletown, New Jersey.

David Thomas has been involved in the music industry for nearly 30 years. Active in the recording industry, he produced the last nine Christopher Parkening recordings for EMI and Sony Classical. Thomas has also produced recordings with soprano Kathleen Battle, baritone Jubilant Sykes, guitarists Virginia Luque and Liona Boyd, the soundtrack for the movie *Last Flight Out*, as well as projects with the London Symphony Orchestra, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields. His profession has taken him to such internationally-acclaimed studios as Abbey Road in London, as well as Capitol and Sony/MGM studios in Los Angeles. He founded TYI/Concert Marketing, which coordinates venue marketing for many labels, including Universal, Sony, and Warner. Originally from Napa, California, Thomas now resides in Fayetteville, Arkansas, with his wife, Joanna, and their two sons, Julian and Sebastian.

Pablo Sáinz Villegas, praised as “the soul of the Spanish guitar,” has become a worldwide sensation known as this generation’s great guitarist. With his “virtuosic playing characterized by irresistible exuberance” as described by the *New York Times*, he is known for his passionate, emotive and open-hearted playing, whether he is performing at intimate recital halls, or playing with beloved tenor, Plácido Domingo, to an audience of over 85,000 at Santiago Bernabéu Stadium in Madrid. With the prestigious tenor, Sáinz Villegas recently recorded his new duo album that was released in Fall 2018 under the Sony Classical label. The list of some of the world’s most prestigious stages that he has performed on include Carnegie Hall in New York City, Philharmonie in Berlín and Concertgebouw in Amsterdam. He regularly receives invitations to perform in different festivals and with different symphonic and philharmonic orchestras, including the symphonic orchestras of New York, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Perú, Colombia y Panamá Orquesta Nacional de España and the philharmonics of Israel, Bergen and Denmark. In the last decade, he has been able to reach, through his social project, more than 32,000 children and youth audiences in different regions of Spain, México, and United States. During his career, he has achieved more than 30 international awards. Sáinz Villegas currently lives in New York and it is the official Tourism Ambassador of La Rioja, his homeland.

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