

Alvaro LOZANO

Fourth prize and Rtbf spécial prize at Queen Elisabeth Compétition 2026, Alvaro Lozano is currently studying with prof. Jens Peter Maintz and Fernando Arias at Escuela Reina Sofia, Madrid. He was born in Málaga and began his cello studies at the age of eight with Carmen Maria Elena and Sabrina Rui, and later with Pavel Gomziakov at the Barenboim-Said Academy in Seville. He received masterclasses from renowned cellists such as Frans Helmerson, Ivan Monighetti, Wolfgang Emanuel Schmidt, Asier Polo, Mischa Maisky, Pablo Ferrández, Steven Isserlis and Philippe Müller among others.

Alvaro has won several prizes in national and international competitions, including Queen Elisabeth Compétition, International Janigro Cello Compétition, International Popper Compétition, International Dotzauer Compétition, Gustav Mahler Cello Compétition and Soloists Interpretation Prize Intercentros Melomano.

He has performed as a soloist with orchestras namely the Antwerp Symphony Orchestra, Kölner Kammerorchester, RTVE Symphony Orchestra, Belgian National Orchestra, Málaga Philharmonie Orchestra or Seville Royal Symphony Orchestra. He is also active in chamber music as a member of Arriaga Quartet.

Naoko SONODA

Naoko Sonoda studied in Tokyo and at the Berlin University of the Arts under Rainer Becker. She also received important musical inspiration and artistic guidance from Tabea Zimmermann, Natalia Gutman, and Markus Nyikos. Upon completing her studies, she was appointed Artistic Associate at the Berlin University of the Arts, a position she continues to hold today.

As a highly sought-after collaborative pianist, she has appeared at numerous international festivals and performed in some of the world's most prestigious concert venues, including the Mariinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg, the Berlin Philharmonie, Wigmore Hall in London, and Carnegie Hall in New York. She has also made several live appearances on major public broadcasting networks, including the BBC, ZDF, Bayerischer Rundfunk (BR), Hessischer Rundfunk (HR), and Rundfunk Berlin- Brandenburg (RBB).

An acclaimed chamber musician, Naoko Sonoda has earned international recognition as an exceptional piano partner, receiving the award for Best Collaborative Pianist at both the Witold Lutoslawski International Cello Compétition (2015, 2018) and the International Tchaikovsky Compétition (2015, 2019). In 2021, she was awarded the Pianist Prize for the best performance of Enescu's Sonata at the George Enescu International Compétition in Romania.