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Young Concert Artists, Inc.

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Celebrating 50 Years' Worth of Promising Talent

By Vivien Schweitzer

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Success in any artistic field depends largely on talent and hard work, but also on the luck of recognition.

Since 1961, Young Concert Artists has been an enthusiastic and savvy promoter of promising musicians, offering mentorship, management and, most important, performance opportunities. Susan Wadsworth, its tireless founder, still directs the organization, which celebrated its 50th anniversary with a well-attended 12-hour marathon at Symphony Space on Saturday, featuring solo and chamber performances by early and recent protégés.

Ms. Wadsworth has proved an adept talent scout over five decades, with a track record of promoting musicians now famous, like the pianists Murray Perahia, Jean-Yves Thibaudet and Emanuel Ax and the soprano Dawn Upshaw. And to judge by recent recitals of impressive fledgling musicians presented in their New York debuts, the organization hasn't lost its mojo.

The flutist Eugenia Zukerman, who referred to herself and other veteran performers as "antique Y.C.A. artists," hosted the opening segment of the marathon, devoted to Bach. She joined alumni including the violinist Eugene Drucker and the harpsichordist Anthony Newman for a spirited rendition of Bach's "Brandenburg" Concerto No. 4 in G. The German violinist Christiane Edinger, a 1966 alumna, offered a passionate interpretation of the Chaconne from the Partita in D minor.

Young Concert Artists did not have marimba players auditioning in 1961, since the marimba has only recently come into its own as a solo instrument. Pius Cheung, a Chinese-Canadian performer on the organization's roster since 2008, recently recorded Bach's "Goldberg" Variations on marimba. Here he offered a dexterous, expressively colored performance of the Allegro from Bach's Keyboard Concerto No. 1 in D minor, in a version for string quartet, double bass and marimba.



Matt Dine, for the New York Times

Pius Cheung on marimba Saturday at the Young Concert Artists 50th anniversary show at Symphony Space.

Other highlights of the morning and early afternoon segments that I heard included the pianist Jeremy Denk's virtuosic, thoughtful account of Book 1 of Ligeti's *Études* (which he performed with the other Ligeti *études* on Wednesday at

Zankel Hall). The violinist Juliette Kang, who won the Young Concert auditions at 13 in 1989, joined the cellist Efe Baltacigil for a dynamic rendition of the Presto from Kodaly's *Duo* (Op. 7); and the clarinetist Daniel McKelway and the pianist Gleb Ivanov offered a colorful interpretation of Debussy's "Rhapsodie." Mr. Ax showed his customary sensitivity in Schubert's *Impromptu in A flat* (Op. 142) No. 2.

The performances were interspersed with appreciative comments from the musicians about the help they received from Young Concert Artists and amusing anecdotes from Ms. Wadsworth about her protégés.