



*Pau Casals*

FOUNDATION

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**PABLO CASALS**

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INTERNATIONAL AWARD

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FOR YOUNG CELLISTS

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**2020**



# SUMMARY

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## PRESS RELEASE

# Xuanhan Xu, Petar Pejčić and Felix Brunnenkant: Winners of the Pablo Casals International Award for Young Cellists 2020

These three young cellists have won the First Prize, AENA Special Prize and Third Prize respectively

The Pablo Casals International Award for Young Cellists, an initiative of the Pau Casals Foundation, was for the first time open to all over the world and received applications from musician candidates from 21 different countries

Out of the ten finalists selected, the international jury also awarded honorary mentions to the other 7 finalists

*Barcelona, 20 November 2020: Xuanhan Xu (China) won First Prize, Petar Pejčić (Serbia) the AENA Special Prize and Felix Brunnenkant (Germany) the Third Prize of the Pablo Casals International Award for Young Cellists 2020, which is organised and promoted by the Pau Casals Foundation. The jury also awarded honorary mentions to Raffaella Cardaropoli (Italy), Tzu-Shao Chao (China, Taiwan), Jeremias Fliedl (Austria), Miquel Keenan Fuentes Bock (USA), Benjamin Kruithof (Luxembourg), Joe Pritchard (UK) and Till Schuler (Germany) highlighting their high performance and artistic level. The aim of the Pablo Casals International Award is to support and improve the training of young cellists and it enjoys the special support of AENA and the collaboration of the Banco Sabadell Foundation.*

The **final selection was carried out in digital format** this year and the ten finalist candidates sent two videos of their performance of the works required in the rules of the 2020 competition call. The jury members viewed the videos of each finalist and **their deliberation took place by videoconference on 20 November 2020.**

This new format was in response to the needs of adapting the Pablo Casals International Award to the circumstances arising from the health situation through a commitment to flexibility of format and renouncing to stage the Final Audition in person at the Pau Casals Municipal School of Music in El Vendrell (Tarragona), the hometown of Pablo Casals.

The jury for this year's 2020 edition was chaired by **Marta Casals Istomin**, co-founder and vice president of the Pau Casals Foundation, and included figures and musicians of renowned international prestige, such as **Claudio Bohórquez, Henri Demarquette, Gustav Rivinus, Arnau Tomàs (winner of the Pau Casals Scholarship in 1991) and also Bernard Meillat, artistic advisor to the Pau Casals Foundation and jury secretary.**



## A more international edition with more prizes

On 7 April 2020, the Pau Casals Foundation launched a new competition call for the Pablo Casals International Award for Young Cellists that was open until 13 July 2020. **An important new addition for this year was the fact that it was open to applications from around the world,** thereby extending the scope of previous editions aimed at young cellists from EU Member States, Puerto Rico and Uruguay. **As Jordi Pardo, general director of the Pau Casals Foundation,** explains: *“In this way, the Pau Casals Foundation has reaffirmed its commitment to the training of young musicians and its desire to spread Pau Casals’ artistic, cultural and human legacy of throughout the world.”*

**The Pau Casals Foundation therefore received a considerable number of applications from 21 different countries,** such as New Zealand, the USA, Canada, China, Singapore, Honduras, Peru, Germany, France, Serbia and Spain, among others. **Bernard Meillat, artistic advisor to the Pau Casals Foundation and jury secretary,** highlights “the high technical and artistic level of the cellists, and the variety of temperaments and musical personalities”.

Moreover, this edition also increased the number of prizes and their financial endowment. **Xuanhan Xu won the First Prize of €18,000, Petar Pejčić the AENA Special Prize of €12,000 and Felix Brunnenkant the Third Prize of €6,000. The Pau Casals Foundation will also provide artistic promotion and professional advice to the winners.**

The ten finalists of the 2020 edition –ranging up to 22 years of age– are: **Felix Brunnenkant (Germany), Raffaella Cardaropoli (Italy), Tzu-Shao Chao (China, Taiwan), Jeremias Fliedl (Austria), Miquel Keenan Fuentes Bock (USA), Benjamin Kruithof (Luxembourg), Petar Pejčić (Serbia), Joe Pritchard (UK), Till Schuler (Germany) and Xuanhan Xu (China).**

## The winners: short biography

### FIRST PRIZE

**Xuanhan Xu (China)**

**Hochschule für Musik Saar (Germany)**

Born in Hangzhou, China, in 2004, she began playing the piano at the age of five and the cello at the age of eight. She continued her studies in Germany at the age of 13 and is currently studying there at the Hochschule für Musik Saar in Saarbrücken under Gustav Rivinius. She performed with the National Centre of Performing Arts Orchestra in Beijing in 2017, becoming the youngest cellist to perform at that venue, and has performed with other international orchestras in both Asia and Europe.



## AENA SPECIAL PRIZE

**Petar Pejčić** (Serbia)

**HMT Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy** (Germany)

Born in Leskovac, Serbia, in 2002, he started playing the cello at the age of four and gave his first concert in Belgrade at the age of nine. He won his first competition in 2008 and has since won various other international competitions, including third prize in the Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy in Berlin and second prize in the Anna Kull International Competition in Graz. He has given solo concerts and also performed with such orchestras as the Belgrade Chamber Orchestra and Belgrade Radio Symphony Orchestra. He is currently studying at the HMT Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy in Leipzig under Peter Bruns.

## THIRD PRIZE

**Felix Brunnenkant** (Germany)

**Vorarlberger Landeskonservatorium** (Austria)

Born in Überlingen, Germany, in 2001, he is studying cello at the Vorarlberger Landeskonservatorium, Austria, under Professor Mathias Johansen and has performed Elgar's Concerto with the Vorarlberger Landeskonservatorium Orchestra and at the Saint-Saëns Concertoin Tonhalle in Düsseldorf and Graf-Zeppelin-Haus. He won the first prize in cello at the Jugend musiziert competition in Germany in 2019.

## The Pablo Casals International Award, providing support for young cellists since 1984

The Pau Casals Foundation, established by Pablo and Marta Casals in 1972, created the Pau Casals Scholarship in 1984. Over this 36-year period, a considerable number of young cellists from Catalonia, the rest of Spain, Andorra and the south of France have been able to participate and almost fifty of them have received the support of the Foundation, among other high level musicians such as Arnau Tomàs, Damià Martínez, Laia Puig, Pau Codina, Pablo Ferrández and Mariona Camats, thus forming a major network of ambassadors of Pablo Casal's living musical legacy. In the last edition of 2018, the Award was given to **Carla Conangla** (Sant Cugat del Vallès, Barcelona) and **Johannes Gray** (Chicago, USA), winners *ex aequo* of the call, while the honorary mentions went to **Amarilis Dueñas** (Valladolid, Spain) and **Lluc Pascual** (Térmens, Lleida, Spain).

In 2016, the call was opened to EU Member States and Puerto Rico, and Uruguay also joined in the 2018 edition. For the 2020 edition, the Award was opened to all countries throughout the world, thus reaffirming the commitment of the Pau Casals Foundation to the training of young musicians and its desire to spread Pablo Casal's artistic, cultural and human legacy around the world.



## HISTORY OF THE AWARD

In 1893, Pablo Casals received a scholarship that was decisive for his artistic career from Spain's reigning queen, Maria Cristina, given that it allowed him to commence a period of training at the Conservatory of Music and Declamation of Madrid under Jesús de Monasterio as professor of chamber music. It is for this reason and in recognition of the great opportunity that was granted to him in his youth that the Pau Casals Foundation, established by Pablo and Marta Casals in 1972, created the Pablo Casals International Award for Young Cellists in 1984 under the name of the Pau Casals Scholarship. The prize was initially a scholarship that provided small grants for young cellists in Catalonia.

In the 1990s, the scholarship was extended to applicants from across Spain, Andorra and the south of France. The Award at this stage attracted considerable prestige and provided recognition to young cellists who subsequently developed brilliant artistic careers.

In 2016, the scholarship was renamed the Pablo Casals International Scholarship and was further extended to applicants from all EU Member States and Puerto Rico.

For the 2018 edition, the scholarship was renamed the Pablo Casals International Award for Young Cellists and now also included Uruguay, in addition to being open to all EU Member States and Puerto Rico.

Finally, for the current 2020 edition, the Pablo Casals International Award for Young Cellists was opened to all countries throughout the world, thereby reaffirming the commitment of the Pau Casals Foundation while at the same time supporting young cellists so that they can broaden their studies with leading professionals and perfect the performance art of their instrument.

Over its 36 years of existence, a considerable number of cellists from Catalonia, Spain, EU countries and others from the rest of the world have been able to participate in this competition call and almost fifty musicians have received support from the Foundation.

The winners of previous editions include names such as **Arnau Tomás**, 1991 (Cuarteto Casals); **Damià Martínez**, 1993; **Pau Codina**, **Laia Puig**, 2004; **Oscar Alabau**, 2006; **Moises Lee**, 2010; **Pablo Ferrández**, 2012; **Pablo Pérez**, 2014; **Mariona Camats**, 2016, or **Carla Conangla** and **Johannes Gray**, 2018. They all enjoy major careers and artistic standing and have undoubtedly become ambassadors of the living musical legacy of Pablo Casals around the world.

More information: <https://www.2020.paucasals.org/en/international-award-pablo-casals/>



## THE FINALISTS



**Felix Brunnenkant** (Germany)  
**Vorarlberger Landeskonservatorium** (Austria)

Born in Überlingen, Germany, in 2001, he is studying cello at the Vorarlberger Landeskonservatorium, Austria, under Professor Mathias Johansen and has performed Elgar's Concerto with the Vorarlberger Landeskonservatorium Orchestra and at the Saint-Saëns Concertoin Tonhalle in Düsseldorf and Graf-Zeppelin-Haus. He won the first prize in cello at the Jugend musiziert competition in Germany in 2019.



**Raffaella Cardaropoli** (Italy)  
**Barenboim-Said Akademie** (Berlin)

Born in Mercato San Severino, Italy, in 1999, she started playing the cello at the age of seven. She has performed in Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Malta, Austria and Spain, among other countries, and has won several competitions, such as the Abbado Prize, Antonio Janigro Cello Competition, as well as auditions at the Santa Cecilia Academy. She is currently studying at the Barenboim-Said Akademie in Berlin under Professor Frans Helmerson.



**Tzu-Shao Chao** (China, Taiwan)  
**Hochschule für Musik und Tanz Köln** (Germany)

Born in Changhua, Taiwan, in 2001, he began playing the cello at the age of four and has participated in several competitions in Asia and Europe, including the Tchaikovsky Competition for Young Musicians. He has been studying at the Hochschule für Musik und Tanz Köln in Germany under Professor Maria Kliegel since 2018 and has participated in several masterclasses with renowned cellists such as Yo-Yo Ma, Tsuyoshi Tsutsumi, Reiner Ginzler and Marion Feldmann.



**Jeremias Fliedl (Austria)**

**Universität Mozarteum Salzburg (Austria)**

Born in Klagenfurt, Austria, in 1999, he is studying at the Universität Mozarteum Salzburg, Austria, under Professor Clemens Hagen. He has performed in various chamber music concerts and has also been a soloist with the Zagreb Orchestra and Carinthian Symphony Orchestra, among others. He won the Liezen International Cello Competition in 2012 and the Svirél in Slovenia and Antonio Janigro Cello Competition in Croatia in 2014.



**Miquel Keenan Fuentes Bock (USA)**

**Conservatori Superior de Música del Liceu (Barcelona)**

Born in Holland, USA, in 1999, he is currently studying at the Conservatori Superior de Música del Liceu in Barcelona under Professor Amparo Lacruz. He had previously studied at the Meadowmount School of Music and has performed with the Interlochen Orchestra, as well as at the Lincoln Centre's Stanley H. Kaplan Penthouse and Hope College Annual Concerto-Aria Competition.



**Benjamin Kruithof (Luxembourg)**

**Universität der Künste Berlin (Germany)**

Born in Moestroff, Luxembourg, in 1999, he began studying cello at the age of five and performed his first concert with the Northern Youth Orchestra of Luxembourg at the age of 12. He has won several competitions, such as the Knopf Competition, Leopold Bellan International Competition in Paris and Gabrielli Competition in Berlin. He has performed in various countries and attended such masterclasses as the Cello Meisterkurse at the Kronberg Academy. He is currently studying at the Universität der Künste in Berlin under Jens-Peter Maintz.



**Petar Pejčić (Serbia)**

**HMT Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy (Germany)**

Born in Leskovac, Serbia, in 2002, he started playing the cello at the age of four and gave his first concert in Belgrade at the age of nine. He won his first competition in 2008 and has since won various other international competitions, including third prize in the Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy in Berlin and second prize in the Anna Kull International Competition in Graz. He has given solo concerts and also performed with such orchestras as the Belgrade Chamber Orchestra and Belgrade Radio Symphony Orchestra. He is currently studying at the HMT Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy in Leipzig under Peter Bruns.



**Joseph Pritchard (UK)**

**Hochschule für Musik “Hanns Eisler” (Germany)**

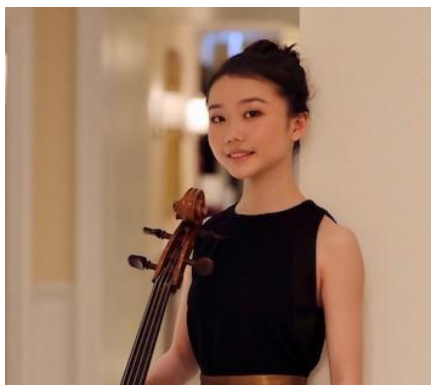
Born in Frome, UK, in 1999, he is studying at the Hochschule für Musik Hanns Eisler under Professor Nicolas Altsaedt. He has won several competitions, such as the Two Moors Festival Young Musicians Competition, and has participated in several masterclasses across Europe. He has performed regularly as a soloist at Menuhin Hall, among others, and was a member of the UK's National Youth Orchestra.



**Till Schuler (Germany)**

**Hochschule für Musik und Theater Hamburg (Germany)**

Born in Stuttgart, Germany, in 2000, he is currently studying at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater Hamburg under Professor Sebastian Klinger. He has won several international competitions, including the Antonio Janigro Junior International Cello Competition in 2020, and has been a soloist in orchestras and chamber ensembles and next year will be a soloist with the Neue Philharmonie München.



**Xuanhan Xu (China)**

**Hochschule für Musik Saar (Germany)**

Born in Hangzhou, China, in 2004, she began playing the piano at the age of five and the cello at the age of eight. She continued her studies in Germany at the age of 13 and is currently studying there at the Hochschule für Musik Saar in Saarbrücken under Gustav Rivinius. She performed with the National Centre of Performing Arts Orchestra in Beijing in 2017, becoming the youngest cellist to perform at that venue, and has performed with other international orchestras in both Asia and Europe.



# THE JURY

## JURY COMPOSITION 2020

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### President

Mrs. Marta Casals Istomin | Co- founder and vice-president of the Pau Casals Foundation

### Members of the Jury

Mr. Claudio Bohórquez | Cellist

Mr. Henri Demarquette | Cellist

Mr. Gustav Rivinius | Cellist

Mr. Arnau Tomàs | Cellist

Mr. Bernard Meillat | Artistic advisor of Pau Casals Foundation and **jury secretary**

## BIOGRAPHIES

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### Marta Casals Istomin | Co-founder and vice-president of Pau Casals Foundation

#### Jury President

Marta Casals Istomin was born into a family of musicians in Puerto Rico. After commencing her music studies in Puerto Rico, she obtained a scholarship to study cello at the Mannes School of Music in New York. She was married to Pablo Casals from 1957 to 1973 and the American pianist Eugene Istomin from 1975 to 2003.

She taught cello at the Puerto Rico Conservatory and was guest professor at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia. Marta Casals was the artistic director of the Kennedy Centre in Washington DC from 1980 to 1981. She was president of the Manhattan School of Music in New York from 1992 to 2005, managing director of Evian Musical Encounters from 1990 to 1997 and member of the National Council on the Arts from 1990 to 1997.

In addition to her duties in the Pau Casals Foundation, Marta Casals Istomin is involved in the boards of the main cultural institutions of Puerto Rico, the Marlboro Festival, Manhattan School of Music, Kronberg Academy and Nippon Music Foundation. The governments of Spain, France, Germany and Catalonia have decorated her with the most prestigious civil distinctions and she received the Living Legend Award from the Library of Congress in Washington DC in 2015.



### **Claudio Bohórquez | Cellist**

The German-born cellist of Peruvian-Uruguayan descent is one of the most sought-after musicians in his field. He achieved success at an early age at international competitions such as the Tchaikovsky Youth Competition in Moscow and the Rostropovich Cello Competition in Paris. He has become a teacher himself: from 2011 to 2016 he was professor at the Musikhochschule Stuttgart, in September 2016 he was appointed to the Hochschule für Musik "Hanns Eisler" Berlin, where he has been a guest professor since 2003.

Among others, Claudio Bohórquez has performed with almost all German radio orchestras, the Staatskapelle Dresden, the Wiener Symphoniker, the Orchestre de Paris and the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France.

He has worked with renowned conductors that include Daniel Barenboim, Christoph Eschenbach, Manfred Honeck, Sir Neville Marriner, among others.

Claudio Bohórquez is also a guest at numerous festivals. Among them are the Casals Festival in Puerto Rico, the City of London Festival, the Penderecki Festival in Warsaw and the Jerusalem International Chamber Music Festival.



### **Henri Demarquette | Cellist**

As a young, brilliant musician Henri Demarquette attended the Conservatoire national supérieur de musique in Paris at the age of thirteen and studied with Philippe Muller and Maurice Gendron. His talent was quickly noticed, and he was unanimously awarded a first prize which led him to work with Pierre Fournier and Paul Tortelier in Paris, and Janos Starker in Bloomington, USA.

His career then takes an international turn and he is invited to perform across the world with some of the greatest French and international orchestras: most recently Orchestre National de France, London Philharmonic, Wiener KammerOrchester, Ensemble Orchestral De Paris, Tokyo Symphony Orchestra. He also appears with his favourite piano-partners Boris Berezovsky, Michel Dalberto, Jean-Bernard Pommier, Fabrizio Chiovetta, Vanessa Benelli Mosell and Jean-Frédéric Neuburger. In 2015 he co-founded a string quartet with Augustin Dumay, Svetlin Roussev, and Miguel da Silva.

His performance of Henri Dutilleux's *Tout un monde lointain* concerto with Musikalische Akademie des Nationaltheater-Orchesters Mannheim under Frédéric Chaslin and was filmed by France Europe Média in 2016.

Henri Demarquette plays the "le Vaslin" cello, manufactured by Stradivarius in 1725 and lent by LVMH/ Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton, with a Persois bow dated 1820.



### **Gustav Rivinius | Cellist**

Gustav Rivinius is the first and only German musician to be awarded a first prize Gold Medal at the 1990 International Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow.

Among the many high points of an illustrious career, Gustav Rivinius has performed with the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, orchestras of Lisbon, Toulouse, Lyon, the Helsinki Philharmonic, and the Swedish Radio Orchestra among others

Along with his solo work, Gustav Rivinius has a passion for chamber music. Having been born into a large musical family, he plays regularly alongside his brothers in the Rivinius Piano Quartet

He also founded the Gasparo da Saló Trio, the Arkas Trio, the Bartholdy String Quintet, and the Tammuz Piano Quartet.

Gustav Rivinius is a professor at the HFM University of Music in Saarbrücken where he oversees a highly successful cello class. He also teaches at the Conservatorium Maastricht (The Netherlands) from autumn 2014 and at a number of master courses annually, including at the Schleswig Holstein Music Festival. In addition, he is a sought-after juror at major music competitions and sat on the jury at the 2011 International Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow.



### **Arnau Tomàs | Cellist**

Born in Barcelona, Arnau Tomàs is recognized as one of the most versatile cellists of his generation, combining solo with numerous chamber music projects. He is the founder of the Cuarteto Casals and the Ludwig Trio.

Prize Winner of several National and International Competitions, Arnau Tomàs gave various cello recitals and appeared as a soloist with Orchestras such as the Orquesta de Radiotelevisión Española, Sinfónica de Tenerife, Orquesta Sinfónica de Galicia and Orquesta Sinfónica de Barcelona y Nacional de Cataluña, among others.

Arnau Tomàs has compiled a substantial and extensive discography with repertoire ranging from the Baroque Period until 20th century, with more than 15 CDs. Especially remarkable are his recordings of the Bach Suites (2014) and the sonatas and variations by Beethoven (2016), in both cases he used historical bows of the composition's period.

In addition to his concert activities, Arnau Tomàs has been guest professor at the Hochschule für Musik Köln and has given various masterclasses and courses both in Europe as well as the United States. Since 2019 he is chamber music professor at the Royal Conservatory of The Hague.



### **Bernard Meillat | Artistic Advisor and Jury Secretary**

A musicologist and journalist specialising in classical music who was born in Paris. Trained as a pianist, he has had a long professional career focused on communicating and disseminating music in various European reference media. He is a specialist in and great connoisseur of Pablo Casals' work and has been developing a research and preservation project of the works and recordings of maestro Pablo Casals since the early 1990s.

In 1991, he was appointed director of the French classical music radio station Radio Classique, increasing its general audience share and promoting a new policy of openness in order to reach new publics with top quality musical programming. In 2005, he took over the management of Musiq3, the classical radio station of RTBF (Belgian public broadcaster for the French-speaking community). Among other responsibilities, he is a member of various juries and collaborates with a number of international institutions and festivals.

He is a member of the International Advisory Committee of the Pau Casals Foundation and has been the artistic director of the Festival Internacional de Música Pau Casals del Vendrell.

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# *Pau Casals*

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