

Young American pianist Katherine Benson is quickly emerging as an important artistic figure of her generation through her “stunning” (ArtsKnoxville) performances and passion for arts leadership.

A native of Jonesborough, TN, Katherine is in demand as a soloist, chamber musician, adjudicator, and teacher, and has performed across the USA and abroad in Spain, Italy, the United Kingdom, Canada, and New Zealand. Recent solo performances include the Evelyn Miller Young Pianist Series, Little Carnegie of the South Young Artist Series, and soloist in Clara Schumann’s Piano Concerto in A Minor with the Spectrum Orchestra of Bloomfield Hills, MI.

Katherine has additionally garnered numerous triumphs in over a dozen international and national piano competitions, having won top prizes in the Seattle, Kerikeri, Walled City Music, Teresa Carreño, and Thousand Islands International Piano Competitions, as well as the grand prize of the 2020 George R. Johnson Concerto Competition. Katherine most recently received the prestigious finalist award at the 2022 Heida Hermanns International Music Competition in Westport, CT, in which she made a solo recital appearance at the Westport Museum of Modern Art and served as a masterclass clinician through the Westport Suzuki School. Upcoming engagements for the 2023–2024 season include Poulenc’s Double Piano Concerto with the Johnson City Symphony Orchestra, Gershwin’s Rhapsody in Blue with the Spectrum Orchestra, Rachmaninoff’s Piano Concerto No. 3 with the Ann Arbor Symphony Orchestra, as well as recitals at the University of Michigan Ann Arbor and the University of Tennessee, among others.

An avid chamber musician, Katherine is the Artistic Director and pianist for The Paramount Chamber Players (TPCP), one of the premier chamber music ensembles of the Appalachian Region and in its nineteenth concert season. Since taking her role with TPCP in 2020, Katherine has organized and performed on over two dozen concerts with the ensemble, including a professionally recorded and entirely virtual 2020–2021 concert season. Katherine’s recent performance highlights with TPCP include Shostakovich’s Piano Trio in E Minor, Brahms’ Piano Quintet in F Minor, Vaughan Williams’ *Songs of Travel*, and Mussourgsky’s *Pictures at an Exhibition* arranged for piano four-hands.

Katherine is deeply passionate about arts leadership and interdisciplinary collaboration, and her innovative projects have been sponsored by multiple grants from the University of Tennessee and Rackham College at the University of Michigan. Together with her colleagues at the University of Tennessee Knoxville, Katherine co-founded the Knoxville International Piano Festival and Competition, which attracted seventy-five young pianists and over two dozen guest artists in its inaugural year. In another recent project exploring the intersections of artistic media, Katherine commissioned seven new pieces of art from graduate and undergraduate visual art students, each new work created directly in response to a solo piano piece. Her work on interdisciplinary studies will be featured in a lecture titled *Painting Sound: A Case Study in Fostering Creativity and Collaboration Across the Arts* presented this July at the National Conference on Keyboard Pedagogy.

In demand as a masterclass clinician and adjudicator, Katherine places great importance on encouraging and supporting the next generation of musicians. She recently presented masterclasses for the Blount County Keyboard Teachers Association, the Evelyn Miller Young Artist Series, and the Knoxville International Piano Festival, working with a diversity of age groups from elementary students up to collegiate artists. Katherine has also served on the jury for multiple competitions, including the Knoxville Symphony Youth Orchestra Concerto Competition, the Tennessee Music Teachers Association Senior Piano Competition, and the Alabama Music Teachers Association Senior Piano Competition.

Currently a Doctoral Candidate in Piano Performance at the University of Michigan, Katherine holds degrees from the Eastman School of Music, Northwestern University, and an Artist Certificate from the University of Tennessee Knoxville. Her teachers have included Arthur Greene, Chih-Long Hu, Nelita True, James Giles, and Jerilyn Paolini.

Katherine serves on the faculty of the University of Tennessee Knoxville College of Music, where she maintains a full studio of piano students and teaches courses in piano pedagogy, piano literature, and chamber music. Outside of music, she enjoys spending time with her husband, Alex, and pet parrot, Razzle.