

**Yangrui Cai's sound is exceptional—layered, alive, and endlessly varied, revealing colors and pianissimo I never thought the piano could produce.**

— Pi-hsien Chen (陳必先)

**Born in 2000 in Shunde, Guangdong, into a family with no musical background, Chinese pianist Yangrui Cai encountered the piano by chance. While visiting a friend's home as a child, he was drawn to a piece being played and instinctively sat at the keyboard. Using only his index finger, he traced the melody he had just heard—an unstudied yet striking response to sound. Recognizing this unusual sensitivity, his mother soon brought him to his first piano lessons, and the piano quickly became his most natural form of expression.**

**As his training deepened, Yangrui's aptitude soon gained public recognition. During his high school years, he won major national piano competitions in China, affirming his talent at an early stage. His admission to the Middle School Affiliated to the Xinghai Conservatory of Music marked a decisive turning point: immersed in a fully professional musical environment, Yangrui chose to pursue music not simply as an interest, but as his lifelong career.**

**Reflecting on this period, Yangrui says:**

**"I realized in high school that the piano was the most natural way for me to express emotions I struggled to communicate otherwise. My goal is to grow as both an artist and a communicator—and to create a musical world others can step into."**

**He later continued his studies in the United States, completing his Bachelor of Music degree at Oberlin Conservatory, and currently studies at the International Center for Music at Park University, where his artistic voice continues to mature within an international and rigorous musical setting.**

**Yangrui has appeared in recital throughout China, Japan, Germany, Denmark, Italy, France, Canada, and the United States, and has performed as soloist with orchestras including the Sendai Philharmonic Orchestra, Armenian State Symphony Orchestra, Azerbaijan State Philharmonic Orchestra, RTV Slovenia Symphony Orchestra, Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra, Kansas City Chamber Orchestra, and leading ensembles across China. His playing has been described as "deeply moving," with performances noted for their emotional intensity and expressive depth.**

**His competition highlights include First Prize at the Japan Piano Open International Piano Competition, Fourth Prize at the Ljubljana Festival International Piano Competition, and recognitions at the Busoni, Enescu, Gina Bachauer, and Sydney International Piano Competitions. In 2025, he was named a semi-finalist at the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition, where he received the award for Best Performance of a New Work, reflecting his engagement with contemporary repertoire and musical imagination.**

## **Teachers**

**Yangrui's musical development has been shaped by long-term mentorship with Dr. Vivian Li and Jay Sun during his formative years in China. He currently studies with Stanislav Ioudenitch, Gold Medalist of the 2001 Van Cliburn International Piano Competition, who describes him as "an exceptionally gifted pianist whose musical sensitivity, technical mastery, and professionalism far exceed his years."**