

The American Recital Debut Award Foundation Announces 2025 Recipients, Cellists Gabriel Martins and Rainer Crosett

The Award Memorializing the Late Cellist Lynn Harrell Honors Emerging Classical Musicians of All Backgrounds Who Demonstrate a Strong Potential for a Performance Career



Gabriel Martins (L) and Rainer Crosett (R)

“Gabriel Martins [has a] sophisticated musicality and nuanced palette of colors.”
– *The Violin Channel*

“Rainer played...with total commitment and conviction.”
– *Seen & Heard International*

www.gabrielmartinscello.com | www.rainercrosett.com

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New York, NY (June 10, 2025) – The **American Recital Debut Award Foundation** announces today that cellists **Gabriel Martins** and **Rainer Crosett** have been named the award’s 2025 recipients, in recognition of their outstanding accomplishments and strong potential as emerging classical musicians. Established in the spring of 2023 by pianist and artistic administrator **Victor Santiago Asunción** in honor of the late cellist **Lynn Harrell**, the award supports exceptional emerging classical musicians who demonstrate strong potential for a performance career, providing them with a concert at **Carnegie Hall** in the 2025-2026 season, professional mentorship from an illustrious artistic advisory board — comprising GRAMMY® Award-winning cellist **Zuill Bailey**, cellist, founder and artistic director of The Piatigorsky Foundation, **Evan Drachman**; award-winning soprano **Margarita Gomez Giannelli**, and **Victor Santiago Asunción** — and concert engagements over three consecutive seasons.

The awardees are selected by Asunción in conjunction with a group of distinguished musicians led by **Bailey**. Those recognized must demonstrate the ability to sustain a career that can adapt to the ever-changing landscape of the performing arts and exhibit the capacity to cultivate an audience across both live and online platforms, as well as a level of accessibility that transcends traditional boundaries to reach broader audiences. A longtime chamber music partner of Harrell's, Asunción created the award as a way to give back and honor the opportunities and mentorship he received through their collaboration.

As one of the 2025 recipients of the American Recital Debut Award, Brazilian-American cellist **Gabriel Martins** brings with him a distinguished list of accolades, including the Concert Artists Guild/Young Classical Artists Trust Grand Prize, the Sphinx Competition Gold Medal, and the David Popper International Cello Competition Gold Medal. His accomplishments have led to high-profile debuts at **Carnegie Hall**, **Kaufman Music Center**, **Wigmore Hall**, and **92nd Street Y**, as well as performances with major orchestras across North and South America.

"I am deeply grateful to be the recipient of the American Recital Debut Award. To present a recital program at Carnegie Hall is a dream come true for any young artist, and I am thrilled to have this opportunity," says Martins. "Additionally, it is a particularly special honor to share this recital with pianist **Victor Santiago Asunción**, and to be a part of the continuous legacy of his longtime recital partner **Lynn Harrell**, one of my great cello heroes."

Quickly gaining international recognition for his sensitivity and artistry, American Recital Debut Award-winning cellist **Rainer Crosett** made his **Wigmore Hall** debut as the first American to win the Pierre Fournier Award and gave his concerto debut in 2023 with the **Philharmonia Orchestra of London**. A dedicated advocate for contemporary music, Crosett has collaborated with leading composers such as **Jörg Widmann**, **Chaya Czernowin**, and **Lei Liang**. He has also recently commissioned new chamber works from composers including **Eun Young Lee**, **William Cooper**, and **Reinaldo Moya**.

"It is such an honor to receive the American Recital Debut Award. To perform at Carnegie Hall is every musician's dream, and the wonderful pianist Victor Santiago Asunción will be the ideal collaborator. He and his duo partner, the late legendary cellist Lynn Harrell, have profoundly influenced me, especially in recent years after I discovered recordings of their live performances," says Crosett. "Such nuance in duo playing is rare to hear, and the spontaneity and flexibility they achieved is something I continue to aspire to! I am profoundly grateful for the support of the award in making this next career step possible."

In 2023, the inaugural American Recital Debut Award was presented to cellist **John-Henry Crawford**, recognizing both his already impressive accomplishments and his potential for continued excellence in classical performance. Crawford says, "I am so grateful to the American Recital Debut Award for a wonderful several years under its wing. Since receiving the award at my Carnegie debut, I've been fortunate to release a concerto debut album with the San Francisco Ballet Orchestra featuring works by Dvořák and Tchaikovsky, and have gone on concert tours worldwide from the Spanish Canary Islands, to an Asia debut on a concert tour of the Philippines, to beautiful Alaska!"

More About Gabriel Martins

Brazilian-American cellist **Gabriel Martins** has established himself as one of the world's most compelling young musicians. He is the recipient of numerous top prizes, including the Concert Artists Guild/Young Classical Artists Trust Grand Prize, Sphinx Competition Gold Medal, David Popper International Cello Competition Gold Medal, and Silver Medal at the Tchaikovsky Competition for Young Musicians. His achievements have led to acclaimed debuts at Carnegie Hall, Wigmore Hall, 92nd Street Y, Merkin Hall, and the Great Hall of the Moscow Conservatory, as well as solo appearances with major orchestras across the Americas.

In 2022, *The Strad* praised his all-Bach recital debut in New York as "flawlessly played... a deeply moving experience," and *Classic FM* named him one of their "30 under 30" Rising Stars. Known for his rich, mesmerizing sound, Martins performs a wide concerto repertoire and has earned special acclaim for his

interpretations of the Bach Cello Suites and his own transcriptions of Bach's Violin Sonatas and Partitas, which he is currently recording in full.

His performances have been broadcast on *NPR*, *WQXR*, *KUSC*, and *WFMT*. He has appeared at leading festivals including Aspen, Ravinia, La Jolla, Yellow Barn, Chamberfest Cleveland, and Mainly Mozart.

Born in Bloomington, Indiana, Martins began cello studies at age five. He earned his B.M. from USC Thornton with Ralph Kirshbaum and his M.M. from New England Conservatory with Laurence Lesser. Based in Charleston, SC, he also composes and teaches. He plays a c.1690 Francesco Ruggieri cello with a François Nicolas Voirin bow. Learn more at www.gabrielmartinscello.com.

More About Rainer Crosett

Hailed as "sensational" and for playing with "total commitment and conviction" (*Seen & Heard International 2024*), cellist **Rainer Crosett** is quickly building an international career as an artist of uncommon sensitivity and creativity. He made his Wigmore Hall debut as the first American to win the Pierre Fournier Award and gave his concerto debut in 2023 with the Philharmonia Orchestra of London. He performs regularly across Europe and North America, with recent highlights at Bridgewater Hall, Oxford May Music, the Dame Myra Hess Concerts, and Roman River Festival.

As a chamber musician, Rainer has appeared at major festivals including Yellow Barn, Ravinia, Music@Menlo, and La Jolla SummerFest, performing alongside artists such as Robert Levin, the Parker Quartet, Anthony Marwood, and Kim Kashkashian.

A committed advocate of contemporary music, he has worked closely with composers like Jörg Widmann, Chaya Czernowin, and Lei Liang, and recently commissioned works by Eun Young Lee, William Cooper, and Reinaldo Moya. He is also co-founder of Tonhain Kollektiv, curating a Berlin-based concert series exploring the relationship between music and technology.

Rainer received the Silver Medal and Artistic Encouragement Award at the 2017 Ima Hogg Competition, debuting with the Houston Symphony. He studied in the Harvard–NEC joint program, graduating magna cum laude with a degree in Philosophy, and later earned an Artist Diploma from USC's Thornton School of Music and pursued further study at Berlin's Universität der Künste. His principal mentors include Jens Peter Maintz, Ralph Kirshbaum, and Paul Katz. Learn more at www.rainercrosett.com.

About Victor Santiago Asunción

Hailed by *The Washington Post* for his "poised and imaginative playing," Filipino-American pianist **Victor Santiago Asunción** has appeared in concert halls in Brazil, Canada, Ecuador, France, Italy, Germany, Japan, Mexico, the Philippines, Spain, Turkey and the USA, as a recitalist and concerto soloist.

A chamber music enthusiast, he has performed with artists such as Lynn Harrell, Zuill Bailey, Antonio Meneses, Joshua Roman, Giora Schmidt, the Dover, Emerson, and Vega String Quartets. He was on the chamber music faculty of the Aspen Music Festival, and the Garth Newel Summer Music Festival. He was also the pianist for the Garth Newel Piano Quartet for three seasons. Festival appearances include the Amelia Island, Highland-Cashiers, Music in the Vineyards, and Santa Fe.

His recordings include the complete Sonatas of Ludwig van Beethoven for Piano and Cello, Sonatas by Shostakovich and Rachmaninoff with cellist Joseph Johnson, the Rachmaninoff Sonata with the cellist Evan Drachman, and the Chopin and Grieg Sonatas, also with cellist Evan Drachman. He is featured in the award-winning recording *Songs My Father Taught Me* with Lynn Harrell, produced by Louise Frank and WFMT-Chicago. Mr. Asunción is the Founder, Artistic Director, and Board Director of FilAm Music Foundation, a non-profit foundation that is dedicated to promoting Filipino classical musicians through scholarship and performance. Victor Santiago Asunción is a Steinway Artist. Learn more at www.victorsantiagoasuncion.com.

**Photo Credit: Martin Allison (for Gabriel Martins) and Clara Evens (for Rainer Crosett)*