

Clara Lee

Clara Lee is a violinist and educator who strives to develop master violinists who excel in the instrument.

Born in Hong Kong, Clara began to play the violin at 4 with Professor Bao-zhi Yang of the Central Conservatory of Music, China. Early on she received a strict regimen best described as a combination of the Suzuki method and conservatory level training from some of the best Chinese violin educators in the country at the time. This includes Yao-ji Lin, Chai Liang, and Dr. Yip Wai Hong. At 12 Clara won both the violin concerto and intermediate duet divisions of the 57th Hong Kong Schools Music Festival before a panel of international jury. Two years later she was awarded a fellowship diploma from Trinity College London. She gave public performances throughout her teenage years in Hong Kong, Chang Sha, Gui Lin, and Taiwan. She was appointed concertmaster of Diocesan Girls' School Orchestra during high school. In 2012 Clara began studying with renowned professor Michael Ma, Curtis graduate and head of strings at The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (HKAPA). She is the recipient of the merit-based Maria Fan Howard Arts Scholarship. During that time she gave two public recitals at HKAPA, graduating with a Bachelor of Music degree.

In 2015 Clara was invited to Kent/Blossom Festival in Ohio. She played with The Cleveland Orchestra that summer. There she met Professor Benny Kim, who offered her a full ride to pursue a Master of Music degree at The University of Missouri - Kansas City (UMKC). A year later Clara moved to Kansas City. During this time she won auditions to become permanent members of the Topeka Symphony and Wichita Symphony. Summer of 2017 she was appointed concertmaster of the Round Top Festival Orchestra. She participated at Heartland Music Chamber Festival and Taneycomo Music Festival in Branson, Missouri. Clara is winner of the First Biennial Tiberius Klausner Youth Concerto Competition in 2017, and subsequently performed Brahms Violin Concerto with the Kinnor Philharmonic Orchestra January of 2018. Same year she partnered with Midwest Chamber Ensemble to produce an album for Philip Lasser's *La Boite a Bijoux*.

During her time at UMKC Clara served as first violinist of The UMKC graduate string quartet. Together with her fellow musicians she went to Kansas City's local school districts to conduct masterclasses, workshops, and performances. Today, Clara continues the mission of making classical music accessible by partnering with String Sprouts KC to bring instruments and teachers into low-income neighborhoods of Kansas City metro. She maintains a private studio in Prairie Village, makes guest clinician appearances at various school districts in Olathe, Raymore, and North KC, continues to perform with Topeka Symphony and Wichita Symphony, serves as co-concertmaster of Midwest Chamber Ensemble, and performs with Kansas City Symphony periodically.