

Biography

Dr. Xiangyu Zhao is a pianist, composer, and scholar, born in China and beginning his musical journey at the age of four. He pursued his education in the United States, attaining remarkable success and recognition.

Dr. Zhao completed his Doctor of Musical Arts in Piano Performance at the UMKC Conservatory of Music and Dance under the esteemed guidance of Dr. Robert Weirich. Previously, he earned his Bachelor of Music from the University of Northern Colorado in 2013, studying with Dr. Lei Weng. During his undergraduate studies, Dr. Zhao received the Undergraduate Academic Excellence Award from the International Department and performed as the sole soloist in the 29th Gala Concert, receiving coverage in UNC's school newspaper, *The Mirror*, following his freshman recital.

Throughout his career, Dr. Zhao has earned numerous accolades and awards. He excelled in prestigious competitions such as the Steinway Piano Concerto Competition, achieving 3rd Place in 2008 and advancing to 2nd Place in 2009. He also achieved two 2nd Place finishes in the MTNA Young Artist Competition for the State of Colorado. Notably, Dr. Zhao was named the winner of the MTNA Young Artist Piano Competition in Missouri in 2017 and the alternate winner of the MTNA Young Artist Piano Competition in the West Central Region.

Dr. Zhao's commitment to musical excellence extends beyond performance. He has actively engaged in composition, studying under Dr. Chen Yi at UMKC Conservatory since 2013. His compositions, ranging from solo piano pieces to complex chamber works, have been well-received and showcased in various concerts, including the Composers' Guild and *Musica Nova*.

As a performer, Dr. Zhao has graced stages worldwide, from the iconic Kauffman Center for the Performing Arts in Kansas City to international festivals such as the University of Florida's International Piano Festival and the International Keyboard Institute Festival in New York City. His performances have captivated audiences and critics alike, earning him recognition in esteemed publications such as the *Kansas City Star* and *Classical KC*.

Dr. Zhao's scholarly contributions are equally impressive. He collaborated on the groundbreaking project of the comprehensive critical edition of Stravinsky's "Four Piano Etudes Op. 7," the first-ever compilation offering performance suggestions, theoretical analysis, and corrections to previous editions. This research significantly advanced the understanding of Stravinsky's musical repertoire. His article on Liszt's "Transcendental Etudes" further solidified his presence in the academic and music community.

In addition to his performance and scholarly achievements, Dr. Zhao is actively involved in various music organizations. He serves as a piano accompanist for the Kansas City Ballet and holds leadership positions in the Kansas City Music Teachers Association (KCMTA), affiliated with the Music Teachers National Association (MTNA). His dedication to musical education is evidenced by his role as Co-Chair of the Junior Concerto Competition, where he mentors young musicians and promotes musical excellence.

Dr. Zhao's artistic endeavors are marked by a commitment to fostering cultural exchange and understanding through music. His composition blending American blues with Chinese musical elements debuted in Candás, Spain, receiving acclaim from the Spanish newspaper *La Nueva España*.

His collaborative efforts with renowned musicians like saxophonist Don-Paul Kahl and his performances of contemporary compositions highlight his versatility and dedication to advancing the musical landscape.