

From the PPWC Home Tour to Disney Hall

By the Palisadian-Post - February 28, 2019



Photos by Rich Schmitt/Staff Photographer

Classical Trio La FAZ Strings Listeners Along

By MICHAEL AUSHENKER | *Contributing Writer*

On the recent Pacific Palisades Woman’s Club Home Tour, a trio of high school violinists caught the ears of visitors taking in Pacific Ocean views at an expansive El Medio neighborhood beach house.

Welcome to the world of La FAZ, the swanky acronym for a teen trio of classical violinists comprised of Vera Fang, Layla Adeli and Sophie Zhu. (“Faz,” in youth parlance, doubles for “cool.”)

The string musicians are all members of Los Angeles Youth Orchestra, a group of some of the most talented young musicians citywide.

Vera Fang

“The trio added so much to the Home Tour experience,” Margaux Glaser, a home coordinator for what became dubbed the “Gallery Home,” told the *Palisadian-Post*. “Everyone working at the home that day wanted to be positioned outside to enjoy the music.”

Adeli and Zhu attend Paul Revere Charter Middle School while Fang is a student at Palisades Charter High School, where Adeli, who resides in Pacific Palisades, plans to attend as well.



“They are all in their school orchestras,” said Fati Adeli, Layla’s mother. “Both schools have amazing music programs. The fundraising the schools do support the music programs to make sure they have access to the best music and musical instruments.”

“We met at Paul Revere and were all members of Los Angeles Youth Orchestra,” Adeli said.

The girls, who take private violin lessons, participate in orchestra on a weekly basis. Cosima Luther, who has trained teens for more than 15 years, deems these ladies “an exceptional group.”

“We get together every few months to work on chamber music as an extracurricular,” Luther said.

Layla Adeli

“It is my honor to be one of the string coaches who teaches these kids professional-level repertoire,” coach Sharon Jackson said. “We have played Carnegie Hall, Walt Disney Concert Hall and in fine halls in Europe. We are very excited about our upcoming June 19th performance in Disney Hall.”

“What is really impressive is their support for one another,” said Luther, their LAYO performances mentor. “In chamber groups, students argue over who will play the first part, and there are feelings of resentment or jealousy, but they are all happy to trade parts and pieces so that the melody is evenly distributed. They all practice and take the violin seriously.”



At age 4, Adeli started playing piano but segued to violin at Palisades Charter Elementary School, joining Children’s Music Workshop. She chose violin because, as a first-grader, she had to choose between the fiddle and the recorder.

Sophie Zhu

For Adeli, the musical tradition runs deep. As a mother of three teens, Fati said she and her husband have always enjoyed classical.

“We attend concerts at the Disney Hall, Hollywood Bowl and UCLA Royce Hall as a family,” Fati said. “We also have an 11-year-old daughter, Leena, who plays the violin with LAYO and started with the Children’s Music Workshop when she was in the first grade.”

Adeli enjoys performing Bach and Vivaldi, and started learning Partita with her private coach. She recently caught one of her idols, violinist Hillary Hahn, performing Bach at UCLA Royce Hall.



“Of course, we bought front row tickets,” Fati said.

Outside of classical, the teen violinists shared their varied pop music preferences, which include bands such as Five Seconds of Summer and Panic! at the Disco and even video game scores.

Palisadian Adeli and Fang and Zhu, who both reside in West Los Angeles, enjoy music, but all three of them said that they do not intend to pursue their craft professionally after college. Zhu remains undecided while Fang and Adeli both want to pursue careers in biotech.

Yet for now, they are having fun and look forward to pursuing and performing more gigs, including, if it happens, at the Palisades' Fourth of July concert at Pali High—and that makes their mentors very happy.

“They are very detail-oriented for their age, understanding complex fingerings and bowings that I assign to them on the spot,” Luther said.

“They are playing advanced repertoire and doing so with great maturity,” Jackson added. “I’m proud to work with them.”

