
Benett Tsai – Biography 26–27

The music-making of Australian cellist Benett Tsai has been described as “electrifying...flawless freshness” (Süddeutsche Zeitung) and “charismatic, heartfelt playing full of fluid intensity” (Sydney Arts Guide). A compelling soloist and chamber musician on major stages worldwide, he first gained international recognition at the 2022 Grand Prix Emanuel Feuermann in Berlin, receiving both the Third Prize and Special Prize for the Best Haydn Concerto as the youngest entrant. In 2023, he joined the roster of Young Concert Artists for management after winning First Prize and The Stern Young Artist Award at the YCA Susan Wadsworth International Auditions in New York. His subsequent recital was listed by New York Classical Review as one of the best debuts in 2024, and he was recently awarded the 2026 Prix Jean-Nicolas Firmenich at the Verbier Festival.

In the 2026-27 season, Benett will perform across North America, Europe, Asia, and Australia. Highlights include his Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra debut conducted by Michał Nesterowicz, and premieres of Matthew Hindson’s “*Rock Star*” cello concerto with the Göttinger Symphonieorchester under Ryusuke Numajiri and the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra under Samy Rachid. He also returns to the Queensland Symphony Orchestra and appears with the symphony orchestras of Virginia Beach, Mobile, and Plano. In recital, he collaborates with pianist Aristo Sham at Hong Kong City Hall and accordionist Radu Ratoi at The Phillips Collection, with further appearances at Carnegie Hall and Chamber Music San Francisco as part of YCA on Tour.

Since his mainstage debut at the age of thirteen, Benett has performed widely as a soloist with orchestras such as the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra, Sinfonia Lahti, Queensland Symphony Orchestra, Kammerphilharmonie Metamorphosen Berlin, Maryland Symphony Orchestra, Anchorage Symphony Orchestra, Australian Chamber Orchestra Academy, and the Canberra Symphony Orchestra. Conductors with whom he has collaborated include Esa-Pekka Salonen, Umberto Clerici, Joseph Bastian, Nicholas Milton, and Elizabeth Schulze.

Among other venues internationally, Benett has been presented in recitals at The Kennedy Center (Washington D.C.), Berliner Philharmonie, Shanghai Oriental Arts Center, La Jolla Music Society, Kaufman Music Center (New York), City Recital Hall (Sydney), and Melbourne Recital Centre. He has also made appearances at the Verbier Festival, Lincoln Center with Emanuel Ax, Kravis Center for the Performing Arts, Calgary ProMusica, UAB Alys Stephens Center, and Musica Viva Australia. Notably, he was featured in the 2020 film, *The Way Forward*, where he performed with pianist Jean-Yves Thibaudet.

Born in 2003, Benett began playing the cello at the age of five under the guidance of his uncle and teacher, Thomas Tsai. He currently studies with Clive Greensmith at The Colburn School in Los Angeles, where he holds a Bachelor of Music degree. In previous years, he also learned with Li-Wei Qin and Susan Blake. His other significant mentors include Ralph Kirshbaum, Steven Isserlis, and his pianist father, Joshua Tsai.

Benett plays on a 1719 Giuseppe Guarneri 'filius Andreae' cello, on loan from a generous benefactor. He is a VC Artist on The Violin Channel and an alumnus of the Lausanne-based Classeek Ambassador Programme.