

ESTHER BACK, D.M.A.

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SAN BERNARDINO
DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC
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CURRENT POSITIONS

- **Lecturer**, California State University, San Bernardino (September 2018 – present)
- **Director, Cello Ensemble**, California State University, San Bernardino (September 2018 – present)
- **Tenured Cellist**, San Bernardino Symphony Orchestra (October 2010 – present)
- **Performer**: Cellist (Modern/Baroque) / Violist da gamba / Violoncellist piccolo
- **Music Director and Founder**, Orange County Cello Ensemble (2003-2019)
- **Private Cello Instructor** (2000 - present)

TEACHING/OTHER EXPERIENCE

- **Lecturer** (adjunct, since September 2018), Department of Music, California State University, San Bernardino, CA. Courses taught to date (all at undergraduate level): Studio cello (applied lesson), *Cello Ensemble**, *Chamber Music*, *Early Music Ensemble*, Applied Pedagogy: *Orchestral Strings*, *Musicianship II*, *Music for Classroom Teacher* (seminar and activity) All courses regularly employ(ed) Canvas and/or other available technological/pedagogical tools.
- **Cello Faculty/Masterclass Artist/Cello Ensemble Coach** at Cello Fest of Cal State Fullerton June/July 2023.
- **Guest speaker/clinician**, invited to give a lecture titled “Bach Cello Suites in Performance Practice” at California State University, Fullerton, November 2022
- **Director** of CSUSB Cello Ensemble, 2019 – present
 - Duties include: forming groups; coaching/directing the small groups and large group; researching and assigning the repertoire; reaching out to donors for the established account to expand the program such as scholarship opportunity for participating students, and funds to be used to benefit students; hiring outside contractors (professional guest artists, cellists, guest master class artists, etc.); leading staging

rehearsals for any collaborative concert program; grant writings to fund the concerts; active recruiting; planning for international or national tour

- **Co-director** of CSUSB Early Music Ensemble, 2022 – present
 - Duties include: forming groups; lecturing historical performance practice issues; coaching/directing the small groups and large group; researching and assigning the repertoire; hiring outside contractors (professional guest artists, cellists, guest master class artists, etc.); leading staging rehearsals for any collaborative concert program; grant writings to fund the concerts; active recruiting; planning for tour; researching and assigning the repertoire; maintaining/taking care of the recently procured Baroque string instruments; conducting/leading
- **Research Assistant**, Department of Music, Claremont Graduate University, CA, August 2020 – present.
- **Teaching Assistant**, Department of Music, Claremont Graduate University, CA, August 2022 – May 2023.
- **Cello Faculty/Chamber Coach** at Summer California Music Institute SoCal, 2020 – present
- **Cello Instructor**, Valley Christian School, West Music Conservatory (2002-2004), University of Redlands Community School of Music (2008-2012), Allegro Music Center (2002-2006), SOMA Music School (2005-2012), and Grace Music School (2009-2015)
- **Cello Faculty**, California Music Clinic, CA, June/July 2010
- **Cello Coach**, California State University San Bernardino Summer Music Camp, June 2018 and June 2019
- **Cello Coach**, Irvine Classical Players, Irvine Young Artists, 2016-2018
- **Director** of Orange County Cello Ensemble, 2003 – 2019 (duties are described under “Significant Organization Roles”)
- **Cello Coach**, GMI Youth Orchestra, and Giocoso Youth Orchestra, 2006-2008
- **Private Cello Instructor**, Esther Back Cello Studio, 1999-present

LECTURES/MASTERCLASSES

- **“Bach Cello Suites in Performance Practice”**, two-hour public lecture given as part of Art Inter Club Council presented by Cello Council at California State University, Fullerton, CA, November 2022. (Invited and compensated)
- **“Performance Practice Issues”**, lecture-recital presented as part of Doctoral degree partial fulfillment, Claremont Graduate University, CA, 2021

EDUCATION

- **Ph.D., Historical Musicology**, Claremont Graduate University, CA, in progress. Academic studies with Robert Zappulla, Mark Howard, and Nancy van Deusen.

- **D.M.A., Historical Performance Practices** (Baroque cello, violoncello piccolo, and viola da gamba), Claremont Graduate University, CA, May 2023. Baroque cello, violoncello piccolo, and viola da gamba with Jaap ter Linden. Committee: Robert Zappulla, Jaap ter Linden, and Mark Howard.
- **M.M., Performance** (Cello), University of Redlands, CA, May 2010. Cello with Kyle Champion. Thesis: Authenticity in the Performance of J.S. Bach's Violoncello Music. Advisor: Jean-Sebastian Vallee and Melissa Tosh.
- **B.M., Performance**, (Cello), California State University, Fullerton, CA, May 2006. Cello with Bongshin Ko.

RECORDINGS

- **Cellist, Director, and Producer**, *Miracle of the Cellos*, Orange County Cello Ensemble (BMI) 2017 – Produced/Directed/Released on CD Baby label, iTunes, Soundcloud, Amazon, YouTube, and Spotify.
- **Baroque Cellist**, *Johann Sebastian Bach: Six Suites for Unaccompanied Violoncello*, (2-compact disc complete recording sets, Athene Labels, Inc.); in progress, planned for release 2025.

ORCHESTRAL EXPERIENCES

- **Tenured cellist**, San Bernardino Symphony, 2010-present (section position won in 2010)
- **Baroque cellist**, *Musica Angelica (professional baroque Orchestra)*, June 2022 and Jan. 2023
- **Baroque cellist**, *Opera Neo*, June, and July 2023
- **Baroque cellist**, *Meistersinger*, May 2023
- **Cellist**, Redlands Symphony, 2008-present (finalist for Assistant Principal position)
- **Principal cellist**, Orange Coast College Symphony, 2014-present
- **Principal cellist**, Orange County Symphony, 2010-2015
- **Cellist**, American Youth Symphony, 2006-2008
- **Cellist**, Burbank Philharmonic, 2008
- **Cellist**, Downey Symphony, 2008
- **Cellist**, Torrance Symphony, 2008
- **Cellist**, Westchester Orchestra, 2005-2006
- **Cellist**, Carson-Dominguez Symphony Orchestra, 2007-2008
- **Cellist**, LA Pro Musica Orchestra, 2007
- **Cellist**, Culver City Symphony Orchestra, 2006
- **Principal cellist**, Summit Music Festival Symphony Orchestra, 2009
- **Principal cellist**, Texas Music Festival Symphony Orchestra, 2007
- **Principal cellist**, Grace International Church Symphony Orchestra, 2005-2010
- **Cellist**, numerous operas and musical works

- **Principal cellist, CSUF Symphony Orchestra, 2001-2006**
- **Principal cellist, La Primavera Orchestra, performed in Carnegie Hall, 2003**
- **Principal cellist, Valley Symphony, 2003**
- **Principal cellist, Pacific Youth Symphony, 2000-2001**

STUDENTS' ACCOMPLISHMENTS (HIGHLIGHTS)

- **CSUSB cello major students' accomplishments** demonstrate the results of excellence in teaching since I joined as a faculty at CSUSB (highlights).
 - CSUSB cello major, Annabelle Su: is a winner of the 2023 Los Angeles "Golden Classical Music Awards" International Competition, and will be featured to perform at the prestigious Walt Disney Concert Hall; is a winner of the 2023 International Music Competition "Barcelona" Grand Prize Virtuoso, and will be featured to perform in Barcelona; is selected as a Finalist in the highly competitive American String Teachers' Association Solo Competition, Greater Los Angeles Area
 - CSUSB cello major, Symeon Seraphim: is a FIRST PRIZE Winner of the Winterfest competition; a FRIST PRIZE Winner of the 2020 Satori Competition
- **Private cello students' accomplishments**--over 40 awards of first and top prizes in over 30 string and concerto competitions, including Golden Classical Awards International competition, Pelican International Competition, American Protégé International String competition, American Teacher's String Association of Los Angeles competition, Music Teacher's Association of California VOCE competition, Los Angeles Violoncello Society Scholarship, Satori String Contest, and Southwest Youth Music Festival competition
- **Solo Debut Performance** with Yorba Linda Symphony Orchestra, California State University San Bernardino Symphony Orchestra, Seraphim Symphony, Grace Youth Orchestra
- **Solo Debut Performances** at prestigious major venues, including Carnegie Hall (United States), Walt Disney Concert Hall (United States), the Pantheon in Rome (Italy 2018), Eglise de la Madeleine in Paris (France 2017), and Sunday Concert Series at the Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum (2015-2018)
- **Acceptances** to the Orange County High School of the Arts
- Former students graduated from Julliard School, Eastman School of Music, and Manhattan School of Music

SOLO/CHAMBER PERFORMANCE EXPERIENCES AT MAJOR VENUES

- **The Meng Concert Hall, CSU, Fullerton – Celloist and director of CSUSB Cello Ensemble, to be performed with CSU Cello Choir, 2024**

- **CSUSB Performing Arts Recital Hall** – Baroque cellist, moderator for the guest artist, Robert Zappulla’s talk, and presenter student group of the CSUSB Early Music Ensemble, 2023
- **CSUSB Performing Arts Recital Hall** – Solo Performer with orchestra, Cello Concerto (first movement only) by David Stern with CSUSB Symphony Orchestra, 2023; Solo Cello Concerto in entirety to be performed in May 2024
- **Presidential Richard Nixon Library & Museum, theatre 37** – Baroque cellist, works by J.S. Bach’s cello suite no. 3 [C] and 5 [c], 2022
- **Presidential Richard Nixon Library & Museum, theatre 37** – Baroque cellist, Robert Zappulla works by Domenico Gabrielli Sonata [G], Francesco Geminiani Sonata No. 2 [D], and J.S. Bach’s cello suite no. 3 [C] and 5 [c], 2022
- **Claremont Graduate University, Art & Music Building, East Gallery** – Baroque cellist and viola da gambist, works by J.S. Bach’s cello suite no. 6 [D] and Bach’s gamba sonatas no. 2 [D] & 3 [g], Dr. Melody Lin, harpsichord, 2023
- **CGU, Art & Music Building, East Gallery** – Baroque cellist, works by J.S. Bach’s cello suite no. 3 [C] and 4 [E flat], 2021
- **Presidential Richard Nixon Library & Museum, theatre 37**– Baroque cellist and viola da gambist, works by J.S. Bach’s cello suite no. 6 [D] and Bach’s gamba sonatas no. 2 [D] & 3 [g], Dr. Melody Lin, harpsichord, 2023
- **CGU, Art & Music Building, East Gallery** – Baroque cellist, works by Ludwig van Beethoven Cello Sonatas Op. 5, No. 2 [g], No. 3 [A], Op.69, Dr. Melody Lin, fortepiano, 2022
- **Walt Disney Hall** – Solo performer, music director and performance, 2019 and 2022
- **United Nations** – Invitation performance (Solo and chamber music performer), 2009
- **Eglise de la Madeleine, Paris, France** – Solo Performer with orchestra (Moses Variations by Paganini) and director of Orange County Cello Ensemble, July 2017
- **Servite Theatre, U.S.A.** – Solo Performer with orchestra **Schumann Cello Concerto** with Orange County Symphony Orchestra, 2016
- **Memorial Chapel, University of Redlands** – Solo Performer with orchestra **Schumann Cello Concerto** with Redlands Symphony Orchestra, 2010
- **Memorial Chapel, University of Redlands** –Solo Performer with orchestra **Dvorak Cello Concerto** with University Symphony Orchestra, 2009
- **Meng Concert Hall, California State University of Fullerton** – Solo Performer with orchestra **Prokofiev Cello Sinfonia Concertante** with orchestra, 2006
- **Walt Disney Hall** – Orchestral performer, 2005-2015
- **Dorothy Chandler Pavilion**– Orchestral performer (Principal Cellist), 2004-2009
- **Carnegie Hall** – Orchestral performer (Principal Cellist), 2002 and 2003
- **Laguna Beach Music Festival** - performed with renowned cellist/artist, **Lynn Harrell**, 2009

- **FM 88.9 Radio Station**– Music Director, performer, solo performer, live interview and performance, 2006-2018
- **Royce Hall**, the University of California, Los Angeles – Orchestral performer, 2006-2008
- **Colosseum**, Caesars Palace, Las Vegas – performer, 2016
- **California Theatre**, San Bernardino – Orchestral Performer, 2010-present

CONDUCTING/TEACHING ORCHESTRA EXPERIENCES

- **Guest Conductor**, San Bernardino City Unified School District Honor Orchestra (professionally hired to conduct for the SBCUSD Honor Orchestra), 2024
- **Conductor/Director**, CSUSB Cello Ensemble/Orchestra, 2018 – present
- **Guest Conductor**, San Bernardino County Music Educators Association (professionally hired to conduct for the Superintendent of Schools San Bernardino County), 2017
- **Assistant Conductor**, Grace Youth Orchestra, 2013-2016
- **Conductor**, Orange County Cello Ensemble/Orchestra, 2003-2018

FESTIVALS

- **Baroque Performance Institute Summer Festival**, Cleveland, OH, June-July 2022
- **Tafelmusik Summer Festival, Canada**, June 2021 and 2022
- **New York Summit Music Festival**, July 2008 and 2009
- **Texas Music Festival**, July 2007
- **North Carolina School of the Arts**, June 2004 and 2005

PRINCIPAL TEACHERS

- **Robert Zappulla**, department chair at Claremont Graduate University; musicology faculty and supervisor committee at CGU
- **Mark Howard**, musicology faculty and committee member at CGU
- **Jaap ter Linden**, [Baroque Cellist and viol player](#); faculty at Case Western Reserve University; faculty at Cleveland Institute of Music; former faculty at Royal Conservatory, The Hague;
Grove article: <https://doi-org.ccl.idm.oclc.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.43956>
- **Ronald Leonard**, former Principal Cellist, LA Philharmonic; former faculty at Colburn School and University of Southern California
- **Peter Stumpf**, former Principal Cellist, LA Philharmonic; faculty at Indiana University
- **Ben Hong**, Associate Principal Cellist, LA Philharmonic; faculty at University of Southern California
- **Kyle Champion**, Principal Cellist, Redlands Symphony; faculty at University of Redlands
- **Bongshin Ko**, Associate Professor of Music at California State University, Fullerton
- **Hee-Song Song**, faculty in Daegu Catholic University, Korea

- **Fei Bein**, former faculty at Frankfurt University, Germany

MASTER CLASSES FOR SOLO AND CHAMBER PERFORMANCES

- **Bernard Greenhouse**, Cellist, Beaux Arts Trio
- **Kenneth Slowic** Cellist, viol player, and conductor, Curator of Musical Instrument Collection at the National Museum of American History and Artistic Director of the Smithsonian Chamber Music Society
- **Nathaniel Rosen**, faculty, USC and Manhattan School
- **Matt Haimovitz**, faculty, McGill University in Montreal
- **Peter Stumpf**, former Principal Cellist, LA Philharmonic
- **Laszlo Varga**, former Principal Cellist, NY Philharmonic
- **Eleonore Schoenfeld**, former Professor, University of Southern California
- **Paul Katz**, faculty, New England Conservatory
- **Edward Aaron**, Cellist, Metropolitan Opera
- **Daniel Ruthmuller**, former Associate Principal Cellist, LA Philharmonic

AWARDS, HONORS, AND SCHOLARSHIPS/FELLOWSHIPS

- **CE & Bertha Harsh Fellowship** (\$14,388.00), Claremont Graduate University, 2022-2023
- **Friedman Fellowship at CGU** (\$2500.00), CGU, 2022
- **CE & Bertha Harsh Fellowship at CGU** (\$13,051.00), CGU, 2021-2022
- **Music Fellowship at CGU** (\$6400.00), CGU, 2021-2022
- **Music Fellowship at CGU** (\$58,949.00), CGU, 2020-2023
- **Blaisdell Fellowship at CGU** (\$5500.00), CGU, 2020-2023
- **Fernandez Prize Music Grant at CGU** (\$500.00), CGU 2020
- **The Rudolph Polk Award Winner** (\$1000), Claremont Graduate Division, cello and Baroque cello, 2021
- **University of Redlands Competition Grand Prize Winner** (performed Schumann Concerto with Redlands Symphony), 2010
- **University of Redlands Competition Prize Winner** (performed Dvorak Concerto), February 2009
- **Chamber Awards** (\$500), 2009
- **Grand Prize Winner**, Music Associates Competition at Cal State Fullerton (performed Prokofiev Sinfonia Concertante), 2006
- **University of Redlands Chamber Music Awards** (\$500), 2008
- **Charles Baker Scholarship Awards** (\$300), 2003
- **Grand Prize**, ASTA Solo Competition Greater Los Angeles Finals, 2004
- **1st Prize Winner**, ASTA Solo Competition and **3rd Prize** in ASTA Greater LA Finals, 2003

- **1st Prize Winner**, ASTA Solo Competition and **2nd Prize** in ASTA Greater LA String Finals, 2002
- **3rd Prize Winner**, ASTA Solo Competition in Greater LA String Finals, 1998
- **1st Prize Winner**, ASTA Solo Competition (Orange County), 1997
- **1st Prize Winner**, Kang-Won State Annual Solo Competition (Korea), 1991~1994
- **2nd Prize Winner**, Music Journal Competition (Seoul, Korea), 1994

SIGNIFICANT ORGANIZATION ROLES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Founder of several notable music groups; event planning/managing; producer of audio/video recordings; writer of numerous grant applications; and successful fundraiser

CAL STATE SAN BERNARDINO CELLO ENSEMBLE, DIRECTOR AND FOUNDER

- Creating the course, 2019
- Launched with the largest number of students recruitment with high caliber level
- Establishing a tax-deductible cello gift account to be enabled to receive donations/kind donations; conducting active fundraiser activities for the recent accomplishment of invitation to perform at Carnegie Hall in New York, 2020

PAST CELLO ENSEMBLE HIGHLIGHTS

- The Season Concert Cello Ensemble at the Nixon Library, 2019
- Invitation performance as part of Orchestra Festival at the Walt Disney Concert Hall; directed and conducted 25 cellists—CSUSB cello students and Orange County Cello Ensemble students, and CSUSB Percussion Group, 2019
- Virtual Video Performance Recording, as a director, video editor, audio editor, and producer, 2020, 2021, over 689 views
- Invitation to perform at the historic California Theatre in San Bernardino, pre-concert to San Bernardino Symphony Orchestra Concert, October 23, 2021
- Community Performance as part of the Festival of Arts in Riverside at Ramona High School, Riverside, October 18, 2022
- *An Evening of Beautiful Music by Tutti Celli*, CSUSB 2021
- The Season Concert Cello Ensemble at the CSUSB Recital Hall, 2022
- *Dancing Cellos*, Nixon Theatre, 2023
- The Season Concert Cello Ensemble with a distinguished harpsichordist, Prof. Robert Zappulla at the CSUSB Recital Hall, 2023

ORANGE COUNTY CELLO ENSEMBLE, FOUNDER (2003-2018)

- Incorporated 501(c)3, formed a board and became Presidential Service Award Certifying Organization

- Successfully produced over 30 concerts/events including performances at international and national major venues
- Produced over 40 music-related events requiring full production efforts: concert promotion posters/postcards, booking musicians, venue rentals, ticket sales, fundraising, media advertisements, creating programs, trained and supervised overall, creating scholarship ideas, bring donors, planning for event catering
- Executive Director, Music Director and Founder, Orange County Cello Ensemble (2003-2018)

**COMPETITION CHAIR, AMERICAN STRING TEACHER'S ASSOCIATION,
ORANGE COUNTY (2016-2021)**

- Booked venues and hired judges, oversaw the competition, and communication

OTHER EXPERIENCES

- Adjudicator at numerous competitions

LANGUAGES

- Fluent Korean/English; Reading knowledge of French and Italian

REFERENCES

- **Professor Robert Zappulla**, Fred W. Smith, and Grace Hobson Smith Professor of Music, Chair, Department of Music, Claremont Graduate University, 251 E. Tenth St., Rm. 113, Claremont, CA 91711, USA
Phone: (909) 952-3764, Email: robert.zappulla@cgu.edu
- **Jaap ter Linden**, faculty at Case Western Reserve University; faculty at Cleveland Institute of Music; former faculty at Royal Conservatory, The Hague;
Grove article: <https://doi-org.ccl.idm.oclc.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.43956>
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- **Ben Hong**, Associate Principal Cellist, Los Angeles Philharmonic
Phone: (310) 384-8949, Email: f4senna1000@mac.com
- **Dr. Anne Viricel**, Executive Director, San Bernardino Symphony, 198 N. Arrowhead Ave., San Bernardino, CA 92408
Phone: (909) 381-5388, Email: alviricel@sanbernardinosymphony.org
- **Professor Andrew Glendening**, Dean, Department of Music, University of Redlands and Principal Trombone, Redlands Symphony
Phone: (909) 749-8684, Email: andrew_glendening@redlands.edu
- **Ana Maria Maldonado**, Principal Cellist, San Bernardino Symphony
Phone: (909) 559-6995, Email: ammaldonado23@yahoo.com

- **Kyle Champion**, Principal Cellist, Redlands Symphony
Phone: (909) 720-2982, Email: championcello@usa.net
- **Bongshin Ko**, Associate Professor of Music, CSUF Music Department Vice Chair
Phone: (657) 278-3265, Email: bko@fullerton.edu

CONCERT/SOLO PERFORMANCE REVIEW

AS A BAROQUE CELLIST:

“Baroque cellist Esther Back beautifully interprets the literature with a passion and expressiveness that is wholly accessible to modern ears yet entirely authentic, learned, and respectful of the sources.”

Dirk Tenbrock, Trierischer Volksfreund Music Journalist (Trier, Germany) (2022)

“Thanks for your calmness and for complementing a great event!”

Alan. S.

AS A DIRECTOR OF CAL STATE SAN BERNARDINO CELLO ENSEMBLE:

“Ms. Back and all –

Please convey admiration and appreciation for the marvelous concert yesterday at the Nixon to all. The orchestra is marvelous...beautiful people making lovely music. The singers were excellent. It seems like it is a very difficult piece...I'm amazed at the full orchestra sound created by the cellos. Thank you for a most enjoyable time.

Best wishes for continued success,”

Angela R. D. (2018)

“Hello, Dr. Back,

I just wanted to share my appreciation and love for your ensemble's performance at the beginning of the Symphony event last night. It was absolutely beautiful to see such young passionate musicians giving it their all for a pre-show nonetheless. The young man to your left made those strings cry when he played, it was mesmerizing.

I was wondering if you had a list of the pieces you and your students played last night, as I'd love to take another listen.

Thanks for fostering such wonderful talent,”

Gabe (2021)

“Dear Prof. Esther Back:

I want to extend my thanks and congratulations for your outstanding performance in the CSUSB Music Department's Cello Ensemble Concert, "An Evening of String and Film Music."

I found the selection of works to be quite uplifting, beginning with Dvorak's romantic "Four Miniatures, Opus 75" and concluding with Norman's rousing "007 James Bond Theme Song."

Congratulations and thank you again for a remarkable experience. I wish you all the very best as you continue to pursue your personal, academic and professional goals.

Sincerely,”

Tomas D. Morales

CSUSB President (April 18, 2022)

“Dear CSUSB Cello Ensemble, Professor Back, and Guest Artists,

Congratulations to each of you for another fabulous performance yesterday! It is an honor and privilege to be invited to perform in the California Theater as an opener for the San Bernardino Symphony Orchestra, and we are so extraordinarily proud of you and your exquisite musicianship and dedication.

Thank you for sharing your gifts with our community, am thrilled that you received positive feedback from an audience member! You are most deserving, and am sure that is simply some of the first of many more positive notes of appreciation to come.

Special congratulations as well to your fearless leader, Professor Back, whom we are very blessed to have on our faculty.

Sending best wishes to all of you, congratulations again!

Warmly,”

Dr. Lewis (2021)