

From the Practice Room to the United Nations: Young Artists Turn Music Into Dialogue

Kunst Harmonie and IAA marked International Youth Day with four days of music, dialogue, and youth leadership in New York.

NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES, September 4, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- From the practice room to the dialogue table and finally the concert stage, fifteen young artists spent four days in New York exploring a question beyond musical performance: What do you want another person to hear, understand or feel?

The Arts Leadership Project, organized by the [Kunst Harmonie Foundation for Arts & Cultural Education](#) and the

[International Academy for Arts and Cultural Studies \(IAA\)](#) for International Youth Day, brought young musicians together for master classes, leadership and cultural diplomacy training, a Youth Dialogue at United Nations Headquarters, and a final concert. The program was supported by Teachers College, Columbia University, and The Affiliated Secondary School of the Shanghai Conservatory of Music.

On August 10, master classes at Teachers College brought students in piano, violin, voice, and guzheng together with pianist and educator Byron Zhou and conductor Jorge Soto. Beyond technique, the sessions emphasized communicating artistic intention clearly to others.

On August 11, participants gathered at One United Nations Plaza for leadership and cultural diplomacy training, preparing them for the following day's dialogue.

On August 12, International Youth Day, the project moved to the United Nations Correspondents Association room at United Nations Headquarters. Moderated by Soto, the Youth Dialogue



Young participants and speakers gather for the International Youth Day Youth Dialogue in the United Nations Correspondents Association room at United Nations Headquarters in New York on August 12, 2026.

brought together participants, educators, and guest speakers Yana Gladkikh and Dr. Amaj Rahimi Midani around fifteen themes, from identity and empathy to leadership, global citizenship, and hope.

Drawing on SDG 4: Quality Education and SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals, Shu Claire Liu, Founder and Executive Director of Kunst Harmonie, connected arts education with critical thinking, cultural awareness, and responsibility. Dr. Midani addressed trust and understanding in an increasingly connected world, while Gladkikh explored leadership through storytelling.

The students answered those larger questions through experiences of their own. Hayden Huang, drawing on his experience as a Legislative Page at the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, reflected on leadership through listening across disagreement. Lucy Gao explored identity, Lillian Meng curiosity, and Charlotte Meng innovation. Alik Yashayev described how sharing food with a Kenyan classmate became a lesson in curiosity and inclusion, while Augustina He reflected on partnership through bringing different strengths and experiences together around a shared purpose. Anthony Yang, Angela Tang, Katherine Lee Dai, Yiran Liu, Selina Qiu, Xintong Si, Jay Liu, and Mandy Ke contributed perspectives spanning creativity, empathy, kindness, dialogue, responsibility, cultural exchange, global citizenship, and sustainability. Selin Daskiran brought the conversation toward hope — not as passive optimism, but as something young people can create through education, art, dialogue, and participation.

On August 13, words returned to music at Milbank Chapel, Teachers College, for the Kunst Harmonie Final Concert: Global Music Community. Yiran Liu performed her own Polyphony for Piano in D alongside Chopin's Waltz in E Minor. Katherine Lee Dai, a young violinist from Canada, performed Kreisler, while the Jade Glissando Ensemble — Selin Daskiran, Xintong Si, and Jay Liu — brought the guzheng to the stage.

The rooms had changed — from Teachers College to One United Nations Plaza, from United Nations Headquarters to Milbank Chapel. So had the language: music became movement, movement became dialogue, and dialogue returned to music.

Yet the purpose remained unchanged: to turn individual expression into shared understanding.

For Kunst Harmonie and IAA, that means not only giving young people a voice, but teaching them what must come with it — the curiosity to understand another perspective, the courage to communicate across differences, and the responsibility to listen when someone else speaks.

Because a bridge does not begin when someone speaks.
It begins when someone on the other side chooses to listen.

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