

Tristan Zhu is a scholarship fellow at the Academy of the Music Institute of Chicago, a training center for advanced pre-college musicians, where he studies with Almita Vamos. He began studying violin at age 5, his previous teachers include Davis King, and Aurelien Pederzoli. He is also a member of Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestra.

In 2023 Tristan was awarded the winner of the DePaul Concerto Festival for violin. In addition, he was the gold medalist of the International Young Gifted Musicians Festival, where he made his Carnegie Hall debut in April, 2022; and 3rd place winner of Fox Valley Concerto Competition. He has also received awards at the American Protege International Piano & String Competition; VIII Odin International Music Online Competition; International Music Competition "London" Grand Prize Virtuoso; Music Performance of 2021–2022 Discover FAA High School Talent Competition by University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

He has performed in various venues and events across the world, including Schoenberg Hall (UCLA, 2019), Roy O. Disney Concert Hall (CalArts, 2019), International Academy of Music (Italy, 2018), Kulas Hall (Cleveland Institute of Music, 2017), David Stull Hall (the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, 2017), and the Goppisberger Musikfestival und Akademie (Switzerland, 2016 & 2017).

An avid chamber musician, Tristan regularly and actively participates in various chamber groups. His previous chamber music activities include receiving the Luke Piercy Young Artist Scholarship in 2021; advanced to the Quarterfinals of the Fischhoff National Chamber Competition, and aired on WFMT "Introductions". With his groups, Tristan has performed at many community outreach events, including the Jay Pritzker Pavilion for the Grant Park Music Festival, the Next! Music program at the Chicago Philharmonic.

As an orchestral musician, Tristan performs with MIC Academy Orchestra and Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestra, with which had a successful European performance tour in 2022 summer.

Other musical interests include studying viola and composing chamber music. Tristan is also a varsity runner, and has a curious mind for physics and engineering.

Tristan attends Walton Payton College Prep, a Chicago Public School.