Jia Cao, Cello

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Jia Cao joined the Hartford Symphony Orchestra as the Assistant Principal Cellist in 2019, after serving as the Principal Cellist of the South Dakota Symphony Orchestra and a member of the Dakota String Quartet since 2015.

Cao has been featured as a soloist with the Albany Symphony Orchestra, the American Symphony Orchestra, the South Dakota Symphony Orchestra, and the Youth Orchestra of Shanghai Conservatory of Music.

Cao has always been passionate about performing chamber music. As a founding members of the Chimeng String Quartet, she won the silver medal at the 2010 Fischoff Chamber Music Competition. Soon after, the quartet was invited to the Aspen Music Festival for the Advanced Quartet Studies. They subsequently toured in the US, Asia and Europe, and were featured at the Shanghai World Expo in 2010. In 2016, Cao joined fellow musicians in the Sioux Falls Chamber Music Collective, bringing chamber music with various platforms directly into the heart of the community.

Her numerous appearances in music festivals include the Aspen Music Festival, the Norfolk Chamber Music Festival, the Bard Music Festival, the Rhinebeck Chamber Music Society, the Banff Master Class Program and the Morningside Music Bridge in Canada, the Incontri in the Terra di Siena Festival in Italy, and the Grafenegg Academy Orchestra in Austria. Additionally, Cao has had the privilege of working with many outstanding string quartets including members of Emerson, Guarneri, Juilliard, Shanghai, and Tokyo String Quartet, as well as musicians such as, Ida Kavafian, Ani Kavafian, Peter Frankl, and Claude Frank.

Born in Shanghai, China to a musical family, Cao began cello lessons at age four with her grandmother, Yishan Qian, who was Pablo Casals's only student from China. She earned B.M. and B.A. from the Bard College Conservatory of Music, and M.M. and A.D. from the Yale School of Music. Her teachers include Aldo Parisot, Peter Wiley, and Sophie Shao.