Cellist **Ariana Nelson** is based in Houston where she is a member of the Houston Grand Opera Orchestra. She frequently performs with other ensembles in the Houston area, including the Houston Symphony, Houston Ballet, and is a core member of the new music collective Loop38. Ariana teaches cello as an adjunct faculty member at Texas Southern University, and is a coach for AFA’s Chamber Music Academy. She is an avid proponent of new music and loves experimenting with different styles, including improvisation and folk music. Her eclectic tastes have led her to appearances at Jazz at Lincoln Center, performances for patients recovering in Mount Sinai Hospital’s transplant ward, and a performance with the Silk Road Ensemble at Tanglewood. In 2015 Ariana was invited to perform in a small chamber orchestra to accompany Yo-Yo Ma at the Kennedy Center as part of the Kennedy Center Honors event. Ariana has received many honors as a soloist, most recently winning third prize at the 2016 Eisemann Young Artists Competition in Dallas, Texas.

A native of Seattle, Washington, Ariana was steeped in chamber music as a child. Family influences in music extend three generations back to her grandfather, Alan Iglitzin, who was the founding violist of the Philadelphia String Quartet. Her mother Karen was the first violinist of the quartet before she started her own chamber music organization in Seattle, called Chamber Music Madness. Since age eight, Ariana has been playing string quartets. Her extensive chamber music experience has included coaching with renowned musicians such as Emanuel Ax, James Dunham, David Finckel, John Harbison, Desmond Hoebig, Jon Kimura-Parker, and Roger Tapping.

Ariana is passionate about bringing the joy of music to others in her community. For the past three summers, Ariana has been an artist faculty member at the Danbury Music Center’s “Chamber Music Intensive,” a week long program for young students. In conjunction with the Charles Ives Concert Series, she taught private lessons, coached chamber music, and performed several concerts featuring new and contemporary music in Danbury, Connecticut. Additional summer appearances include the Grand Teton Music Festival, Strings Music Festival, Fontainebleau Conservatoire Américain, Spoleto Festival USA, Tanglewood Music Center, Aspen Music Festival and School, Le Domaine Forget Chamber Music Festival, the Olympic Music Festival and the Zephyr International Chamber Music Festival in Italy.

Ariana received her Master of Music degree at the Juilliard School in May of 2017 where she studied with Darrett Adkins. She completed her Bachelor of Music degree at Rice University’s Shepherd School of Music, where she graduated cum laude in May of 2015. There she had the privilege of studying cello with Norman Fischer of the Concord Quartet.