

The Hawai'i Concert Society

presents



ESCHER STRING QUARTET

**ADAM BARNETT-HART, VIOLIN; BRENDAN SPELTZ, VIOLIN
PIERRE LAPOINTE, VIOLA; BROOK SPELTZ, CELLO**

Wednesday, November 6, 2024, 7:00 p.m.

University of Hawai'i at Hilo Performing Arts Center

Concert Sponsor: Chuck and Judy Wakely



ABOUT THE ARTISTS

The Escher String Quartet has received worldwide acclaim for its profound musical insight and rare tonal beauty. A former BBC New Generation Artist and recipient of the Avery Fisher Career Grant, they have performed at the BBC Proms and are regular guests at Wigmore Hall. In their home town of New York, they are Season Artists of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center.

The Escher Quartet has made a distinctive impression throughout Europe, with recent debuts including the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Berlin Konzerthaus, London's Kings Place, Slovenian Philharmonic Hall, Les Grands Interprètes Geneva, Tel Aviv Museum of Art, and Auditorium du Louvre. The group has appeared at festivals such as the Heidelberg Spring Festival, Budapest's Franz Liszt Academy, the Hong Kong International Chamber Music Festival, and the Perth International Arts Festival in Australia. The quartet continues to flourish in its home country, performing at the Aspen Music Festival, Bravo! Vail, Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, Bowdoin Music Festival, Toronto Summer Music, Chamber Music San Francisco, Music@Menlo, and the Ravinia and Caramoor festivals.

Beyond the concert hall, the Escher Quartet has created the not-for-profit organization, ESQYRE (Escher String Quartet Youth Residency Education). ESQYRE's mission is to provide a comprehensive educational program through music performance and instruction for people of all ages. In addition, the quartet members have held faculty positions at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, and the University of Akron.

Within months of its inception in 2005, the ensemble came to the attention of key musical figures worldwide. Championed by the Emerson Quartet, the quartet was invited by both Pinchas Zukerman and Itzhak Perlman to be Quartet in Residence at each artist's summer festival: the Young Artists Program at Canada's National Arts Centre; and the Perlman Chamber Music Program on Shelter Island, NY.

The Escher Quartet takes its name from the Dutch graphic artist M.C. Escher, inspired by Escher's method of interplay between individual components working together to form a whole.

PROGRAM

String Quartet in B minor, Op. 11
Molto allegro e appassionato
Molto adagio
Molto allegro (come prima) – Presto

Samuel Barber
(1910-1981)

String Quartet No. 2 in A minor
Moderato
Andante cantabile
Juba: Allegro
Allegro

Florence Price
(1887-1953)

Intermission

String Quartet in A flat major, Op. 105
Adagio ma non troppo — Allegro appassionato
Molto vivace
Lento e molto cantabile
Allegro non tanto

Antonin Dvořák
(1841-1904)

*The Escher String Quartet appears by arrangement with
Arts Management Group: 130 West 57th Street, Suite 6A, New York, NY 10019*

FOR YOUR INFORMATION and FOR MAXIMUM AUDIENCE ENJOYMENT:

Recording and photographic equipment are prohibited.

If you arrive after the performance has begun, please remain in the rear of the auditorium. Move forward only when music is not being performed.

Please turn off your cellular phone and silence alarms and beepers.

Please do not bring infants to concerts.

Please keep children seated, quiet, and still. They can distract audience and artists.

In deference to those with allergies, do not wear strong perfumes.

*It is generally appropriate to applaud **only at the end of a set of pieces, not in between them.***

The Hawai'i Concert Society thanks you for your cooperation.

PROGRAM NOTES

Samuel Barber was a child prodigy who began studying the piano at an early age and soon after began to compose. He entered the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia at age 14, studying composition, voice, and piano. Until the 1940s Barber's music usually avoided the experimental trends of modern music in favor of traditional 19th-century harmonic language and formal structure embracing lyricism and emotional expression.

String Quartet, Op. 11 was composed in 1936 while he was spending a summer in Europe with Gian Carlo Menotti, an Italian composer and Barber's partner since their student years at the Curtis Institute. It was a blissful summer of solitude for the two young composers and they were able to work uninterrupted. Barber wrote to a friend, "We are very inaccessible and able to work in peace..."

The first movement of the quartet opens with a theme of great dramatic urgency and contains two ideas, both lyrical and songlike. The harsh accents are never far from the surface, and the recapitulation of the opening theme erupts with a power that is almost violent. The music winds down and ends in the same pianissimo in which the famous Adagio then begins. It consists of an extended slow, harmonious melody repeated successively by violin, viola and cello. There are slight variations as the music rises high in the range of the instruments and then recedes to the more contemplative nature of the melody and its mournful character. The music merges without pause into the final movement, which is very short, lasting about two minutes, revisiting the themes of the opening movement, giving the quartet a cyclic form.

Barber knew that in the Adagio he had composed something special. Not long after its first performance in Rome, he sent a version of it, arranged for string orchestra, to Arturo Toscanini, conductor of the New York Philharmonic. At the end of the first rehearsal of the piece, Toscanini remarked, "Semplice e bella" (simple and beautiful). Music critic Oliver Downes wrote that its simple chords create significance, "because we have here honest music, by an honest musician, not striving for pretentious effect." The Adagio is one of those pieces that remind us of the eternal and mysterious communicative power of music.

Florence Price's life in many ways resembled those of the millions of African Americans who moved away from the southern United States in search of professional opportunities and greater personal autonomy during the Jim Crow era. Born into a middle class family in Little Rock, Arkansas in 1887, Price received a sound musical education from her mother after the city's pre-eminent white instructors refused to teach her. Florence played in a recital at age 4, had her first work published at 11, and was high school valedictorian three years later. Since opportunities for more advanced musical training were largely unavailable for women of color in the South, her mother enrolled her at the New England Conservatory, one of few higher musical institutions accepting African-American students. There she pursued courses of study in organ and piano pedagogy while receiving teaching in all musical disciplines from conservatory faculty. She then returned to the South, but after years spent teaching in her hometown and at Clark University in Atlanta, settled in Chicago by the end of the 1920s.

Price became the first black female composer to have a symphony performed by a major American orchestra when Music Director Frederick Stock and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra gave the world premiere of her Symphony No. 1 in E minor on June 15, 1933, in one of four concerts presented at the Auditorium Theatre from June 14 through June 17 during Chicago's Century of Progress Exhibition. Her symphony had come to the attention of Stock when it won first prize in the prestigious Wanamaker Competition held the previous year. But the "two handicaps -- those of my sex and race," as she put it in a letter to conductor Serge Koussevitzky, prevented her from entering the mainstream in that time when racism and sexism were overt in the music world. With few exceptions, the barriers became increasingly insurmountable for her, and after she died in 1953, she was largely forgotten. In 2009 the discovery in a dilapidated house in St. Anne, Ill., that had been her summer home, of a cache of her compositions contributed to the revived interest and appreciation of her music.

Price's second quartet vividly captures the depth of her unique talents. Dated 1935 on the manuscript, the quartet is densely and virtuosically written with an abundance of double stops, fast arpeggiated flourishes, and brooding counterpoint. Each movement is a world unto

its own: a highly romantic and searching first movement; a profound spiritual-esque second movement; a boisterous juba (an African-American plantation dance) third movement; and a blistering finale.

To quote the Escher Quartet's cellist, Brook Speltz, "Florence Price is one of the great American voices of the early 20th century and her music is now rightfully being presented on the world's great stages. Her second quartet is filled with beautiful melodies, exotic and enticing harmony, and a wonderful spirit."

Antonín Dvořák lived in America between 1892 and 1895, during which time he served as the director of the new National Conservatory in New York City. He was paid a generous salary (\$15,000 per year). Dvořák spent an idyllic and productive summer in the Czech community of Spillville, Iowa in 1893. But in general, he was not particularly happy. He was extremely nostalgic for Vysoka, a small village near Prague, and for the friends, family, and pigeons, he had left there.

While in America, Dvořák encouraged American composers to incorporate African American spirituals and Native American songs and rhythms into their pieces. He did this himself in his "American" Quartet and the E-flat minor Viola Quintet, which were written in Spillville, and in the "New World" Symphony. Dvořák also composed his beloved cello concerto in America.

In his final days before setting sail for home in 1895, he began work on his A-flat String Quartet, Op. 105, but did not finish it until December, when he had been home for several months. Listeners disagree on the flavor of the A-flat Quartet, composed on both sides of the Atlantic; some claim to hear persistent American strains in it, some hear an affirmation of the composer's Slavic roots, some just hear a yearning for home. Whatever its essence, this piece is one of Dvořák's chamber masterpieces, a showcase for all the traits that make him beloved: rich harmonizations, imaginative, layered textures, and irresistible vigorous rhythms.

The first movement, as if invoking Dvořák's melancholy in a foreign land, begins with a lonesome cello, but transform into a bright *Allegro appassionato*, which only occasionally remembers the darkness

from which it escaped. The second movement, a scherzo, is often described as a *furiant*, which is a fast (and furious) Bohemian dance. The trio section is filled with beautiful melodies, ornamented and passed from instrument to instrument as if improvised. The slow third movement contains repeated melodies in which the accompaniment changes with each repeat. Its middle section is ominous and dramatic, in contrast to the sweetness of the outer sections. The final movement, initially foreboding, crowns the work in an expression of spontaneous joy. Towards the end, Dvořák gradually enhances the joyous tone of the movement, and the work culminates in dazzling euphoria.

- compiled by Tom Geballe -

Coming Attractions

There is a nearly three month hiatus before our next presentation, on **Tuesday, January 28**. A concert of early music is long overdue in our season; there has been none since before the pandemic. So we are especially pleased to present the intriguingly named trio, **Gut, Wind, and Wire**. Formed by founding members of the esteemed early music ensemble, Baltimore Consort, GW&W consists of Ronn McFarlane on lute (Gut), Mindy Rosenfeld on wooden flutes, fifes, and pipes (Wind), and Mark Cudek on cittern (Wire). They will perform popular music of the Renaissance from England, Scotland, Italy, and France, as well as traditional Celtic music and Grammy-nominated original music by McFarlane. Tickets will be in our outlets by early January.

Note: Some of our season ticket purchasers may have received tickets for the Gut, Wind, and Wire concert with tonight's date printed on them. Those tickets will be accepted on January 28.

HAWAI'I CONCERT SOCIETY BOARD

President: Tom Geballe

1st Vice President: Bo Reipurth

2nd Vice President: Judy Wakely

Secretary: Nina Buchanan

Treasurer: Tom Schager

Membership: Jeffery Davis

Box Office: Zeke Israel, Pat Tummons

Program Coordinator: Kaori Mahelona

Hospitality: Debra Ota, Nina Buchanan

Tickets: Alan Young Education: Cynthia Debus

Social Media: Cristin Gallagher

Historian: Cristin Gallagher

Webmaster: Cristin Gallagher

Publicity: Tom Geballe

House: Jacqueline van Loon

At Large: Suzanne Frayser, Gus Highstein, Kenith Simmons

HAWAII CONCERT SOCIETY 2024-2025 MEMBERSHIP

CONCERT SPONSORS

Eric Anderson and Roger Beck
KTA Super Stores
Carey Yost & Jim Klyman
Chuck & Judy Wakely

Robert & Patricia Ferazzi
Ron & Arlene Terry
Drs. Young R. Kim & Robert Shapiro
The Opi Family

Anonymous
KWXX/B97/KPUA
Dr. & Mrs. Ghosh
The Sachi Family

BENEFACTORS

Jeanne Beers & John Flatley
Diane S. C. Ferreira
Timothy & Robin Jahraus
Ronald Pusateri & Bradley Clark
Mercia & Bo Reipurth
Kenith Simmons & Leon Hallacher

Nina K. Buchanan
Susan Munro & Kerry Glass
Fred & CC Kent
Richard & Quack Moore
Tom Schager & Joe Swick
Philip & Irene Tye
Lana Wold

Russ & Katie Button
Leslie & Jo Hittner
Dr. Dennis & Susan Lee
Kathleen Oldfather
Lee & Jean Schechtman
Don & Carol Weir

PATRONS

Joan Derbyshire & Sunny LaRosa
Dean Dunsmore & Regina Sleater
Barbara & Lawrence Heintz
Atsuko, Scot and Mari Nitta Kleinman
Patricia Richardson
Roy & Gladys Sonomura
Patricia Tummons

Rayna & Ken Armour
Harald Ebeling
Carole & Tom Geballe
Leanne Kirk
Kathy & Don Romero
Nan Sumner-Mack
Seeske Versluys, DVM
Thor Wold

Fumi & Gilbert Dakujaku
Paul & Jane Field
Anonymous
Shirley Sakoda Long
Annu Shoko Shionoya
Dan & Toshiko Taylor
Garrett & Julie Webb

DONORS

Douglas & Shelly Albertson
Linda Cashman
Lee & Mike Dombroski
Suzanne Frayser & J. P. Thoma
Cristin Gallagher & Yoga Ida Bagus
Deanne Kysar
Marta Lepas
Nicolas & Carol Myrianthis
Ming Peng
Russell Segawa
Dr. & Mrs. Alan Takase

Anonymous (2)
David & Lily Chan-Harris
Wes & Claudine Fujii
Fumiko Harada
Jacunski Ohana
Sherelyn Labowski
Kaori & Herb Mahelona
Melanie Oldfather
James & Anne Sadayasu
Lloyd & Diana Van De Car

Ed & Edie Bouc
Cynthia & Steve Debus
Cynee Gillette-Wenner
Don & Helen Hemmes
Sonia & Jim Juvik
Kathleen R. Leonard
Shirley T. Mendoza
L. Peat O'Neil
Marsha Schweitzer
Cynthia Sorenson
Susan & Daniel White

SUSTAINING

Eugene & Victoria Azuolas
Yoko Gussman
Meizhu Lui
Susan Proctor
Linda Wallihan
Hawaii Radiologic Associates

Richard Brungard
Susan Hicks
Dorothy Zipp Malinski
Alex & Anne Sheftic
Deborah Ward
John Hoover & Marcia Stone

Sylvia Dahlby
Robert M. Jordan
Claire McNair
Bert Saito
Randall Wong

Jeffrey L. Davis
Maud Lawrence
Lucy Maloney
Patricia Tierney
Jane Yanabu
Joyce M. Mitsumori & Family

Anonymous

CONTRIBUTING

Joyce Alcouloumre
Elisabeth Erker
Zeke Israel
Eleanor Nishikawa

Anonymous
Jimmi Suzanne Hutchins
Karen Kuester
Ira Ono
Jacqueline van Loon

Barbara Dalton
Gus Highstein
Kirsten Mollegaard
Debra L. Ota

Margaret Elcock
Sylvie J. Garner
Jeffrey & Sally Mermel
Rosalind Smith