

# The Hawai'i Concert Society

presents



## **NATHAN MELTZER, violin** **WYNONA WANG, piano**

Friday, February 28, 2025, 7:00 p.m.

University of Hawai'i at Hilo Performing Arts Center



## **ABOUT THE ARTISTS**

Winner of the 2023 Concert Artist Guild Competition, major prize winner at the 2022 Sibelius and Singapore International Violin Competitions, recipient of the Salon de Virtuosi Career Grant, and youngest ever to win the Windsor Festival Competition, **Nathan Meltzer** is establishing a multi-faceted career as a soloist and chamber musician, with passions for both standard and contemporary repertoire.

Nathan has performed as a soloist with major orchestras around the world, including the Orchestre National d'Île-de-France, the Philharmonia Orchestra, the Royal Northern Sinfonia, the Helsinki Philharmonic, and the Aalborg, Charlotte, Concepción, Indianapolis, Medellín, Montréal, and Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestras, performing across Europe and North and South America.

As a recitalist and chamber musician, Nathan has performed at celebrated series including the Chamber Music Society of Palm Beach, the Dresden Musikfestspiele, the Heidelberger Frühling, and Midori's Partners in Performance, as well as at festivals including ChamberFest Cleveland, Montreal Chamber Music Festival, Music@Menlo's International Program, the Ravinia Festival Institute, the Perlman Music Program, and Verbier Festival Academy.

A Juilliard graduate and student of Li Lin and Itzhak Perlman, Nathan plays on a 1793 Storioni violin on loan from the Rin Collection. Born a generation after Stradivarius and Guarnerius, Storioni helped to revive violin-making in Cremona.

Born in Beijing, **Wynona (Yinuo) Wang** began playing the piano at age 4 and studied at the Music Middle School at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing. In 2016, she was awarded a full scholarship at Southern Methodist University in Dallas and earned her Performer's Diploma in 2018. She was awarded both the Paul Velucci Piano Award and the Harold Von Mickwitz Prize in Piano by SMU. Her career took off after she won First Prize at the 2018 Concert Artists Guild International Competition in New York City.

Wynona has performed in major concert venues such as the Sydney Opera House, the Lincoln Center's David Geffen Hall, the Carnegie Hall's Weill Hall, the Metropolitan Museum, the Merkin Concert Hall in New York City, the Krannert Center for the Performing Arts, the Purdue Convocations, the Kravis Center, the California Performing Arts Center, the Whitney Center, the Conrad in La Jolla, and the Dallas Winspear Opera House. Wynona recently earned her bachelor's degree at The Juilliard School, winning the Arthur Rubinstein Commencement Award, and is pursuing her master's degree at Juilliard.

## PROGRAM

Violin Sonata No. 1 in G Major, Op. 78 (1879) Vivace ma non troppo Adagio Allegro molto moderato	Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)
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Reciprocity: Violin Sonata (in five movements)	Hannah Ishizaki (b. 2000)
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~Intermission~

FastLowHighSlow	Sky Macklay (b. 1988)
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Violin Sonata No. 2 in E minor, Op. 108 (1916) Allegro non troppo Andante Allegro non troppo	Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)
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### 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 the pieces.***

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

## PROGRAM NOTES

In his first twenty years, **Johannes Brahms** made the transition from a miserable childhood in the downtrodden harbor area of Hamburg to an eminent position as a distinguished young composer. At the age of twelve he was giving piano lessons for pennies, and at thirteen, he was playing in harbor bars. By the age of sixteen, however, he performed Beethoven's *Waldstein Sonata* and one of his own compositions in a public concert. In April 1853, before he was 20, he set out from Hamburg on a modest concert tour, traveling mostly on foot. In Hanover, he called on violinist Joseph Joachim, head of the royal court orchestra there. Brahms so impressed Joachim that he gave him a letter of introduction to Liszt in Weimar and sent him to see Robert Schumann in Düsseldorf. When Schumann, who was then Germany's leading composer, and his wife, Clara, one of Europe's greatest pianists, heard Brahms' music and heard him play, they took him into their home, and in an article Robert hailed the young Brahms as the heir to the legacy of Beethoven.

Brahms's three violin sonatas are works of his fullest maturity. In the 26 years preceding the completion the first of these, however, he had begun and destroyed at least four attempts at violin sonatas. Brahms was almost pathologically secretive about his sketches and unfinished works, and he refused to release any music that was not in his judgment of the highest quality. He simply burned anything he did not want others to see.

As in many of Brahms' compositions, the movements of Sonata No. 1 are intimately interrelated. A three-note figure is common to all three movements. A mood of gentle nostalgia permeates the first movement, *Vivace ma non troppo*, and sets the tone and character for the entire sonata. Brahms follows a pattern Beethoven had often used: he introduces a seed out of which the themes for the whole movement eventually evolve and grow. The second movement is a solemn and dramatic *Adagio*. The third, a rondo, *Allegro molto moderato*, contains an episode in which Brahms brings back the lovely slow movement theme. This movement also contains the melody from *Regenlied* ("Rain Song"), the third of Brahms' *Eight Lieder*, Op. 59, published in 1873 and a favorite of Clara Schumann. The song is a wistful remembrance of the dreams and sense of awe experienced in childhood.

Sonata No. 1 owes a great deal to Joachim and to Clara, who by the time of its composition was a widow. When Brahms sent Clara a manuscript copy of this new work, she wrote back, “I must send you a line to tell you how excited I am about your Sonata. It came today. Of course I played it through at once, and at the end could not help bursting into tears of joy.” Ten years later, when Clara was seventy years old and in failing health, she still loved the sonata and treasured the friendship of both Joachim and Brahms. From her house in Frankfurt she wrote a touching letter to Brahms in which she said, “Joachim was here on Robert’s eightieth birthday and we had a lot of music. We played the Sonata again and I reveled in it. I wish that the last movement could accompany me in my journey from here to the next world.”

American based composer **Hannah Ishizaki** is the youngest female composer to have a world premiere performed by the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra (in 2017). Described as “Imaginative...effective and moving” by the New York Times, her music seeks to create connections between musicians and audiences through the explorations of the physicality of music performance. Ishizaki finds inspiration in the process of composition, leading her to experiment with a wide range of instruments and sound generating methods—from acoustic instruments in an orchestra to digital sensors to rocks and zippers. She has worked with dancers, actors, filmmakers, and visual artists, to connect the seemingly unconnected and create innovative and multidisciplinary projects. Recently, Ishizaki was named one of five 2023 Hildegard commission winners, which is presented by National Sawdust and generously supported by The Onassis Foundation and the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation. In 2022, she was selected as one of four winners of Juilliard’s Orchestral Composition Competition, and her work, “Fractured Transformations” was premiered by the Juilliard Orchestra with Maestro Jeffrey Milarsky on April 18, 2022 in Alice Tully Hall.

Commissioned by the New Jersey Composers Guild, Ishizaki’s Violin Sonata was written for and premiered by Nathan Meltzer, violin, and Danae Dörken, piano on May 23, 2024 in Germany at the Moritzburg Festival and the Dresden Musikfestspiele.

The music of Baltimore-based composer, oboist, and installation artist **Sky Macklay** explores extreme contrasts, surreal tonality, audible processes, humor, and the physicality of sound. She writes, “I see myself as a composer in the experimental contemporary Western art music tradition. I write music for all kinds of different ensembles ... I want the listener to hear transparently — hear what’s going on the piece, that is, hear a sound go through a transformation that they can follow over the course of the piece. I often use tonality in more experimental or surreal ways combining different tonal systems or blurring tonal harmony in a way that is reminiscent but yet new.”

*FastLowHighSlow* is an exploration of the extremes of two musical axes: register and speed. The violin has a slow, high module and a fast, low module. The piano has a fast, high module and a slow, low module. Either of one instrument’s modules fit with either of the other instrument’s modules. The four movements cycle through all of the possible module combinations.

Few composers have lived through such far-reaching changes in musical climate as **Gabriel Fauré**. When he composed his first works, in the 1860s, French musical life was dominated by Gounod and Mendelssohn; Chopin, Liszt and Wagner were still considered daringly modern by most. By the time of his death in 1924, Debussy had been dead for six years, and Schoenberg had invented his twelve-tone system. Nevertheless, at no point in Fauré’s career was there any fundamental change in his compositional technique. Despite its more complex harmonic language and its more elusive emotional character, the Second Violin Sonata, completed in 1916, is the work of the same composer as his first sonata written more than four decades previously.

The sonata was begun on the shores of Lake Geneva, in August 1916 and completed in Paris the following winter. It is a powerful, concentrated work whose first movement, *Allegro non troppo*, attains a violence of expression that reflects both the grim period in which it was composed (World War I) and, more specifically, Fauré’s anxieties about his son, Philippe, who was a soldier. With its disconcerting shifts of mood and its density of thought, the E minor sonata found far less favor with the public than its predecessor. In 1922, when Alfred Cortot was to play the work before Elizabeth, Queen of Belgium, to whom it is dedicated, Fauré complained to his wife that ‘my poor sonata is

still so rarely played'. Even today, when many musicians regard it as the finer of the two violin sonatas, it is still much less well known than the A major.

What is particularly compelling about this later sonata is the wonderful writing for both instruments; a superb fusion where one instrument compliments the other. This is true in the A major *Andante* which is rich in beautiful melodies. The fusion between violin and piano is also well played out in the closing *Allegro non troppo* where, the pianist's disruptive C major octaves are finally resolved in harmony with the violin's high *espressivo* phrases imitated by the piano with E major arpeggios.

- compiled by Tom Geballe

### **Coming Attaction**

Our next presentation, on Friday, March 14, brings the excitement, beauty and drama of Spanish dance to Hilo for the first time in nine years, with **Flamenco Vivo Carlota Santana**. Hailed as "The Keeper of Flamenco" by Dance Magazine and honored by the King and Government of Spain with *La Cruz de la Orden al Mérito Civil* for "the years of passion, excellence and dedication to the flamenco art," Carlota Santana is a renowned Spanish dance artist and educator. Her Flamenco Vivo is one of America's premier flamenco companies. Its universal spirit – with diverse influences from Arab, Jewish, Roma, Spanish, African and Latin American cultures – gives flamenco the power to build bridges between people. Flamenco Vivo is being co-presented by the University of Hawai'i Hilo Performing Arts Center. The event is not far from a sellout; remaining tickets are not available from HCS, only via the UHH website: <https://pay.hilo.hawaii.edu/pac/tickets/tickets.php?showtime=46>

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