

PUNAHOU MUSIC DEPARTMENT AND MUSIC SCHOOL PRESENTS

# Chamber Music Showcase

2021

Friday, May 14, 2021

7 p.m. Premiere

Punahou School YouTube Channel

*"Chamber music - a conversation between friends."*

This quote by Catherine Drinker Bowen easily and simply states some of the essential goals of the Punahou Chamber Music Program. We find, especially during these challenging times, that music is an undeniable, magnetic force that can bring people together through shared emotion, beauty and connection.

The students and coaches have worked to overcome many obstacles this year in bringing this music to life. Although we typically start each chamber music season at the beginning of the school year, this year we were not able to hold in-person coaching sessions until the Spring semester - with the Academy groups starting in January and the Junior School groups starting in March. We employed some innovative virtual rehearsal techniques, utilizing an online DAW as well as video conferencing, but nothing can match being in a room together with your friends making music!

Through the Chamber Music Program, our students develop creative and collaborative skills as well as personal responsibility and confidence, all of which are needed to create a composite group sound and a compelling musical interpretation. These are also essential life skills, which they practice along with musical experiences that foster risk-taking, trust-building, and deep listening.

Mahalo to our program sponsors whose generosity and support make this program possible. We would also like to thank the coaching faculty, who dedicate their time, experience and expertise in coaching our student groups! Mahalo nui loa to the students and their families for their commitment to the program. We are delighted to be able to share this special performance showcase with you!

Helen Chao-Casano & Craig Young  
Co-coordinators  
Punahou Chamber Music Program

## PROGRAM

Chorale .....J.S. Bach (1685-1750)

"Prayer" ..... César Franck (1822-1890)

### **Cooke Violin Quartet**

Megan Yamamoto, Ashley Hong, Raynna Yamauchi, Paisley Asato, violins

*Rachel Saul, coach*

String Quartet No. 1 in D Major, Op. 11 .....Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)

II. Andante cantabile

arr. Sally O'Reilly

### **Arthur Y. and Misako M. Akinaka String Quartet**

Kai Asakura, Gwyneth Tenn, Chani Chung, violins

Zachary Godsey, cello

*Rachel Saul, coach*

String Quartet No. 1 in E-flat Major, Op. 12 .....Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

I. Adagio non troppo; Allegro non tardante

### **Peter Mesrobian Memorial String Quartet**

Noah Chung and Madeline Hodge, violins

Eric Nakamoto, viola

Cedric Yeo, cello

*Steven Flanter, coach*

String Quartet No. 2 in F Major, Op. 92 .....Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953)

I. Allegro sostenuto

### **Saburo Watanabe String Quartet**

Erika Kwee and Kate Wong, violins

Kainoa Maruoka, viola

Madison Suh, cello

*Rachel Saul, coach*

Piano Trio No. 1 in D minor, Op. 49 ..... Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)  
I. Molto allegro ed agitato

**Chang Piano Trio**

Bao Nguyen, violin  
Christian Yamada, cello  
Jairus Rhoades, piano

*Deven Kono & Maile Reeves, coaches*

String Quartet in G minor, Op. 10 ..... Claude Debussy (1862-1918)  
I. Animé et très décidé

**Kathryn Kennard Vaught Memorial String Quartet**

Stephanie Yoshida and Marissa Kwon, violins  
Keon Sagara, viola  
Celina Lim, cello

*Iggy Jang, coach*

String Quartet in F Major ..... Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)  
II. Assez vif --Très rythmé

String Quartet No. 2 in A minor ..... Florence Price (1887-1953)  
III. Juba

**Keller String Quartet**

Erin Nishi and Ellie Ochiai, violins  
Sewon Park, viola  
Mira Hu, cello

*Dr. Helen Liu, coach*



## PROGRAM NOTES

### Bach - Chorale

Johann Sebastian Bach was a devout Lutheran who wrote a great deal of music for use in church, including many hymns set as chorales. His chorale-writing follows the natural flow of the human voice: In this one, hear how each phrase comes to a restful pause, allowing a congregation to breathe while singing. The voices sing, or in this case play, in plain, pure harmony, sometimes diverging but always coming back together.

### Franck - "Prayer"

The Belgian-French composer, César Franck, had a lot in common with Bach. They were both famed as organists, and Franck was devout too, although he was not a Lutheran but a Catholic. Franck, however, was born in a very different era from Bach's, at a time when composers were writing rich, romantic music with highly individualized expressive voices. In Franck's Prayer, even though there are four voices moving together, the overall emotion seems individual, evoking a soul in pain. The music is a little too emotional to come to restful pauses at phrase endings, until the last peaceful chord.

### Tchaikovsky - String Quartet No. 1 in D Major, Op. 11, II. Andante cantabile

This Andante cantabile is one of the most beloved pieces by the great Russian composer Tchaikovsky. The famous writer Tolstoy is said to have cried listening to it at its premiere. The first section is based on a folk song Tchaikovsky heard while staying in Ukraine with his sister. There are various accounts that the singer of the song was either a house painter, a gardener, or a carpenter. Regardless, the song begins, "Vanya sat on a divan, pouring out a glass of rum." The words might be silly, but Tchaikovsky makes the first violin melody at the beginning sound dignified and poignant, with gentle accompaniment from the other instruments. Don't try too hard to follow the beat: the beat pattern is a little unpredictable, which might help the music from feeling silly like the words do. Things change after a little solo second violin transition: Listen to the way the cello pizzicato and inner voice syncopation alter the mood, perhaps transporting the music from countryside to city. Then, when the opening melody returns, hear how the upper instruments playing in unison, with some counterpoint from the cello, create still another mood.

### Mendelssohn - String Quartet No. 1 in E-flat Major, Op. 12, I. Adagio non troppo; Allegro non tardante

Mendelssohn's Op.12 Quartet opens with an incredible introduction, full of expression and meaning. It's hard, though, to put your finger on just what that meaning is. A combination of pauses, repeated groupings of three disconnected notes, and repeated sighing slurs manage to simultaneously pull the listener forward and project hesitation. By the time the introduction ends and the performers embark on the faster Allegro, there's a lot of stored-up energy. Listen to how that energy escapes in fast eighth notes, first briefly from the viola, a little later in the cello, rising to the violins, and eventually taking over the texture to drive the music along.

### Prokofiev - Quartet No. 2 in F Major, Op. 92, I. Allegro sostenuto

During World War II, when the Nazis invaded the Soviet Union, composer Sergei Prokofiev was evacuated from Moscow to the out-of-the-way town of Nalchik, in the Caucasus mountains. While there, he heard folk music of the local Kabardinian people. Soon, he was incorporating their music into his music. In this quartet movement, Prokofiev starts out with the melody from a song about a trickster god named Sosriqwa. This melody, played by the first violin, would sound simple and folklike on its own. But hear how it becomes more emotionally troublesome thanks to conflicting parts played by the rest of the quartet. (Some have compared the writing for this accompaniment to the texture of an accordion.) A short way in, Prokofiev switches to something new: more Kabardian music, originally intended for a dance for two old men. Can you hear when Prokofiev switches from song to dance?

## Mendelssohn - Piano Trio No. 1 in D minor, Op. 49, I. Molto allegro ed agitato

Mendelssohn's D minor Trio was written ten years after his Op. 12 Quartet, and was declared by fellow composer Robert Schumann to be "the master trio of our age." The age Schumann referred to boasted many amazing composers born within a year or two, including Chopin and Liszt, who were famous for their dazzling piano pieces. Their influence can be heard in the highly active piano part of this trio, which runs below beautiful string melodies featuring large, leaping intervals. (Think of the effort it would take a singer to make the leaps the strings play.) The combination of dazzling piano and singing strings creates a rare blend of gorgeousness and excitement.

## Debussy - String Quartet in G minor, Op. 10, I. Animé et très décidé

The French composer, Claude Debussy, preferred the unusual to the ordinary. Bored with the here and now, he was intrigued by things from far away and long ago. He liked the harmony of medieval church modes, the sound of Indonesian gamelan orchestras, and the look of Japanese woodblock prints. He also felt drawn to vague and obscure poetry written by his French poet contemporaries; and otherworldly, gravity-less paintings, like the "Lady of the Flowers" by Odilon Redon that hangs at the Honolulu Museum. You can hear the impact of Debussy's aesthetic interests in the wonderful, constantly changing textures of this quartet movement. First comes modal harmony in rhythmic unison, sounding just slightly medieval and somewhat forbidding. The modal harmony continues, sounding neither major nor minor, neither happy nor sad; however, the texture soon changes, becoming weightless with fast slurry notes from the bottom three voices. Floating above, the first violin plays a melody that doesn't sound anxious to go anywhere. Then, plans shift. The cello takes over the melody, and the first violin becomes one of fast slurrers. All this in just the first minute of the piece!

## Ravel - String Quartet in F Major, II. Assez vif --Très rythmé

The second movement of Debussy's quartet (not heard today) uses pizzicato to imitate the percussive sound of the Javanese gamelan. Debussy's pizzicato scherzo inspired the younger Maurice Ravel to also write a pizzicato scherzo for his own quartet, written ten years after Debussy's. But Ravel wasn't just interested in unusual textures. He also had a thing for precision. (Some people think this was because his father was Swiss, although there are undoubtedly a few imprecise Swiss people.) In this piece, it's as if a Swiss watchmaker had created a giant, intricate timepiece out of Indonesian percussion instruments. Ravel uses melodic pizzicato, rhythmic pizzicato, pizzicato chords, and also throws in slurred bowing patterns, quick bowed notes, trills ... how many different textures can you hear?

## Price - String Quartet No. 2 in A minor, III. Juba

The *juba*, also known as hambone, was a dance brought to America by African slaves, which employed "body percussion"; two dancers in the middle of a circle would perform an intricate pattern of slaps with the front and back of the hand on the thigh and chest. African-American composer Florence Price wrote movements named Juba in more than one of her works. At the beginning of this quartet movement, listen to how the dance rhythm comes out as syncopation in both the cello-viola accompaniment and the violin-violin melody—and then hear how the syncopations continue to travel around the group.

-Program Notes written by Sasha Margolis

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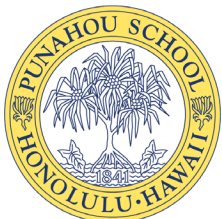
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