

PACIFICA QUARTET

Simin Ganatra, violin
Sibbi Bernhardsson, violin
Masumi Per Rostad, viola
Brandon Vamos, cello

2009 Grammy Award - Best Chamber Music Performance
Musical America 2009 Ensemble of the Year
2006 Avery Fisher Career Grant Recipient
Winners of the 2002 Cleveland Quartet Award
Winners of the 1998 Naumburg Chamber Music Award



Recognized for its virtuosity, exuberant performance style, and often-daring repertory choices, the Pacifica Quartet has gained international stature as one of the finest chamber ensembles performing today. Named the quartet-in-residence at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (2009 – 2012) – a position previously held by the Guarneri String Quartet – and named Ensemble of the Year by Musical America, the Pacifica received the 2009 Grammy Award for Best Chamber Music Performance.

Formed in 1994, the Pacifica Quartet quickly won chamber music's top competitions, including the 1998 Naumburg Chamber Music Award. In 2002 the ensemble was honored with Chamber Music America's Cleveland Quartet Award and the appointment to Lincoln Center's CMS Two. In 2006 the Pacifica was awarded a prestigious Avery Fisher Career Grant, becoming only the second chamber ensemble so honored in the Grant's long history. Also in 2006 the Quartet was featured on the cover of Gramophone and heralded as one of "five new quartets you should know about," the only American quartet to make the list.

The Pacifica Quartet tours extensively throughout the United States, Europe, Asia, and Australia, and performs in the world's major concert halls. Having given highly acclaimed performances of the complete Beethoven, Mendelssohn, and Carter string quartets in recent seasons, the Quartet presented the monumental Shostakovich cycle in Chicago and New York during the 2010-2011 season. In the summer of 2011, the Quartet presented the complete Beethoven cycle at Tokyo's famous Suntory Hall, in an unprecedented presentation of five concerts in three days. And in 2011-2012, the Quartet will take the Shostakovich cycle to London's Wigmore Hall and will also perform the complete Beethoven cycle at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and for the Denver Friends of Chamber Music.

An ardent advocate of contemporary music, the Pacifica Quartet commissions and performs many new works. It has been widely praised for its single-concert performances of Elliott Carter's five-quartet cycle, performed in New York, San Francisco, and abroad. Critics have called these groundbreaking concerts "brilliant," "astonishing," and "breathtaking." In 2008 the Quartet released its Grammy Award-winning recording of Carter's quartets Nos. 1 and 5 on the Naxos label; the 2009 release of quartets Nos. 2, 3, and 4 completed the two-CD set. The Quartet's other recordings, including Mendelssohn's complete string quartets and *Declarations: Music Between the Wars*, both on the Cedille label, have also attracted international acclaim.

The members of the Pacifica Quartet live in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois, where they were appointed to the faculty of the University of Illinois in 2003 and serve as quartet-in-residence. In addition to their position as quartet-in-residence at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Pacifica Quartet also serves as resident performing artist at the University of Chicago.

For more information, please visit www.pacificaquartet.com.

Pacifica Quartet is represented by Melvin Kaplan, Inc.
115 College Street, Burlington, Vermont 05401
www.melkap.com www.pacificaquartet.com
Recordings: Cedille Records

CHRISTOPHER SHIH, GUEST PIANIST

from: www.christophershih.com

Physician and pianist Christopher Shih has been hailed by *The New York Times* as "an intelligent and thoughtful musician," with "effortless performances" and "consummate control." He has performed in major venues in over a dozen countries around the globe, including France, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Taiwan, Canada, and many cities in the United States. Festival appearances include the Aspen Music Festival and the Banff Chamber Music Festival. He has soloed with numerous orchestras, including repeated engagements with the National Symphony Orchestra at the Kennedy Center Concert Hall in Washington DC. His performance with the National Symphony on the Capitol Lawn for an audience of 50,000 prompted the *Washington Post* to declare, "If Shih is as gifted in medicine as he is in music, he has some serious career decisions to make. His performance was fluent, gracious, miraculously light, and a joy to the ear." Other past orchestral engagements include the Georgetown, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan, New England Conservatory, Harvard-Radcliffe, Newton, and Paris *Garde Republicaine* symphony orchestras.



In 2011 Christopher won first prize and audience award at the Sixth Van Cliburn International Piano Competition for Outstanding Amateurs in Fort Worth, Texas. Fourteen years prior to that, he was one of the top four Americans in the professional Tenth Van Cliburn International Piano Competition, where he was a press and audience favorite.

The *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* raved, "He demonstrated a magical touch in voicing and a fine Chopinesque rubato...a total sense of style across three centuries. For Shih, technical control supports impeccable musicianship."

Christopher is also the grand prize winner (including jury, press, and audience awards) of the 2008 Paris Concours International de Grands Amateurs de Piano, the 2007 Boston International Piano Competition for Exceptional Amateurs, and the 2006 Washington International Piano Amateurs Competition.

Christopher has studied with Boris Slutsky, Robert McDonald, Natalya Antonova, and Suzanne Guy. He is currently a board-certified gastroenterologist with Maryland Digestive Disease Center, a division of Capital Digestive Care. He received his B.A. from Harvard University and his M.D. from The Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. He did his internal medicine residency training at the University of Pennsylvania and his gastroenterology fellowship training at Johns Hopkins. He is also active in clinical research and community and charitable services, and is a Fellow of the American College of Gastroenterology.

Christopher believes that the distinction between "amateur" and "professional" is an arbitrary one, that regardless of a musician's status, the common goals are continued pursuit of artistic excellence and communicating the composers' intentions to the listener. Because he works full-time as a physician, he usually plays only two or three concerts a year, and he prefers chamber music and other sorts of collaborative projects over solo performances. He frequently collaborates with his wife, who is a violinist on faculty at the Peabody Preparatory Institute in Baltimore.

For more information, please visit his website at christophershih.com.

PACIFICA QUARTET - INDIVIDUAL BIOS



Simin Ganatra, violin, has won wide recognition for her performances throughout the United States and abroad. She has been described by critics as an "excellent and unique violinist" and heralded for "creating a miraculous sense of flow and other worldly beauty." She has performed in such prestigious venues as Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall, the Corcoran Gallery, and Carnegie's Weill Recital Hall. Collaborations include performances with Michael Tree, Toby Hoffman, and the St. Lawrence Quartet. She is the recipient of several awards and prizes, including the Naumburg Chamber Music Award, top prizes at the Concert Artists Guild Competition and the Coleman Chamber Music Competition, and first prizes in the Union League of Chicago Competition, the Pasadena Instrumental Competition, the Minnesota Sinfonia

Competition, and the Schubert Club Competition. Originally from Los Angeles, Ganatra studied with Idell Low, Robert Lipsett, and most recently Roland and Almita Vamos. She is a graduate of the Oberlin Conservatory, where she was concertmaster of the Oberlin Conservatory Orchestra and recipient of the Louis Kaufman Prize for outstanding performance in chamber music. She is currently on the faculty of University of Illinois, Champaign/Urbana and the University of Chicago.



Sibbi Bernhardsson began playing violin at the age of five in his native Iceland. As a member of the Pacifica Quartet he performs over 90 concerts a year worldwide in many of the leading concert halls in the United States, Europe, and Japan, including Wigmore Hall, the Vienna Konzerthaus, the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, and New York's Alice Tully Hall and Metropolitan Museum of Art. Sibbi has performed at festivals including the Edinburgh Festival, Ravinia, Music@Menlo, and the Iceland Art Festival. With the Pacifica Quartet he has received several honors including the Grammy Award, the Musical America Ensemble of the Year, and the Avery Fisher Career Grant.

Collaborations include those with Menahem Pressler, Yo-Yo Ma, Jörg Widmann, the Emerson Quartet, and members of the Guarneri and Cleveland Quartets.

His television appearances include the Tonight Show, Saturday Night Live, and the MTV Europe Music Awards with award-winning rock artist Björk. Sibbi gives regular recitals and master classes in Iceland and the United States, and has appeared as a soloist with the Iceland Symphony Orchestra and the Reykjavik Chamber Orchestra. His teachers include Gudny Gudmundsdottir, Almita and Roland Vamos, Matias Tacke and Shmuel Ashkenasi. Sibbi lives in Champaign, IL, with his wife Sally Takada Bernhardsson, and is on the faculty at University of Illinois and artist-in-residence at the University of Chicago.

December 2011:

Congrats to Sibbi and Sally Bernhardsson, new parents of Hiromichi Magnus Bernhardsson!



Japanese-Norwegian violist **Masumi Per Rostad** has been described as an expressive and elegant musician. As a member of the Pacifica Quartet, with whom he performs over 90 concerts a year, he won a 2009 Grammy Award for Best Chamber Music Performance and the Cleveland Quartet Award, in addition to being named Musical America's 2009 Ensemble of the Year. The Pacifica Quartet is the Resident Quartet of the Metropolitan Museum in New York City.

Masumi has participated in the Marlboro Music Festival and performed as violist for the Spoleto USA and Skaneateles chamber music festivals. Collaborative highlights include performances with the St Lawrence, Emerson Quartets, Yo-Yo Ma, and Menahem Pressler. He has toured and recorded with the International Sejong Soloists and the Metamorphosen Chamber Orchestra. He can be found on recordings for Cedille Records, Naxos, Tzadik, Windspell Productions, and Musical Observations.

The Third Street Music School Settlement in New York City, where he began his musical studies at age three, presented him with the 'Rising Star Award' for musical achievement in 2008. Mr. Rostad received his Bachelor and Master of Music degrees from the Juilliard School, where he was awarded the Lillian Fuchs Award for outstanding graduating violist. At Juilliard he studied with Karen Tuttle and was her teaching assistant. He has also served on the faculty of the Northwestern University School of Music. He counts Paul Zukofsky among his great musical mentors.

He performed the world premiere of Michael White's Viola Concerto in Lincoln Center's Avery Fisher Hall with conductor James DePreist after winning the Juilliard concerto competition in 1999. He also gave the New York premiere of Paul Schoenfield's Viola Concerto with the Juilliard Symphony. *The New York Times* described it as "magnificently performed," and *New York Magazine* heralded him as "headed for the big career."

Masumi is an artistic planner and founder of DoCha (www.DoCha.org), a collaborative effort among University of Illinois community members to experiment with new and fun ways to present chamber music. The festival, which began in April 2010, intends to represent the first generation of classical musicians in the 21st century who feel they have a responsibility to carry forward the traditions of their art form while adapting to the changing world.

Currently, Masumi lives with his wife, Milena, in Champaign, Illinois, where he is a professor of viola at the University of Illinois School of Music. He is also on the faculty of the University of Chicago.



Brandon Vamos has performed solo and chamber music recitals both in the U.S. and abroad to critical acclaim. Called a "first-rate cellist" by the *Chicago Reader* and praised for his "gutsy bravura" by the *Chicago Tribune*, Mr. Vamos has appeared as soloist with orchestras worldwide, including performances with the Taipei City Symphony, the Suwon Symphony in Seoul, the Samara Symphony in Russia, and the New Philharmonia Orchestra and the Elgin Symphony Orchestra in Chicago. Mr.

Vamos has collaborated with many distinguished artists, including Paul Katz, Michael Tree, Yo-Yo Ma, Menahem Pressler, and the Emerson Quartet, and has recorded for Cedille, Naxos, and Cacophony Records. Awarded a Performer's Certificate at the Eastman School of Music, where he earned a Bachelor's of Music Degree as a student of Paul Katz, Mr. Vamos has also studied with distinguished artists such as Tanya Carey in Macomb, Illinois, and Aldo Parisot at Yale University, where he earned a Master of Music Degree. As a member of the Pacifica Quartet, with whom he performs over 90 concerts a year, he won a 2009 Grammy Award for Best Chamber Music Performance and the Cleveland Quartet Award, in addition to being named Musical America's 2009 Ensemble of the Year. The Pacifica Quartet is the Resident Quartet of the Metropolitan Museum in New York City.