



University of Maryland School of Music Presents

FACULTY ARTIST SERIES: Murasaki Duo

Eric Kutz, cello • Miko Kominami, piano

Saturday, April 8, 2023 • 8PM

GILDENHORN RECITAL HALL

AT THE CLARICE SMITH PERFORMING ARTS CENTER



**SCHOOL OF
MUSIC**

University of Maryland School of Music Presents

FACULTY ARTIST SERIES:

MURASAKI DUO

Eric Kutz, *cello*
Miko Kominami, *piano*

Adoration Florence Price
(1887—1953)
Arr. Fine/Colle

Sonata No. 3 in A Major, Op. 69..... Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770—1827)

- I. *Allegro ma non tanto*
- II. *Scherzo: Allegro molto*
- III. *Adagio cantabile—Allegro vivace*

Pas de deux (2022) Mark Edwards Wilson
(b. 1950)

- I. The Horizon Beckons
- II. Tango: Kurwenal Steps Out
- III. Bulgarian Rhythm

World Premiere Performance

INTERMISSION

Prelude Ernest Moeran
(1894—1950)

Jewish Life..... Ernest Bloch
(1880—1959)

- I. Prayer
- II. Supplication
- III. Jewish Song

Polonaise Brillante..... Frederic Chopin
(1810—1849)



Since its founding in 1996 at the Juilliard School, the **MURASAKI DUO** has been dedicated to performing the cello and piano literature as chamber music. Named in homage to Lady Murasaki, the author of the world's first novel, cellist Eric Kutz and pianist Miko Kominami weave their instruments' voices together in a unique and compelling equal partnership. The Duo has performed in North America, Europe, and Asia, including concerts in New York City, Los Angeles, Chicago, Toronto, Washington, London, Tel Aviv, Copenhagen, and Oslo.

In 2015 the Duo released a new compact disc entitled *Duo Virtuoso* on the Delos label. *American Record Guide* praised the recording as containing "fine, beautifully balanced performances," and it concluded, "These are two outstanding musicians." The disc won the Violoncello Foundation's "Listeners Choice" Award, from among all cello CD's released in 2015. In 2018 the Duo released a new CD featuring the complete cello/piano works of Los Angeles composer Maria Newman.

The Duo earlier released its debut compact disc—featuring works of Beethoven, Chopin, and Rachmaninoff—on the Centaur Records label. The disc was recommended by the *Journal of the Atlanta Audio Society* as "ebullient . . . brilliant throughout."

Advocates for new music, the Murasaki Duo actively commissions new works, in addition to performing the classics. Its program "The Commissions" features five commissioned works from 2007-2012. The Duo has been a part of leading festivals, such as the Niagara International Chamber Music Festival, the Malibu Coast Music Festival, the Icicle Creek Music Center, Cello an American Experience, and it has been broadcast on public radio stations throughout the country.

Eric Kutz teaches at the University of Maryland School of Music, where he holds the Barbara K. Steppel Memorial Fellowship in Cello. He is also a member of the Left Bank Quartet and the Grant Park Orchestra. Miko Kominami is a faculty member at Luther College, and she is Principal Keyboard of Orchestra Iowa.

MARK EDWARDS WILSON, a member of the faculty of the University of Maryland, began his productive career in his native California. He studied with Henri Lazarof and Leon Kirchner at the University of California at Los Angeles, where he received a Ph.D. at the age of 25. He has received many prizes, awards and other honors for his orchestral and vocal works, his chamber music and electro-acoustic compositions, many of which have been commissioned and performed by major institutions and performing organizations.

Wilson's electro-acoustic *Aeolus*, for flute, has been given more than a hundred performances by various flutists worldwide, and another electro-acoustic work, *Sappho* was given its premiere by the renowned soprano and champion of contemporary music, Phyllis Bryn-Julson, who subsequently recorded it for release on CD.

Most of Wilson's recent works reflect an emphasis on compositions for orchestra employing an approach that he characterizes as "dramatic narrative." Two scores composed for and introduced by the University of Maryland Symphony Orchestra, were premiered under the direction of James Ross and Jose Luis Novo: *The Phoenix* and the Concerto for Piano and Orchestra with faculty colleague Larissa Dedova, piano. Three commissions by the Long Beach Symphony Orchestra have been premiered by that orchestra: *Four Sketches of Notre Dame de Paris*, *Gethsemane*, and *Morpheus*, the last of which was awarded first prize in the Haubiel New Orchestral Music Competition.

The three-movement work *The Phoenix* quickly became one of Wilson's most successful efforts, taking the Grand Prize in the Realize Music Challenge, an international competition held under the joint sponsorship of Notion Music, Inc., and the London Symphony Orchestra. His fellow composer John Corigliano, who headed the jury for that event, wrote of *The Phoenix* in a press release:

"Excellent piece. It really develops its materials and has a fine large shape.

I felt a true symphonic mind at work. Beautiful orchestration, too. Bravo!"

As part of the prize, *The Phoenix* was recorded at Abbey Road Studios by the London Symphony Orchestra under Jack Jarrett. Wilson has received numerous other awards for his compositions including the BMI Award, two Maryland State Arts Fellowships and no fewer than seven Creative and Performing Arts Awards from the University of Maryland.

In 2014 *Meteora* was awarded first prize in the New Orchestral Repertoire Project, an international competition to foster new music for orchestra sponsored by the Minneapolis Pops Orchestra. (The MPO is a summer season orchestra made up primarily of members of the Minnesota Symphony Orchestra and the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra.) Since the recording of *The Phoenix* by the London Symphony Orchestra, *Meteora* and *The Phoenix* together have received a total of 19 additional performances nationwide including, to mention only a few, four performances as part of the regular season of the Austin Symphony Orchestra, Peter Bay, Music

Director; performances by the Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic, Ulysses James, Music Director; the Lansing Symphony Orchestra and the Chautauqua Music Festival Orchestra, Timothy Muffitt, Music Director.

Recordings of Wilson's compositions include *Windows*, on the Neuma label, and on the Ravello label (PARMA Recordings) a collection of his works ranging from solo pieces and chamber music to a composition for chamber orchestra, *Ancient Ways*, in which the Hollywood Chamber Players are conducted by the composer.

Dream-Crossed Twilight, a string quartet commissioned by the Music Teachers' National Association, was premiered last year by the Left Bank Quartet and is subsequently being released as a video by PARMA Recordings with the Sirius Quartet. A video of the performance by the Left Bank Quartet along with other videos and recordings of Wilson's orchestral music can be found on YouTube; google search Mark Edwards Wilson YouTube.

– Richard Freed

Pas de deux**Mark Edwards Wilson**

Born 1950, Long Beach, California

A *pas de deux* (literally a “step of two”) is a dance duet in which two dancers (typically a man and a woman) perform ballet steps together. The title was an irresistible metaphor for my two gifted and accomplished colleagues to whom the piece is dedicated, Eric Kutz and Miko Kominami.

I. The Horizon Beckons

The title of the opening movement makes reference to my interest in the poetic imagination of the ancient Egyptians, who viewed the horizon as emblematic of the mysteries of the unknown and the eternal. The western and eastern horizons were seen as the portals of time, the gateways of yesterday and tomorrow and the cyclic nature of eternity—to me, a deeply moving and beautiful image.

II. Tango: Kurwenal Steps Out

This movement is a tango that makes occasional reference to Tristan und Isolde in the form of musical puns, hence the title and the further caption, “Poor Kurwenal, Tristan’s faithful friend, he deserves a night out on the town.”

III. Bulgarian Rhythm

The energetic finale explores rhythmic ideas that place groupings of three versus two into dynamic interaction. Although there are no overt references to Eastern European folk music in the piece, the meter of the principal theme is 3+3+2, one of the metric patterns often labeled as a “Bulgarian rhythm.”

– Program note by Mark Edwards Wilson



Photos by Juan Tallo

22-23

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