

**JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY®**



**School of Music**

*presents*

***Messages***

*the faculty recital of*

**Diane Phoenix-Neal, *viola***

*with*

**Beth Chandler Cahill, *flute***

**Sarah Plum, *violin***

**Carl Donakowski, *cello***

**Ania Vu, *composer***

Thursday, March 27, 2025

7 pm

Duke Hall Atrium



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## Program

Fantasia X

Georg Phillippe Telemann  
(1681-1767)

Presto – Largo - Allegro

Nadiya for flute and viola

Reena Esmail  
(b. 1983)

American Landscape No. 2 for violin and viola

Adolphus Hailstork  
(b.1941)

II. Andante Grazioso  
III. Vivace

Eclipse for violin and viola (2014)

Mischa Zupko  
(b. 1971)

Four in the Morning (2025)

Ania Vu

*World Premiere*

**Brief Pause**

## **Program - *continued***

Sonata for Two Violins, Op. 56

Sergei Prokofiev

(1891-1953)

I. Andante Cantabile

arr. Wollman

String Trio (1990-91).

Krzysztof Penderecki

(1933-2020)

I. Allegro – Molto Andante

II. Vivace

## Biographies

Violist **Diane Phoenix-Neal** enjoys a vibrant international teaching and performing career, and her performances have taken her to concert venues and music festivals throughout the world to four continents, including to Carnegie Hall, Salle Pleyel (Paris), Spoleto Festival (Italy) and the Banff Centre (Canada). In France, she served as both the principal solo violist of Orchestre de Picardie and as violist of Quatuor Joachim for nearly a decade. Her sound is described as “rich and sumptuous,” and “priceless as it was memorable” (Cultural Voice of North Carolina). A champion of new music for viola and of music by underrepresented composers, her recitals and commissioning projects featuring contemporary music for viola have been featured worldwide. In the southeast, Dr. Phoenix-Neal is a soloist and advocate with the Shenandoah Valley Bach Festival as well as a collaborative performing artist and faculty member with Eastern Music Festival for twenty-five years. Other performing affiliations include the American Viola Society, the International Viola Congress, Colour of Music Festival, Gateways Festival, Roanoke Symphony Orchestra, and principal violist, Roanoke Opera. Hailing from North Carolina, she received her training from the Juilliard School and the Juilliard String Quartet, is a double alumna of the University of North Carolina School of the Arts and earned her Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro after a ten-year career as a performer and teacher in Portugal and France. She serves as an Associate Professor of Music at JMU and received the JMU Compass Award for Leadership in 2022.

Flutist **Beth Chandler Cahill** enjoys a varied performance career as soloist and chamber musician. Praised for her musical versatility and colorful sound, she has been featured at major venues, universities, and festivals throughout the U.S. and abroad. In demand as a pedagogue, she is the Professor of Flute at James Madison University and a recipient of both the JMU College of Visual and Performing Arts Distinguished Teacher and Distinguished Service Awards. Her former students perform, teach, and advocate all over the world. A native Texan, Dr. Cahill earned degrees from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, New England Conservatory, and Baylor University, and she was a Fulbright Scholar to the United Kingdom. Her mentors include Paula Robison, Trevor Wye, Jack Wellbaum, and Helen Ann Shanley. She is a past president of the National Flute Association and can be heard on *TIME PLACE SPIRIT* (MSR Classics), an album of music for flute and piano with pianist Paulo Steinberg, which is widely available to stream. She enjoys living in the beautiful Shenandoah Valley in Virginia with her husband and close to her college-aged twin sons.

## Biographies - *continued*

Violinist **Sarah Plum** began her performing career by winning the first prize at the International Stulberg Competition in 1984. Since then, she has carved out a distinctive role as both a teacher of note and an interpreter of music both old and new. Personal Noise, Plum's recent solo CD release of new music for violin and electronics, was called "a fantastic new release - a must have for everyone who loves meaningful sonic adventures" (Whole Note). Plum has concertized worldwide, including Ankunft:Neue Musik (Berlin), The Center for New Music, San Francisco, Spectrum NY, Cite de la Musique (Paris) as well as residencies at UC Davis, Duke, Virginia Tech, and others. Recent solo concerts include appearances at Constellation (Chicago), Ear Taxi (Chicago), and solo recitals at Oakland University and the University of Iowa. Last April she premiered a concerto for two violins that she commissioned from noted Japanese composer Mari Takano with the Chicago Composers orchestra with Japanese violin soloist Michi Suguira joining her as soloist. Sarah Plum moved to Chicago in 2018 and is on the faculty at the Music Institute of Chicago, the MIC Academy, and Michigan State University.

**Carl Donakowski** pursues a international career in Europe, Asia, and the Americas. Early in his career he was a finalist in the Mendelssohn Competition in Berlin. Since then, his recital performances have been enjoyed at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C.; Merkin Hall in New York City; and aired on WQRS Detroit, WQXR New York, and Südwestfunk Baden- Baden. He has performed at the Manitou, Fontana, Staunton, Tanglewood, Blue Lake, and Beethoven music festivals. As a member of the Arcos Trio, he was awarded an Artistic Excellence grant from the National Endowment for the Arts to perform and record piano trios by Latin American composers on the Centaur label. Of his performances at the Fontana Festival a reviewer wrote ".....His tone is rich in resonance and passionate in approach, displaying the big sound that could sustain a charming longing." Donakowski is Professor of Music (Cello and Chamber music) at the James Madison University School of Music in Harrisonburg, VA where he received the Distinguished Teaching Award. Donakowski was a student of Janos Starker at Indiana University and also studied with Timothy Eddy, Gary Hoffman, and William Pleeth.

## Biographies - *continued*

**Ania Vu** (née Vũ Đăng Minh Anh) is a Polish composer and pianist of Vietnamese descent whose music explores the intersections of language, time, and sounds of nature. Her method, which she calls “composing text to write music,” often involves crafting her own texts in Polish and English, which guide the sound, form, and character of her compositions.

Described by the Boston Globe as exhibiting “artful vocal writing [that] ranges from percussive whispers to glinting, pure-voiced lines,” Ania’s work has been heard across four continents and recognized by the American Opera Project, ASCAP, Copland House, Tanglewood, the Boston New Music Initiative, and the I-Park Foundation. She was the 2024 Composer-in-Residence at the Chelsea Music Festival and her music has been presented at many other festivals and conferences, including PASIC, SEAMUS, CHIMEfest, Tanglewood, the Research on Contemporary Composition Conference, ISCM’s Virtual Collaboration Series, Tage Neuer Musik in Regensburg, and the Red Note New Music Festival. Since 2022, she is a member of the Polish Composers Union. Ania’s music has been performed by many leading ensembles and artists, including the New Fromm players, the Grossman Ensemble, Dal Niente, the Mannes American Composers Ensemble (MACE), the Daedalus and Mivos string quartets, Sō Percussion, the TAK Ensemble, and the International Contemporary Ensemble, among others.

Ania served as the 2022–23 Postdoctoral Researcher at the University of Chicago and was a 2021–23 fellow with the American Opera Project’s “Composers and the Voice.” She is currently a Lecturer at both the University of Chicago and Northwestern University, having previously taught at the University of Texas at Austin. Ania received her Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania and her B.M. in composition and theory from the Eastman School of Music. Together with pianist Eunmi Ko, they started an initiative called The Music She Writes, a series of four virtual concerts featuring 25 works by Asian female composers. This project aims to highlight the diversity and significance of music by a very large, yet underrepresented community.

Outside of music, Ania has a deep interest in languages, and speaks fluent English, Polish, French, and Vietnamese, in addition to having studied Latin, German, and Greek. She also enjoys traveling - having visited 33 countries so far -, wandering in all kinds of museums, and ballroom dancing. Ania is also an actively performing pianist.

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