

Amelia Piano Trio

Anthea Kreston, violin
Jason Duckles, cello
Rieko Aizawa, piano

The **Amelia Piano Trio** is among the most exciting young chamber ensembles to appear in the last decade. Making their mark by commissioning new works, such as Pulitzer Prize-winning composer John Harbison's new piano trio, as well as by performing vivid interpretations of traditional chamber fare, the Amelia Piano Trio have quickly become one of the world's most sought-after ensembles. Called "remarkable" by *Strings* and "exemplary" by *The Strad*, in its short history the Amelia has been Grand Prize-winner at the Yellow Springs National Competition and recipient of the prestigious ASCAP Award for Adventurous Programming.

In 2003 the Trio was asked by National Public Radio to be the Young Ensemble-in-Residence. This exciting week of live concerts and interviews put the Amelia firmly in the foreground of classical music in America, reaching an estimated 1.5 million listeners. Performing fifteen works that spanned the centuries, the Amelia forged a lasting relationship with NPR. In October 2006 the Trio was featured on Chicago's WFMT in live broadcast performances of the complete Beethoven Trios.

In addition to Harbison's new piano trio, other commissions for the Amelia include Augusta Read Thomas' *A Circle Around the Sun* and Adam Silverman's *Sturm*. The Trio's next commissioning project is a new Triple Concerto being composed by Daren Hagen. The Amelia plans to premiere and perform this new piece with youth orchestras around the country during the 2007-2008 season.

The Trio has performed extensively in North America and abroad, including France, Italy, Panama, and the Caribbean. They have released CDs on the Koch and Cedille Records labels, as well as on the world music label Traditional Crossroads. In addition, members of the Trio have toured North America and Central Asia with Yo-Yo Ma's Silk Road Project.

The Amelia Piano Trio is actively involved in arts education and dedicates a substantial amount of time to educational projects, master classes, and coaching children and adults. The Trio members are professors at the Hartt School of Music and Connecticut College. In addition to developing award-winning outreach programs, the Trio is in residence at the Green Lake Chamber Music Camp, where they teach gifted high school and college-aged students the art of chamber music.

Anthea Kreston, violin

Violinist Anthea Kreston has received numerous awards for her chamber collaborations including honors at the Melbourne and Banff International Competitions, the Grand Prize at the Concert Artists Guild Competition, and Top Prize in the Munich ARD International Chamber Music Competition. *The San Diego Reader* said of her: "...Anthea is a soloist of the Heifetz-Shaham-Vengerov caliber, whose musical instincts could make even a mere bagatelle thrill the soul and stir the senses to a frenzy." She made her solo debut at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., and tours actively with her piano trio, The Amelia Piano Trio.

Anthea holds a B.A. in Women's Studies from Cleveland State University and a performance degree from the Curtis Institute of Music. She is a professor of violin and viola at the Hartt School of Music,

where she received her Master's Degree, as well as at Wesleyan University. She has studied with Almita and Roland Vamos, Felix Galimir, Ida Kavafian, and Phil Setzer.

Anthea is actively involved with alternative music; she played in the Cleveland-based rock band Daria for several years, and frequently performs with her violin and percussion duo Sweet Thunder. Anthea can be heard on the labels Cedille Records, Channel Classics, Koch, and Traditional Crossroads.

Jason Duckles, cello

Jason has received numerous awards for his chamber collaborations, including Grand Prize in the Concert Artists Guild Competition and Top Prize in the Munich ARD International Competition. Jason has also been a member of the Avalon String Quartet and the Aspen Contemporary Ensemble, and has appeared frequently as the cellist for the Mark Morris Dance Group, which tours throughout the United States and Europe. Jason can be heard on the Sony Recording "Enchantment" with Yo Yo Ma's Silk Road Project.

Jason received his undergraduate degree from Northwestern University, and his Master's and Doctorate from the State University of New York at Stony Brook as a student of Timothy Eddy. He teaches at both Wesleyan University and Connecticut College, and has given master classes at Dartmouth College, the Longy School of Music, and Stanford University.

Dedicated to music of our time, Jason has commissioned works from many composers, including Pulitzer Prize-winner John Harbison. Jason is a recipient of Chamber Music America's ASCAP Award for Adventurous Programming and can be heard on the labels Sony, Channel Classics, Koch, Traditional Crossroads, and Cedille Records.

Rieko Aizawa, piano

In 1988, Japanese pianist Rieko Aizawa was brought to the attention of famed violinist Alexander Schneider on the recommendation of pianist Mitsuko Uchida. Schneider engaged her as a soloist with his Brandenburg Ensemble at the opening concerts of Tokyo's Casals Hall; later that year, Schneider presented Rieko in her U.S. debut concerts at the Kennedy Center and Carnegie Hall with his New York String Orchestra. *The Washington Post* celebrated her performance: "She played with a beautiful, limpid tone and a sense of characterization and cohesiveness that is unusual."

Since then Rieko has performed in solo and orchestral engagements throughout the U.S., Canada, and Europe, including Lincoln Center's Avery Fisher Hall, Boston's Symphony Hall, and Chicago's Orchestra Hall. Highlights of recent seasons include acclaimed performances with the New Japan Philharmonic under Seiji Ozawa, the English Chamber Orchestra under Heinz Holliger, the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra under Hugh Wolff, the St. Louis Symphony under David Loebel and, most recently, a wonderfully received performance with the Vienna Chamber Orchestra.

An avid chamber musician, Rieko has performed as a guest with string quartets including the Guarneri Quartet and has participated in festivals such as the Marlboro in Vermont and the Evian in France.

Rieko is a graduate of the Juilliard School and the Curtis Institute of Music, where she was the last pupil of Mieczyslaw Horszowski. She also studied with Seymour Lipkin and Peter Serkin. In 2005 Rieko's solo debut recording of Scriabin's and Shostakovich's "24 Preludes" was released by Altus in Japan.

Betti Xiang, Erhu

Already an acclaimed erhu virtuoso in her native China, since 1996 Betti Xiang has built a distinguished career performing throughout the United States. In 2006, Ms. Xiang performed "The Butterfly Lovers" Concerto with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra under the baton of David Alan Miller. She has been invited to perform at such distinctive venues as the Ravinia International Music Festival, Lincoln Center, the Kimmel Center in Philadelphia, the Smithsonian Institute, and on National Public Radio and Chicago's WFMT. Ms. Xiang performs with Yo-Yo Ma as a member of the Silk Road Ensemble and has collaborated with the Amelia Piano Trio, the Lincoln String Quartet, the Newberry Consort early music ensemble, and the Cube Contemporary Chamber Ensemble. In 2005, she performed Tan Dun's erhu concerto "Crouching Tiger" for the inaugural of Chicago's Millennium Park.

Ms. Xiang, a native of Shanghai, studied erhu with her father, Xiang Zuying, a renowned erhu master, soloist with the Shanghai National Orchestra, and professor at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music. Ms. Xiang's public debut as an erhu soloist was with the Shanghai National Orchestra's tour of France, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, and Taiwan in 1981, debuting works by noted Chinese composers Zhu Jianer, Jin Fuzai, and Lu Pei. In 1986, she received the coveted Young Artists Award for outstanding solo artist in both Shanghai and Beijing.

Over the last twenty years, Betti Xiang has premiered works by such renowned composers as Bruce Saylor, Conrad Tao, Huang Ruo, Victoria Bond, Patricia Morehead, Bright Sheng, and Tan Dun. In July 2006, Ms. Xiang recorded a solo CD of her late father's music, "Tunes of Countryside."