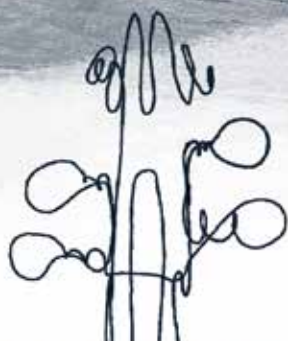


# Reno Chamber Orchestra

Celebrating our 48th Season

*The Real Us*



## PRIMAL VOICES

February 18 & 19

Nightingale Concert Hall

**Kelly Kuo**  
Music Director

**Hanzhi Wang**  
Accordion

**Reno**  
Chamber  
Orchestra

# WELCOME



Dear RCO Friends,

Happy New Year! We ushered in 2023 in musical style with the final concert of the Nevada Chamber Music Festival and are now excited to welcome the full Reno Chamber Orchestra back to Nightingale Concert Hall. I am especially excited to introduce you to today's soloist, Hanzhi Wang. We have dug into our records and as far as we can discern this is the first time an accordionist has soloed with the Reno Chamber Orchestra! I am excited for us to all be a part of RCO history!

Outside the concert hall our partnership with Northern Nevada HOPES is continuing strongly. Maestro Kelly Kuo and principal cellist Peter Lenz performed a concert of holiday favorites at Hope Springs in December, and we are planning other performances for this spring!



We are also getting ready to launch our 2023-2024 season. Maestro Kuo is crafting a beautiful season of music for us all and I cannot wait to share it with you. Look for information about the new season in the next few months!

Now, sit back and get ready to be immersed in the musical landscape of Primal Voices!

Be well,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Amy Heald".

Amy Heald  
Executive Director

*RCO Concerts at Hope Springs are made possible by a grant from The City of Reno Arts & Culture Commission*



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# }| MUSIC DIRECTOR



**KELLY KUO**

*Music Director*

Praised by the Cincinnati Enquirer as “a leader of exceptional musical gifts, who has a clear technique on the podium and an impressive rapport with audiences,” Maestro Kelly Kuo brings a dynamic versatility and nuance to a diverse repertoire, which includes nearly 100 operas. Currently Music Director of the Reno Chamber Orchestra, Artistic Director and Conductor of Oregon Mozart Players and Associate

Artistic Director of American Lyric Theater, he has consistently demonstrated a commitment to bold programming and creative initiatives.

Recent engagements have included productions with Lyric Opera of Chicago, Seattle Opera, Cincinnati Opera, Wolf Trap Opera, Merola Opera Program, Indianapolis Opera, Opera Columbus, and the Brevard Music Center, and concerts with the Memphis Symphony Orchestra, Malta Philharmonic Orchestra, Sunriver Music Festival, Indianapolis Chamber Orchestra, and Ballet Fantastique.

In 2008, Maestro Kuo became the first conductor of Asian descent to lead a performance at the Lyric Opera of Chicago, making his company debut with *Porgy and Bess*. He has since returned to lead the Chicago premiere of Charlie Parker’s *Yardbird* and performances featuring artists of the Ryan Opera Center. Upcoming engagements include a return to Opera Columbus, debuts with Minnesota Opera, Des Moines Metro Opera, Santa Fe Opera, and Opera Idaho.

An Oregon native and recipient of a Solti Foundation U.S. Career Assistant Award for young conductors, Kuo continues to concertize as a keyboardist as the only pianist to have studied with two pupils of the Russian virtuoso Vladimir Horowitz.

[www.kellykuo.com](http://www.kellykuo.com)



## HANZHI WANG

*Accordion Soloist*

Praised for her captivating stage presence and performances that are technically and musically masterful, the groundbreaking musician Hanzhi Wang is the first accordionist to win a place on the roster of Young Concert Artists in its 58-year history.

In 2018, Musical America named Hanzhi Wang “New Artist of the Month,” and Naxos released its first-ever solo accordion CD, Ms. Wang’s “On the Path to H.C. Andersen.” Ms. Wang’s artistry has also been recognized by other contemporary composers, with works dedicated to her by James Black and Sophia Gubaidulina, with whom she has worked extensively.

First Prize Winner of the 2017 Young Concert Artists International Auditions, Ms. Wang’s debut opened the Young Concert Artists Series in New York in at Carnegie Hall, and her Washington, DC debut opened at the Kennedy Center.

Ms. Wang won First Prize in the 40th Castelfidardo International Accordion Competition in Italy, has served on the jury for the Accordion Competition of Rome and Portugal’s International Accordion Festival, and inspired the next generation of accordionists with lectures, performances and master classes at the Manhattan School of Music, Royal Danish Academy of Music, Tianjin Music Conservatory, Beijing’s Capital Normal University, Tilburg and Ghent Music Conservatories (Belgium), and the inaugural 2018 Nordaccordion Festival in Norway.

A Young Concert Artists Fellowship for Hanzhi Wang for the 2018-19 Season has been sponsored by Alan & Judy Kosloff and Mike Lubin & Anne-Marie McDermott. In addition, she holds YCA’s Ruth Laredo Prize and the Mortimer Levitt Career Development Award for Women Artists of YCA.

Ms. Wang earned her Bachelor’s degree at the China Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing, and her Master’s degree at the Royal Danish Academy of Music in Copenhagen as a student of Geir Draugsvoll.

# ARTISTS

## **Kelly Kuo**

Music Director & Conductor

## **Sara Aldana**

Assistant Conductor

## **Hanzhi Wang**

Accordion

## **Violins**

**Ruth Lenz, Concertmaster\***

*A friend of Ruth Lenz*

**Matthew Means**

Assistant Concertmaster

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**Corinne Stillwell, Principal**

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**Olga Archdekin\***

**Ivanka Dill\***

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**Dustin Budish\*, Principal**

**Kati Wentink**

**Sarah Coyl**

**Nathaniel Sattler**

## **Cellos**

**Peter Lenz, Principal\***

*A friend of Peter Lenz*

**Eileen Brownell**

**Barbara McMeen\***

**Karen Stout-Gardner\***

## **Double Bass**

**Scott Faulkner, Principal\***

*Gail & Jack McAllister*

*Chair*

**Nancy Hoffman\***

*Walter Dillard Memorial*

*Chair*

**Lani Oelerich\***

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Christina Castellanos, *Principal*  
*Kris & Pat Ellingsworth*  
Mary Ann Lazzari\*

## **Piccolo**

Mary Ann Lazzari\*

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Aaron Hill

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*Marshall, Pat & Anthony*  
*Postman*  
Chris Money

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*Jimmie's Chair*  
Eric Fassbender

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Aaron Hill

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John Lenz, *Principal\**  
*Jim Whipp Memorial Chair*  
Peter Adlish\*  
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\*indicates RCO contract player

Kelly Kuo, Conductor  
Hanzhi Wang, Accordion

La création du monde, Op. 81a (1922-23)  
Darius Milhaud (1892 - 1974)

Aconcagua (1979) Astor Piazzolla (1921 - 1992)

- I. Allegro moderato
- II. Moderato
- III. Presto

Hanzhi Wang, Accordion

Intermission

Songs from the Deep (2022) Juhi Bansal (b. 1984)

La mer (1903 - 05) Claude Debussy (1862 - 1918)  
*arranged by Iain Farrington*

- I. De l'aube à midi sur la mer
- II. Jeux de vagues
- III. Dialogue du vent et de la mer



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## **Darius Milhaud**

Born: September 4, 1892, Marseille, France

Died: June 22, 1974, Geneva, Switzerland

One of the most prolific composers of the twentieth century, with over 440 works in a wide range of styles, Darius Milhaud started as a violinist. He studied at the Paris Conservatoire, where he met fellow composers Arthur Honegger and Germaine Tailleferre; they, along with Georges Auric, Louis Durey, and Francis Poulenc, later joined forces in the influential group Les Six. From 1917 to 1919, Milhaud served in Brazil as secretary to poet Paul Claudel. They became collaborators on a number of compositions, and the music of Brazil remained a lifelong influence on Milhaud. Not long after that, on a trip to the United States, Milhaud encountered jazz, which became another important element of his musical sound. The invasion of France by Nazi Germany forced Milhaud and his family to move to the United States in 1940. Over the next three decades, he alternated years of teaching at Mills College in Oakland and the Paris Conservatoire, serving as mentor for a diverse group of future composers, including Dave Brubeck, Burt Bacharach, Steve Reich, Philip Glass, and Karlheinz Stockhausen.

## **La création du monde, Op. 81a**

Composed: 1922-23

Duration: 16 minutes

Instrumentation: 2 flutes, oboe, 2 clarinets, alto saxophone, bassoon, horn, 2 trumpets, trombone, timpani, percussion, piano, strings

Milhaud had a fascination with American jazz, which he heard for the first time during a visit to London in 1920, played by Billy Arnold's Novelty Jazz Band. "Their constant use of

# PROGRAM NOTES

syncopation in the melody," Milhaud wrote, "was done with such contrapuntal freedom as to create the impression of an almost chaotic improvisation, whereas in fact, it was something remarkably precise." Not long after, in the early days of Les Six, the group often met at the Gaya Bar, where pianist-composer Jean Wiener performed blues and jazz. But it wasn't until he visited America in 1922 that Milhaud felt he was hearing authentic jazz. He went to clubs and dance halls in Harlem, where he heard a variety of groups, talked to jazz musicians, and started making musical sketches.

It was then that he started work on *La création du monde* on a commission from the Ballets suédois. Milhaud modeled his instrumentation on that of bands he had heard in New York: "In some of the shows, the singers were accompanied by flute, clarinet, trumpets, trombone, a complicated percussion section played by just one man, piano and string quartet." With

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Max BRUCH | *Scottish Fantasy*

Sergei PROKOFIEV | *Romeo and Juliet*-selections from suites 1-3

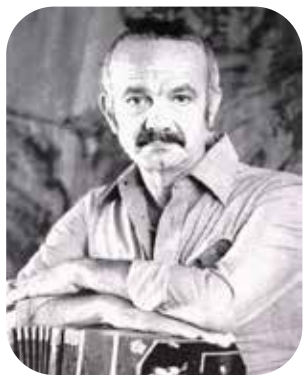
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## PROGRAM NOTES

costumes and set design by Fernand Léger, the ballet had its first performance on October 25, 1923 at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris. In six connected sections, the ballet's scenario is based on an African creation myth found in librettist Blaise Cendrars's *Anthologie negre*.

After a slow, mysterious, slightly dissonant Overture, in which a saxophone (rarely heard in classical music of the time) has the main melody, the intensity builds, leading into the next section. "The Chaos Before Creation" is agitated and rhythmically playful, taking the form of a fugue. Flattened thirds and sevenths, classic blues notes, evoke the world of jazz. It's also no surprise to hear hints of ragtime, and anticipations of George Gershwin's distinctive music (he wrote *Rhapsody in Blue* the year after *La création*, in 1924). Three African gods of creation are on the stage, bringing trees and animals into being in "The Birth of the Flora and Fauna," with its solos for flute, oboe, and horn. In "The Birth of Man and Woman," male and female dancers join the gods onstage in energetic, exuberant music. A bluesy clarinet solo is at the center of "Desire." In the end, a solitary couple is left onstage. They kiss, as an oboe sounds and flutes flutter in a mix of blues notes and jazz rhythms, before the saxophone says a lyrical farewell.



### **Astor Piazzolla**

Born: March 11, 1921, Mar Del Plata,  
Argentina

Died: July 5, 1992, Buenos Aires, Argentina

Astor Piazzolla almost single-handedly took what was once a regional folk dance, the tango, and made it famous all over the world. Piazzolla's family moved to New York when he was three. He grew up listening to his father's tango records, while also encountering the city's wide

# PROGRAM NOTES

range of jazz and classical music. At eight he received his first bandoneón, the large button accordion on which he became a virtuoso. After his family returned to Argentina in 1936, Piazzolla found employment in a dance orchestra while continuing his classical studies. Eventually he won a scholarship that allowed him to study in Paris with famous pedagogue Nadia Boulanger. He took to heart her advice to use his classical and jazz training to revitalize the tango, creating what came to be known as “nuevo tango.” Although his early efforts won the scorn of traditionalists, he continued to experiment, recording and performing all over the world, working with jazz musicians like Gerry Mulligan and Gary Burton, and composing for orchestras and film. As fame grew in the 1980s, he continued to concertize and wrote for musicians like Mstislav Rostropovich and the Kronos Quartet.



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# PROGRAM NOTES

## Aconcagua

Composed: 1979

Duration: 22 minutes

Instrumentation: solo accordion, strings, harp, timpani, percussion, piano

The accordion was probably invented in 1820s Germany. By the 1830s it had spread throughout Europe. Waves of immigration subsequently took the instrument into the Americas and elsewhere. The accordion, as well as relatives like the concertina, became popular in a range of musical styles, including dance, folk, and popular music. As early as 1836, the accordion moved into the classical music world as well. There are examples of accordion music by composers like Piotr Tchaikovsky, Charles Ives, and, later, Paul Hindemith and Sofia Gubaidulina.

Named after the nineteenth century German instrument dealer Heinrich Band, the variation on the concertina known as the bandoneón was originally designed for popular and religious music. By the 1870s the instrument had made its way to South America, quickly becoming a mainstay in Argentina. Soon it was adopted into the new genre of tango music.

Astor Piazzolla's combining of the familiar tango with elements from jazz and classical music into what became known as "nuevo tango" suffuses his compositions, including his concerto for his own instrument, the bandoneón. It was Piazzolla's publisher Aldo Pagani who gave the concerto its name, saying that "this is the highest peak of Astor's oeuvre, and the highest [mountain peak] in South America is Aconcagua." (Aconcagua, a mountain in the Andes of Argentina, is the highest mountain in the Americas, with a summit elevation of 22,838 feet.) While Piazzolla wrote his concerto for the bandoneón, it is also often performed with an accordion.

The concerto's dynamic opening movement hints at tango rhythms

# PROGRAM NOTES

right from the start. Syncopated rhythms and percussive attacks from the timpani and piano accompany the accordion's initial solo. Eventually the music's thrust calms for a short accordion solo, leading into slower, atmospheric, vaguely sentimental music from the strings, over which the soloist plays a dancing line. Another accordion solo leads into a reprise of the opening music.

The accordion opens the slow second movement by itself, introducing a sultry, mysterious main theme that unfurls in arching phrases. The fiery third movement features slashing attacks from the orchestra behind a syncopated melodic line from the soloist. Passionate phrases from the strings lead to a passage in which the accordion dances over pizzicato strings, piano, and percussion. The music becomes hushed, as a repeating rhythmic pattern gradually builds to the work's powerful conclusion.



**Juhi Bansal**

“Radiant and transcendent,” the music of Juhi Bansal weaves together themes celebrating musical and cultural diversity, nature and the environment, and strong female role models. Her music draws upon elements as disparate as Hindustani

music, the spectralists, progressive metal, musical theater, and choral traditions to create deeply expressive, evocative sound-worlds. As an Indian composer brought up in Hong Kong, her work draws subtly upon both those traditions, entwining them closely and intricately with the gestures of western classical music. Her awards include prizes from the Five Colleges New Music Festival Competition, ASCAP Lotte Lehman Foundation

# PROGRAM NOTES

Art Song Competition, Boston Metro Opera International Composers Competition, and multiple ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composer awards. A conductor and pianist as well as composer, she is currently on the music faculties of the Hartt School at the University of Hartford and Pasadena City College.

## **Songs from the Deep**

Composed: 2022

Duration: 12 minutes

Instrumentation: 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani, percussion, strings

Commissioned by the Oregon Mozart Players for the 2022 Sound Investment Commission, *Songs from the Deep* takes its inspiration from both the songs of whales and ocean currents. Dynamic swirls from the strings contrast with static notes enmeshed within them, with huge, crashing climaxes juxtaposed with moments of almost motionless calm. A pair of string quartets sit separately from the rest of the strings, creating antiphonal effects. Bansal also employs unusual performing techniques as well as carefully-placed aleatoric, or chance, sounds.

Juhi Bansal has written the following about her work:

“Jacques Cousteau wrote of finding freedom below the ocean’s surface, and I would add that one might find inspiration there as well. Below the waves lies a world that is both surreal and familiar, a place of transcendent calm, of weightlessness, of motion and stasis. Sounds underwater become physical – vibrations felt as much as heard – and in the lapping of waves, gentle chatter from reefs, and sounds of wildlife, the lines between movement, noise, sound and music start to blur. Inspired by an experience hearing humpback whale songs while diving, *Songs from the Deep* juxtaposes antiphonal masses of sound, Hindustani melodies and dramatic color shifts to build an homage to an immersive



# PROGRAM NOTES

soundscape of water, movement, current and flow; of changing colors and shifting light; of wild voices emerging out of chaos.”



## Claude Debussy

Born: August 22, 1862, Saint-Germain-en-Laye, France

Died: March 25, 1918, Paris, France

Claude Debussy was one of the most important and influential composers of his time. After more than a decade of studies at the Paris Conservatoire, his receipt of the prestigious Prix de Rome in 1884 allowed him two years of work in

Rome. Visits to Bayreuth in 1888-89 brought him under the spell of Wagner’s music, which he later rejected, and the 1889 Paris World Exhibition exposed him to the music of Asian cultures. His famous, revolutionary *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun*, as well as the opera *Pelléas et Mélisande* and the orchestral work *La mer*, secured his reputation as one of France’s great composers. While his music – often described as Impressionism, although he didn’t like the term – is appreciated for its sensuous beauty, it is also noteworthy for its fluid sense of tonality and the use of unusual scales like the pentatonic and whole-tone. These innovations were influential to many major musicians, from Igor Stravinsky and Olivier Messiaen to Pierre Boulez and Bill Evans.

## **La mer** *arranged by Iain Farrington*

Composed: 1903-5

Duration: 22 minutes

Instrumentation: flute (piccolo), oboe, clarinet, bassoon, horn, trumpet, trombone, timpani, percussion, harp, strings

Debussy began work on *La mer* in August 1903, during a visit to

# PROGRAM NOTES

his in-laws in Burgundy. The period of the work's composition was one of some personal turmoil for the composer. By the time the work was done, two years later, he had left his wife and moved in with Emma Bardac, who, although also married to someone else, was pregnant with Debussy's child. Debussy made a point of finishing *La mer* near the sea, during a vacation at the English Channel town of Eastbourne in 1905.

Debussy had enjoyed visits to the sea with his family as a youth. As he admitted to composer André Messager, "You may not have known that I was destined for a sailor's life, and it was only by chance that fate led me in another direction. Yet I have always felt a passionate love for the sea..." But by the time he was an adult, he preferred "the seascapes available in painting and literature" to the real thing. The works of J.M.W. Turner were a particular favorite. Japonisme, the enthusiasm for all things Japanese among



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# PROGRAM NOTES

European artists in the second half of the nineteenth century, influenced Debussy as well. He owned a print of Hokusai's famous *The Great Wave off Kanagawa*, and asked that it appear on the cover of the printed score of *La mer*.

In *The Cambridge Companion to Debussy*, Caroline Potter points out that Debussy's musical depiction of the sea "avoids monotony by using a multitude of water figurations that could be classified as musical onomatopoeia: they evoke the sensation of swaying movement of waves and suggest the pitter-patter of falling droplets of spray." Debussy subtitled his work "trois esquisses symphoniques pour orchestre" (three symphonic sketches for orchestra) – as opposed to calling it a symphony or symphonic poem, even though Debussy did occasionally refer to it as a symphony.

The opening "De l'aube à midi sur la mer" (From dawn to midday on the sea) begins in a subdued manner, gradually accelerating and building to the main part of the movement. Short fragments of melody rise and fall, creating the impression of the play of light on the water and the rocking and crashing of the waves. Musical lines blur and blend, overlap and imitate one another, and move quickly from one instrument or choir to another, creating a musical evocation of the movement of the waters as the sun rises into the sky. One can almost see the crash of the waves in the midday sun in the movement's final moments.

Once again, in the second movement, "Jeux de vagues" (Play of the waves), small bits of melody move quickly from instrument to instrument, here in more lively music in what has been likened to a symphonic scherzo. The third movement, "Dialogue du vent et de la mer" (Dialogue of the wind and the sea), opens with an ominous rumble. A theme from the first movement returns, but this time more dynamically. Over a churning accompaniment, a new theme takes over. Then a hymn-like idea emerges, over figures from the violins. These main themes interact, eventually



# PROGRAM NOTES

building to a return of the hymn melody for the work's powerful conclusion.

In this performance, Debussy's very large orchestra is reduced to a chamber ensemble in an arrangement by British pianist, composer, and arranger Iain Farrington, who writes of *La mer*, "The often transparent approach to the orchestration, lightness of touch and soloistic nature of the scoring lends itself well to a reduced ensemble."



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Christine Veach  
Scott Wait  
Ken Yzurdiaga

# IN MEMORY {

## Scott Bergstrom

Judith Simpson  
& Robert Seale

## Marilyn Hadley

J. Richard Breitling  
Theresa  
& Doug Damon  
Ingrid Ryst  
Robbi Whipp

## Elizabeth Lenz

Marcia & Chuck  
Growdon  
Catherine Hancock  
Maureen & Peter Lee  
Robbi Whipp

## Bill Sell

Lora Albright  
Peggy Albright  
Joe & Lois Parks  
Dan & Tami Sell  
Robbi Whipp

## James Tenney

Joe & Lois Parks  
Elizabeth Tenney

## Jill Winter

David Hornbeck  
Ingrid Ryst  
Robbi Whipp



## Carson City Symphony

David Bugli, Music Director/Conductor



## “Three Continents” Concert

*with violin soloist*  
**Brian Fox**

**Sunday, February 26, 2023, 4 p.m.**

Lobby entertainment - 3:00 p.m.

Concert preview - 3:15 p.m.

## Carson City Community Center

851 E. William Street, Carson City

**\$18 General Admission**

**\$15 Seniors, Students, Association Members**

**FREE Age 18 and under**

**Tickets: online [CCSymphony.com](https://www.ccsymphony.com) and at the door**

**Info: 775-883-4154 or [CCSymphony.com](https://www.ccsymphony.com)**





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