

FORBES CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY®

School of Music

presents

Monticello Strings

Faculty-student String Ensemble

Patrick Shaughnessy, violin 1

Wanchi Huang, violin 2

Erin Choi, violin 3

Roman Rousek, violin 4

Diane Phoenix-Neal, viola 1

Elliot Drew, viola 2

Carl Donakowski, cello 1

John Meshreky, cello 2

Directors: JMU String Faculty

Thursday, April 2, 2026

7 pm

Recital Hall



Patrons are reminded to turn off all pagers, cell phones, personal computers, and any other electronic devices.

The unauthorized videotaping or any other recording of this production is strictly prohibited in adherence with Federal copyright laws.

Program

Octet in E Flat Major, Op. 20

Felix Mendelssohn
(1809-1847)

Allegro moderato ma con fuoco
Andante
Scherzo: Allegro leggierissimo
Presto

There is no intermission.

Biographies

Wanchi's albums, Eugéne Ysaÿe Sonatas, complete Partitas, Sonatas of J.S. Bach for Solo Violin and her collaboration with longtime friend and pianist Robert Koenig presenting music by William Walton and Benjamin Britten under the Centaur Records label, have been excellently reviewed. Her most recent album *Imagining Worlds* has been released in January 2024 by Parma Music. She is an active solo and chamber music performer and presenter at ASTA. She joined "Curtis on Tour" for the 2017-18 season. She received her Bachelor of Music Degree from the Curtis Institute of Music, Masters from the Juilliard School and Doctorate of Music from Indiana University. Currently, she is the full time violin professor at James Madison University and contributes to the community as concertmistress for the Waynesboro Symphony Orchestra, and has been teaching at Heifetz International Institute in the summers since 2023.

Violist **Diane Phoenix-Neal** performs nationally and internationally, including performances at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, the Kennedy Center, Bowdoin International Music Festival and Spoleto Festival. Her sound is described as "rich and sumptuous," and "priceless as it was memorable." (Cultural Voice of North Carolina). In France, she served as the principal solo violist of Orchestre de Picardie and as violist with Quatuor Joachim. A champion of new music for viola, her commissioning projects have been presented worldwide. Dr. Phoenix-Neal received her training from the Juilliard School as a student of William Lincer and with the Juilliard String Quartet. She is a double alumna of North Carolina School of the Arts and received her doctorate from University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Dr. Phoenix-Neal is principal violist of the Shenandoah Valley Bach Festival and is a principal performer with the Roanoke Symphony Orchestra. She is Associate Professor of Viola at James Madison University in Virginia, and a board member of the American Viola Society.

Biographies - *continued*

Carl Donakowski pursues an international career in Europe, Asia, and the Americas. Early in his career he was a finalist in the Mendelssohn Competition in Berlin. His recital performances have been enjoyed at the Kennedy Center, Merkin Hall in New York, Tanglewood, Beethoven festivals and aired on WQRS Detroit, WQXR New York, and Südwestfunk. Of his performances at Fontana Festival a reviewer wrote “Cellist Carl Donakowski is ideally suited to perform these romantic works. His tone is rich in resonance and passionate in approach.” 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 Centaur. Donakowski is Professor of Music at the JMU School of Music where he received the Distinguished Teacher award. Donakowski was a student of Janos Starker, Timothy Eddy, Gary Hoffman, and William Pleeth.

Violinist **Patrick Shaughnessy** has been hailed by *Strad* Magazine for “creating soaring melodies, and warm joyous sound.” Mr. Shaughnessy was the founding member of the Heimat String quartet, with whom he gave his Carnegie debut in 2019. As a member of the quartet, he has traveled extensively performing in Nova Scotia, Quito, Hamburg, and Weimar Germany. A lover of chamber music, Mr. Shaughnessy performs regularly with the Felicity Chamber Players in Charlottesville, Virginia and on the Caravanserai Chamber Series in Staunton Virginia. An avid teacher, Mr. Shaughnessy maintains a full studio at The Catotction School of Music in Leesburg Virginia and will additionally be Guest Professor of Violin at James Madison University for the Fall 2025 semester. As an orchestral player, Shaughnessy has been guest concertmaster and principal 2nd violin with The New Orchestra of Washington and will be guest concertmaster for The Waynesboro Symphony for their fall 25/25 season. In the Summers, Mr. Shaughnessy teaches at Lyricafest in Lincoln, MA, and in Wisconsin at the Birch Creek Music Festival.

Biographies - *continued*

Erin Choi is a versatile violinist known for her technical precision in her emotive performances. With over 13 years of experience on the violin, she has established herself as a nuanced and sensitive collaborator. She is currently pursuing her career at the James Madison University School of Music, where she performs under Professor Wanchi Huang. Her time at the School of Music has been defined by a rigorous exploration of violin repertoires. Known for her ability to balance technical brilliance with a keen ear for ensemble textures, Erin has performed extensively in recitals and orchestral productions. For Erin, the violin is more than an instrument; it has become a part of her, a vital partner, with a profound medium for storytelling and emotional connection. She believes that music has the unique power to bridge the gaps between the performer and the listener, translating complex human experiences into sound through the violin.

Roman Rousek is a violinist and first-year student at James Madison University, pursuing a Bachelor of Music in Music Performance and a Bachelor of Science in Economics. He currently performs with the JMU Symphony Orchestra and the select Monticello Strings faculty ensemble. Roman served as Concertmaster of the Hayfield Secondary School Chamber Orchestra and has participated in summer music programs at Ithaca College and the University of North Carolina Greensboro. He earned placement in the Senior District Honors Orchestra for two consecutive years and has been recognized with the Director's Award, the Military Band Award, and the Most Outstanding Musician Award. He has studied under Mrs. Mary Ann Tortolano, with private instruction dating back to 2015. Roman is honored to perform alongside the distinguished faculty of Monticello Strings and looks forward to his continued growth as an artist at James Madison University.

Biographies - *continued*

Elliot Drew is a current junior viola performance major at James Madison University. He has played in masterclasses with Masumi Rostad and Luca Trombetta and plays in the JMU symphony. He studied under Daniel Reinker at the Eastern Music Festival, where he enjoyed playing in their two orchestras and an octet.

Hailing from Egypt, cellist **John Meshreky** enjoys an international career performing and teaching on four continents. He has performed extensively in Europe, predominantly in Germany, Spain, and Italy, where he earned his Master's in cello performance at the Perugia Conservatory. John has performed at the Vatican Museums, the Opera House of Spoleto, and numerous European festivals, and has also collaborated with the International Opera Theater of Philadelphia in three world premiere operas in Città della Pieve in Italy. In 2018, John won the first prize in the San Lorenzo di Montenero and Castel Rigone international competitions in chamber music and in 2011, he was nominated to the faculty of the University of Alexandria and the Bibliotheca Alexandrina School of Music in Egypt. Currently, John is in his third year as a Doctor of Musical Arts cellist at James Madison University in the studio of Dr. Carl Donakowski.

Friends of the Arts and Design

Thanks to our generous Friends of the Arts and Design scholarship donors whose support allows our students to continue to create, perform, and inspire.

Arts and Design Hero (\$5,000+)

James McHone Jewelry • Ann & Mark Siciliano

Arts and Design Champion (\$1,500 - \$4,999)

Rubén Graciani & Matt Pardo • Hotel Madison • George and Marilou Johnson Kathy Moran Wealth Group • Mack & Towana Moore • Shannon Tierney

Arts and Design Advocate (\$500 - \$1,499)

John Allemeier • Beth Chandler Cahill & Jim Cahill • Nancy Davis •

Matthew Duffy & Christine Jimenez-Duffy • Energy Windows LLC

Jonathan Fox • Quillon Hall & Karin Tollefson-Hall •

Holly Haney & Bob Kolvoord • Charles Ma & Sumei Wang •

Matchbox Realty • Barbara & William Mayo • Ron Pugh •

Scott & Wren Stevens • Debbie & Greg St. Ours •

Matthew & Sarah Von Schuch

Arts and Design Ally (\$250 - \$499)

Paul Ackerman & Weldon Bagwell • Elizabeth Alspaugh •

Jerry Benson & Martha Ross • Stephen Bolstad & Stephanie Wasta •

Robert & Suzanne Bothamley • Jared & Jenny Burden •

David & Jennifer Campfield • Jennifer Copeland • Myron Dickerson

Len & Miriam Discenza • Rhonda Dolan • Hillary Ellis

Joe & Rose Estock • Bob & Linda Failes • Johnny & Phyllis Garber •

John Keightley & Tammy Mannarino • Brenda & Ronald Krablin • JoAnn & Ric

Leobold • Kristi Lewis • Kathryn & Michael Loy • Brock Materson • Tom McKenzie

• Jamie & Tim Miller • Rebekah Noonan • Sharon Shewbridge • Barbara Shifflett •

Nick Swartz • Kristee Jo Trumbo • Cecelia Wolf • Melinda Wood

Marlon Foster Scholarship

How you can make a difference!

Dear Patron,

Thank you for attending this School of Music performance, we appreciate your support! The QR code below will take you to a page where you can donate to the Marlon Foster Scholarship. Marlon Foster ('82, '95) served in the United States Air Force, taught in Harrisonburg City Public Schools for 26 years, and taught percussion in the JMU School of Music. Marlon was awarded Teacher of the Year from Harrisonburg City Public Schools, and he was inducted into the Virginia Band and Orchestra Directors Association's Hall of Fame.

