

# MUSIC GAZETTE

Pomona College Music Department *Spring 2025*  
vol. 33/no. 2

## Department News

On November 18, 2024, **Karl Kohn** passed away at the age of 98. We feel his loss deeply in the Music Department, where he had a distinguished 44-year career teaching students, composing music, and performing in concerts. It is difficult for many of us to envision Thatcher and Bridges Hall of Music without his energetic presence. We have tentative plans for a concert on our fall 2025 series in his honor.

The spring 2025 concert season began with a Friday Noon performance by Julie and **Jennie Jung**, as well as a special Ussachevsky festival directed by Visiting Assistant Professor **Igor Santos** that included guest composer Elaine Lillios and a site-specific performance at the James Turrell Skyspace.

As I write this, music students are immersed in lessons, ensemble courses, and additional classes in music history, theory, ethnomusicology, and composition. Some highlights

from these courses include “Linguistics Elements of Music,” “American Maritime Musical Worlds,” a performance of two violin concertos (Tchaikovsky and Berg!) with the orchestra, and the orchestra and choir teaming up for Mozart’s Requiem. We’ve heard Heinrich Biber’s complete Rosary Sonatas, an Afghan rubab and tabla performance in collaboration with the History Department and Middle East/Asian Studies Program, and soon, a guest performance by Brightwork/HEX and an exciting conclusion of the semester featuring student recitals and Pomona’s wide-ranging ensembles. We are pleased to welcome **Vanessa Fadial** (piano) and **Ryan Baird** (bass), who are teaching lessons this spring semester.

In closing, this is **Elizabeth Champion**’s final Gazette, so be sure to look at the back cover for new information on where to send your news. We look forward to hearing from you!

– Joti Rockwell, Department Chair

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Meredith Monk performance [photo by B. Werger]

## Of Special Note

Last semester, we were treated to a very special residency by legendary composer/performer **Meredith Monk** and two members of her Vocal Ensemble, **Katie Geissinger** and **Allison Sniffin**. In addition to a moving performance for an eager and passionate audience, Monk led an engaging discussion about her work and the search for self-authenticity in musical creation and performance with the members of Prof. Lee's "Music in Dialog" class and Prof. Santos's "Music Composition Since 1900" class. Geissinger led two workshops based in Monk's unique practice exploring the voice-as-instrument with Professor Rockwell's ID1 seminar and



Monk masterclass [photo by A. Dunne]

Theory I & Theory II students from Professors Lindholm's and Cramer's classes.

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The Los Angeles area has begun a long recovery from the January fires and the damage they did to music communities around Altadena and Pacific Palisades. Among the many who lost their homes and instruments is long-time Pomona College jazz director **Bobby Bradford**. Efforts to organize support for affected musicians range from GoFundMe fundraisers to music industry initiatives by ASCAP, NAMM, Fender, and others. With coordination from **Barb Catlin**, Bobby will perform his *Jackie Robinson Suite* at Caltech's free Annual Jazz Festival on

April 19 from 1–5pm on the Hameetman Patio. Bobby's group will perform around 3:45pm.

## Special Events

This spring we are thrilled to welcome guest artists **Salar Nader** (tabla) and **Homayoun Sakhi** (rubab) for a residency in collaboration with the History Department and Middle Eastern/Asian Studies Program that will include a performance and visits to multiple classes including Giri Kusuma, Pomona's Balinese gamelan ensemble. Visiting faculty artist **Vanessa Fadiel** (piano) presents a recital with longtime collaborator **Gary Levinson** (violin); **Jennie Jung** (piano) reunites with special guest **Jin-Shan Dai** (violin); local ensembles **Brightwork** and **HEX** perform LA-inspired works.

## Performing Ensembles

The **POMONA COLLEGE BAND**, conducted by **Graydon Beeks**, will perform concerts on April 25 and 27. The program will feature premiere performances of *Adventure in the Air* by Mark Winges with Ken Foerch as soprano saxophone soloist, *Suite of Old American Dances* by Robert Russell Bennett, and works by Stephen Bulla, Gustav Holst, and John Philip Sousa. Rehearsals are Mondays and Wednesdays 6:30-7:55 p.m.

This fall the **POMONA COLLEGE CHOIR**, led by **Donna M. Di Grazia**, gave two inspired and moving performances in November of Bach's *Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied*, Caroline Shaw's *To the Hands*, and Dieterich Buxtehude's *Ad manus*. The highlight of the three was Shaw's *To the Hands*, which received great reviews from the audience. This semester, the ensemble will perform Mozart's Requiem and

two shorter works by Gabriel Fauré, *Les djinns* and *Pavane*, with the Pomona College Orchestra under the direction of Eric Lindholm.

Under the leadership of **Donna M. Di Grazia**, the **POMONA COLLEGE GLEE CLUB** will be performing an array of unaccompanied choral music on its May concerts and spring tour (the latter to Chicago, Boston, and New York City). Featured works include Maurice Ravel's *Trois Chansons*, Ralph Vaughan Williams's *Three Shakespeare Songs*, Robert A. Harris's *April Rain Song*, Jaako Mäntyjärvi's *Ave Maria d'Aosta*, and other works in French, English, and Latin. At their Alumni Weekend concert on May 3<sup>rd</sup>, they will also offer the premiere of a new college song, *The Footsteps We Follow*, with music by Pomona music major alumnus Matthew Brown '20, and with texts compiled and adapted by Meadow Jones '24 (SC) from various Pomona senior class commencement speeches from 2010–23. Matthew and Meadow are alumni of both the Pomona College Choir and the Glee Club.

**POMONA COLLEGE JAZZ ENSEMBLE**, led by **Barb Catlin**, will present two spring concerts. The first, Tuesday March 11, featured small combos with compositions and arrangements by students, and the second, on Friday, May 2 (as a part of Alumni Weekend) highlights the ensemble's talented graduating members.

The **POMONA COLLEGE ORCHESTRA**, **Eric Lindholm**, conductor, featured two concerto competition winners, both violinists, on its March program. Aria Wang '27 presented the violin concerto by Alban Berg, *To the Memory of an Angel*, and Aimee Co '26 (HMC) was featured in Tchaikovsky's



Concerto winners left to right: Aria Wang and Aimee Co

much-loved concerto for the same instrument. The field for the competition was unusually strong, and both winners gave exceptional performances. The program opened with Humperdinck's beautiful prelude to *Hänsel und Gretel*. In April, the Orchestra and Pomona College Choir will collaborate on the Mozart Requiem, making up for performances of this piece that were scheduled for five years ago before being

lost to the COVID-19 pandemic. Along with the Mozart, the two ensembles will present two brief works by Fauré, *Pavane* and *Les djinns*. The PCO's blockbuster fall semester included Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade*, Strauss's *Till Eulenspiegel*, and music by Mozart, Nielsen, Prokofiev, and Tom Flaherty.

**POMONA COLLEGE BALINESE GAMELAN ENSEMBLE GIRI KUSUMA**, under the leadership of directors **I Nyoman** and **Nanik Wenten** will perform on Monday, May 5 in Bridges Hall of Music.

**POMONA COLLEGE AFRO-CUBAN MUSIC ENSEMBLE**, **Joe Addington**, director, has been busy with rehearsals preparing for their April 28<sup>th</sup> concert with music and dance from Afro-Cuban Yoruba traditions.

## Faculty News

Assistant Professor **Malachai Komanoff Bandy** is having a fabulous time teaching *Engaging Music* and *Music and the Art of Eloquence*, a seminar handling music and rhetoric. Malachai was recently awarded two short-term fellowships for work on this topic: a Paul Oskar Kristeller Fellowship from the Renaissance Society of America and the Society for Seventeenth-Century Music's Diversity and Inclusion Research Award, to support research for his book project treating rhetoric, mysticism, and embodiment in Dieterich Buxtehude's *Membra Jesu nostri* (1680).

Malachai's spring performance opportunities similarly complement his teaching and research. Highlights included Heinrich Biber's Rosary Sonatas at Pomona (thanks to the Department's generosity); French viol solos for the Baroque Music Festival Corona del Mar; period-instrument Beethoven with Bach Collegium San Diego; a Biber reprise in NYC for Wild Up (with Tony Conrad's 1964 Biber-inspired *Four Violins*); and a madrigal project with Voices of Music. Over spring break, Malachai organized the panel "Bloodbath: Sounding Bodily Fluids in Seventeenth-Century Europe," connecting visceral imagery in contemporary theological discourse with music by Aquilino Coppini and Buxtehude, for the Renaissance Society of America's 71<sup>st</sup> annual meeting (Boston). He looks forward to kicking off his Steele Leave performing at the Oregon Bach Festival, then a project with the Gesualdo Six, and presenting written work alongside Professors Di Grazia and Cramer at the International Society for the History of Rhetoric 2025 conference (Copenhagen) in July.





Melissa Givens in Concert at Davidson [photo by Davidson News]

Associate Professor **Alfred Cramer** contributed a chapter, “The Romantic Melodic Code: What Stenography Tells Us About Mid-Nineteenth-Century Music,” to the volume *New Approaches to Shorthand: Studies of a Writing Technology*, which was published by De Gruyter in October. His software for applying the Implication-Realization model of melodic analysis to speech intonation is [available to read on his website](#), with instructions co-authored by Pomona senior music major Melinda Yang.

As a violinist, he performed works by Brahms and Pauline Viardot with pianist Phillip Young in February and works by Telemann, Purcell, and Buxtehude with the Cornucopia Baroque Ensemble in March on the Friday Noon Concert series. In April he will play baroque violin with Con Gioia in Pasadena. Professor Cramer continues to write about the artistic subtleties of Woody Guthrie’s song “This Land Is Your Land.”

On a side note, Alfred is a two-time winner of the *Claremont Courier*’s “Where Am I” contest that asks readers to correctly identify the location of a photo in Claremont.

Professor **Donna M. Di Grazia** will be presenting a conference paper on the rhetorical meaning of silence at the 2025 meeting of the International Society for the History of Rhetoric in Copenhagen, Denmark. She will be joined by colleagues Malachai Bandy and Alfred Cramer as part of a two-panel session focusing on rhetoric in music. She has also been invited to write a chapter on Franz Liszt as a conductor for a new book project scheduled for publication in 2026. Finally, her professional music-making continues with [PRISM Choral Ensemble](#), which will be offering a concert of secular music from Renaissance Italy and England on 8 June 2025 at

St. Edmunds Episcopal Church in San Marino, CA.

In June, Associate Professor **Melissa Givens** was awarded a Distinguished Alumni Award from Davidson College, which recognizes living alumni who have provided leadership or attained recognition on a national or regional level within their profession or business. While at the reunion (her 35<sup>th</sup>!), she was invited to [sing a recital](#). She also worked with a student on writing texts for songs and worked with the Davidson Chorale and Choral Arts Society. The concert was recorded for rebroadcast on WDAV 89.9 on February 28, along with excerpts of an interview she did with host Rachel Stewart. It was made available to stream following the performance.

She was also privileged to premiere another of Florence Price’s rediscovered works this year as musicologist John Michael Cooper released *Seventeen Art Songs and Spirituals* by Price. *Before This Time Another Year*, with Genevieve Feiwen Lee (piano) had its premiere on YouTube and its first public performance on a recital for the Dorothy Schmidt Concerts at Westminster Gardens in Duarte, CA.

Last October, professor **Genevieve Feiwen Lee** and the Eclipse Quartet presented the North American premiere of Dobrinka Tabakova’s piano quintet, *Stone Trail*. She took part in an all-George Crumb concert in November and performed *Eleven Echoes of Autumn* with Pomona faculty colleagues Rachel Rudich (flute), Gary Bovyer (clarinet), and Sarah Thornblade (violin).

She started 2025 as a featured artist on the chamber music series Village Concerts, performing works by Beethoven, Brahms, and Gina Gillie, with artistic director Tomasz Golka (violin) and Preston Shepard (horn). This was followed by the

annual Ussachevsky electro-acoustic music festival, where she performed four movements from Peter Ablinger's *Voices and Piano*. These selections blend audio recordings of notable people (Angela Davis, Bonnie Barnett, Alvin Lucier, and Mother Teresa) speaking with live piano.

The Mojave Trio (with Sara and Maggie Parkins) was invited to return on the Restoration Concerts chamber music series at South Pasadena public library. They performed works of Beethoven, Gao Ping, and Rebecca Clarke.

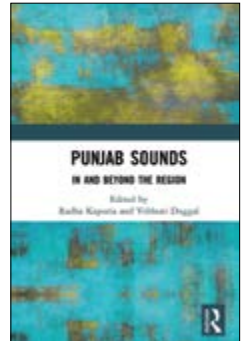
Her newly created [YouTube channel](#) features a steadily growing number of videos of solo and collaborative performances from Bridges Hall of Music. She is on sabbatical this spring semester.

Professor **Eric Lindholm**'s fall projects included collaborating with Robert deMaine (Los Angeles Philharmonic's principal cello), Tom Flaherty (professor emeritus of music), and the Pomona College Orchestra on Flaherty's Cello Concerto, for which deMaine was the featured soloist in the world premiere performances. The rehearsal process prompted late refinements to the work, based on a detailed assessment of how best to achieve the composer's intentions and the soloist's artistic vision. For the upcoming Choir and Orchestra performances of the Mozart Requiem, Professor Lindholm is reorchestrating the Benedictus. Of all of the movements in the piece, the Benedictus was the least completed by Mozart before his death, and relies most on the contributions of Mozart's well-meaning but less inspired colleague, Frank Xaver Süssmayr. A heaviness and relative lack of imagination in Süssmayr's scoring of the Benedictus detracts, in performance, from the overall effectiveness of the entire piece. In the service realm, Eric served on the search subcommittee for a new Assistant Professor of Music specializing in theory and composition, carefully evaluating more than 100 application files. He continues to drive conversations about how the lighting in Bridges Hall of Music could be better adapted for the ways the hall will be used in the coming decades.

This past fall, **Joti Rockwell**, Associate Professor, joined the Tectonic City Band on pedal steel guitar at the Geological Society of America conference, performing on a set entitled "Campfire Songs for Geologists." He began work on a review of a book entitled *The Science-Music Borderlands*. He served as a reviewer for *Music Theory Spectrum* and the *Journal of Music Theory*, while also serving on the ad-hoc program committee

for the 2025 String Band Summit. At the end of February, he delivered a keynote address at the "Music Theory/Genre Theory" conference at the Butler School of Music at UT-Austin, entitled "Christmas Music: America's Exo-Genre." He'll be performing in May as part of the Giri Kusuma concert celebrating 50 years of Nyoman and Nanik Wenten teaching gamelan in the United States.

Associate Professor **Gibb Schreffler** saw the publication of two of his works in the Fall. The essay "One Transnation Under a Groove: 'Chaal' and the Modern Punjabi Soundscape" appeared in the edited volume *Punjab Sounds: In and Beyond the Region* (Routledge) and represents the concluding piece of Schreffler's long research on Punjabi drummers, is now [available online](#). The third piece of his project on the co-development of sailors' work-songs and sailing ships' anchor-raising technologies was published as "'A Very Ingenious Invention': Sailing Ship Windlass Technology and the Burgeoning of Sailors' Chanties" in *American Music* (41.3), [as seen here](#).



At the Society for Ethnomusicology Annual Meeting in November, Schreffler was awarded honorable mention for the Helen Roberts Prize for his article "Remembering the Cotton Screwmen: Inter-racial Waterfront Labor and the Development of Sailors' Chanties" (*Journal of the Society for American Music* 17.4). As President of our region's chapter of the Society for Ethnomusicology, Schreffler is engaged this semester in the executive direction of this year's conference at UCLA.

## Emeritus Faculty

**Graydon Beeks** conducted the Pomona College Band in a pair of concerts in November 2024 featuring premiere performances of pieces by Shuying Li and Sergio Barer and other works by Carol Brittin Chambers, Gustav Holst, Karl Kohn, and Frank Ticheli. In September he joined his colleagues in the Cornucopia Baroque Ensemble for a program of music by Handel, Kriegers, and Telemann on the Friday Noon Concert series. In October he played continuo harpsichord in three Bach arias with Con Gioia on their concert in Pasadena. His article "Two Sets of Lessons for Princess Louisa" was published in the Winter issue of the *American Handel Society Newsletter*.

Many of **Tom Flaherty**'s works have been recently performed including his *DinoGold* by Sue-Ellen Hershman-Tcherepnin (flute) and Anne Black (viola) on the Dinosaur Annex series in Newton, MA; the premiere of *ConcorDance* with Gloria Cheng (piano) on the Piano Spheres series at Zipper Hall in Los Angeles, CA; *The Thin Edge* with Kirsten Ashley Wiest (soprano) and Todd Moellenberg (piano) at the University of California's Performing Arts Center and in Lake Arrowhead; and *Running Thoughts* with Kathleen Supové (piano) '73 at the University of Illinois in Springfield. Other works are forthcoming, including one for Jennie Jung (piano) and Jin-Shan Dai (violin) to be premiered on their April Little Bridges recital.

**William Peterson** presented a paper, "Constructing Cultural Markers of Czechoslovak Solidarity, 1918-1928," in a panel at the Virtual Convention of the Annual Convention of the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies (ASEEES) on October 18. His recording of "Souvenir" by John Cage was included in [Pipedreams program 2507](#) entitled "American Originals," broadcast on February 17, 2025 (American Public Media). The selection is from his 2018 album, *Recital at Bridges Hall, Pomona College* (Loft Recordings / LRCD - 1140).

## In Memoriam

**Karl Kohn**, emeritus professor and composer-in-residence whose teaching and performances left an indelible mark on generations of students at Pomona College, passed away November 18 in Claremont. He was 98.

Kohn joined the Music Department faculty in 1950 and taught theory and composition as well as music history and appreciation during his 44-year career. He was the Thatcher Professor of Music and later the William Keck Distinguished Service Professor Emeritus. When he retired in 1994, an alumna recalled in a *Pomona College Today* (now *Pomona College Magazine*) article that his teaching style was "fresh, inventive, magical in its effects." He was, she wrote, "a nationally renowned composer of finely imagined, impeccably crafted music who is a crack pianist and conductor to boot; a man with uncompromisingly high standards."

Thomas Flaherty, emeritus professor of music and a friend of Kohn's for more than 40 years, describes him as a key part of the new music scene in Los Angeles. "He had dinner with the likes of Stravinsky and Boulez and gave stunning performances of their music," Flaherty says, including "his

regular performances of Boulez's *Structures* and Stravinsky's *Les Noces* with his wife of 74 years, pianist extraordinaire Margaret Kohn," who also taught at Pomona, starting in 1970.



Karl and Margie Kohn [photo by J. Lucas]

In support of Kohn's musical endeavors, he was named a Fulbright Research Scholar and a Guggenheim Fellow. He also received grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Howard, Ford, and Mellon foundations. He was a member of the board of directors of the Monday Evening Concerts in Los Angeles, a founding member of the American Society of University Composers, and the recipient of numerous ASCAP awards, which recognized annually the "prestige value" of music composed, performed, and recorded during the year.

Kohn credited teaching in a liberal arts college with helping to shape his work as a composer, noting, "My music, I think, turned out more accessible because of balancing what I was interested in as a musician and what I was dealing with as a teacher." He succeeded in both worlds, with Pomona students voting him a Wig Distinguished Professorship Award, the highest teaching award bestowed on Pomona faculty, in 1968.

Alumni and colleagues remember Kohn's profound impact and generosity. "Walking past my bookshelf just now I realized he once gave me an autobiography of the composer Ernst Krenek signed to Karl," recalls Oliver Dubon '20, now a composer himself. "Running into him in the halls of Thatcher or meeting in his office always left me with a massive smile on my face and eager to write music."

By Marilyn Thomsen

Excerpted, with permission

from [pomona.edu/news/2024/11/21](https://pomona.edu/news/2024/11/21)

[-memoriam-karl-kohn-emeritus-professor-and-composer-residence](#)



# Student Happenings

## THE SOUNDS OF THE SENIORS

The five senior music majors scheduled to graduate this May—**Willa Albrecht**, **Jacqueline Cordes**, **Theo Kokonas**, **Nick Payton**, and **Melinda Yang**—pursued fascinating musical projects this academic year. Topics included Irish traditional singing, studying and composing music involving synesthesia, Maurice Ravel’s piano and vocal music, Afrofuturism and electronic music, and a mathematically-inspired song cycle. On March 12, we will experience a sample of their work in Lyman Hall at a performance entitled “Senior Sounds.”

## THE ARCHITECTURAL ACOUSTICS OF LITTLE BRIDGES

Physics major **Danté Christian**, advised by Physics Professor (and Orchestra and Band member) Alma Zook along with Joti Rockwell, is devoting his senior thesis to the topic of acoustics in Bridges Hall of Music. With support from Music Department staff members Sherrill Herring and Barry Werger, and with collaboration between the Physics and Music Departments, Danté has worked with blueprints and within the space to create a 3D virtual architectural model of the concert hall. His model can predict reverberation decay times depending on location and materials within the space, and he is refining the model using a custom-built dodecahedral speaker.



Zook and Christian [photo by T. Khachatoorian]

# Alumni News

**Matthew Cook** '20, has taken the position of Concert Manager for the Scripps College Music Department, and is also the accompanist for the choirs at Claremont High School. He performed a solo organ recital featuring the music of Bach and Mendelssohn at Trinity Methodist Church, Pomona in February.

**Oliver Dubon** '20, has been accepted into the Ph.D. program in Composition at the University of Pennsylvania. His work *Speak Louder than Words*, written as the thesis for his M.A. degree from Rice University, is scheduled to be premiered in March 2025 by the Shepherd School Symphony Orchestra of that institution. Another recent composition, *Monsoon*, was premiered by the Pacific Chamber Orchestra in October 2024. *Wandering Rocks*, his 2023 work for chamber orchestra, received Honorable Mention in the 2024 New York Youth Symphony First Music Competition and was a Finalist for the 2024 ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composers Award.

Soprano **Lydia Saylor** '18, as the winner of the Aaron Copland School of Music, Queens College CUNY’s Concerto Competition, sang Copland’s *Eight Poems of Emily Dickinson* with the Queen’s College Orchestra under the direction of James Lowe in February.

**Eron Smith** '16, finished her first year on the music theory faculty at Oberlin, had her first print article, “Prosodic Dissonance,” published in *Music Theory Online*, and presented a talk about “Last Choruses” at the annual meeting of the Society for Music Theory (with 2-month-old Cedar in tow!).



**Evelyn Saylor** '13, presented two concerts of her music at the Seanaps Festival in Leipzig in October. In November she sang the premieres of her compositions *Fundamental Ornamental* and *Scherzo* with Nina Guo and Dina Maccabee in Berlin. She provided music and sound design for Dragana Bulut’s *Beyond Love*, which was performed in Berlin in November and Oslo in February. In the latter month *Caligula* by Albert Camus was performed with her incidental music at the Munich Volkstheater.

Composer and saxophonist **Kate Campbell Strauss** '11, joins trumpeter Emily Mikesell on the album *Give Way*, which was released in January and received an Editor's Pick in *DownBeat* magazine. Kate's new trio with Kevin Lee (drums) and Jake Hickey (organ) opened for jazz pianist Benito Gonzalez at Colby College's Greene Block + Studios on February 7, 2025.

Sighted at Melissa Givens's recital last summer at Davidson



was **Frank Albinder** '80. He also has recently shared the major role Pomona College played in his education and career and his commitment to giving back to the College. [Read the article](#) on the Pomona College's website!



#### A NOTE FROM AN ALUMNUS

We recently received a "small thank you" from Robert Crawford '76 (Physics major and member of the College Choir and Men's Glee Club) for keeping him on our mailing list because, as he says, he enjoys "news of Pomona College and the Music Department."

*Robert, thank you for writing and we hope to see you at a concert soon.*

#### GLEE CLUB SPRING TOUR \* CHICAGO - BOSTON - NYC

**May 21** - Grace Episcopal Church, Oak Park, IL

**May 22** - Roosevelt University, Chicago, IL

**May 24** - First Church Cambridge, Cambridge, MA

**May 27** - St. Joseph's Church, New York, NY

All concerts at 7:30 p.m.

[Click to see the full listing info](#) \* We hope to see you soon!

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We hope you will share your music-specific happenings with us for our next Music Gazette.

Please submit to our new editor Audrey Dunne at: [audrey.dunne@pomona.edu](mailto:audrey.dunne@pomona.edu)

For broader life submissions please email them to the PC Magazine at: [pcmnotes@pomona.edu](mailto:pcmnotes@pomona.edu).

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Both concerto winners in concert with Pomona College Orchestra the left to right: Aria Wang and Aimee Co



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