

UNIVERSITY of VIRGINIA

McINTIRE DEPARTMENT of

**music** 

*presents*

---

---

# Chamber Music Series

## Faculty Recital

Ayn Balija, viola

Shelby sender, piano

---

---

Sunday, February 16, 2025

3:30 pm

Old Cabell Hall

University of Virginia

# Program

TOMRIS for solo viola, Op. 1 No. 1

Bariş Kerem Bahar  
(b. 1984)

Philadelphia Suite

Amanda Harberg

I. Firefly Prelude

II. A Close Call

III. Kingfisher

IV. Urban Hootenanny

The Black Sea (Karadeniz) for solo viola, Op. 1, No. 2

Bariş Kerem Bahar  
(b. 1984)

~ Intermission ~

Jhula Juhle for viola and piano

Reena Esmail  
(b. 1983)

Sonata for Viola and Piano in E-flat Major,  
Op. 120, No. 2

Johannes Brahms  
(1833-1897)

I. Allegro amabile

II. Allegro appassionato

III. Andante con moto

# About the Performers



**Ayn Baliya** is a dynamic violist dedicated to expanding the viola's expressive range through innovative performances and collaborations. She has performed as a guest artist in Canada, Hungary, Brazil, New Zealand, and various locations in the United States showing her commitment to sharing musical diversity. Dr. Baliya actively champions new works by contemporary composers like Libby Larsen, Leah Reid,

Judith Shatin, and Jorge Variego, commissioning and premiering pieces that push the boundaries of the instrument.

Dr. Baliya's versatility in performance styles allows her to collaborate with a range of organizations, including the Charlottesville Chamber Music Festival, Charlottesville Opera, Charlottesville Ballet, Early Music Access Project, Victory Hall Opera, Carolina Chamber Music Festival, the Richmond Symphony, Pittsburgh Symphony and the Staunton Music Festival. As an educator, she fosters creativity in younger musicians through initiatives like Violapalooza, an annual viola event in Central Virginia, serving on the faculty in the summer at the Tennessee Governor's School for the Arts and offering masterclasses and coachings at the college level. Currently, she serves as the Associate Professor of Viola at the University of Virginia and holds the position of Principal Violist with the Charlottesville Symphony. Ayn Baliya's passion for the viola and commitment to education make her a prominent figure in the music community.



**Shelby Sender** received her Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Piano Performance at the University of Maryland in 2013. She is active as both a solo and collaborative pianist. She has performed at both the Hungarian Embassy in Washington, D.C., and the Hungarian Ambassador's Residence. A faculty member of Crescendo, a classical music

festival located in Tokaj, Hungary each summer, she is also a co-founder and the accompanist for Mosaic Children's Choir in Charlottesville. In March 2012, she performed in Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall as a part of the Adamant School of Music's 70th Anniversary Concert. Shelby was featured in a 2011 festival at Ithaca College commemorating the 200th anniversary of Franz Liszt's birth, and she recently gave world premieres of works by Walter Giesecking at the American Musicological Society's 2009 annual conference. She frequently works with the Charlottesville Opera as well as Victory Hall Opera and has appeared on multiple occasions with the Annapolis Chamber Players. She can be heard on a Centaur recording of unpublished works by Walter Giesecking, playing both solo and chamber music.

In 2018, Dr. Sender was sent by the Sister Cities Commission to Pleven Bulgaria to represent Charlottesville in concert. She studied during the 2010/2011 academic year under Kálmán Dráfi at the Franz Liszt Academy of Music in Budapest. She gave performances in Bartók Hall at the Institute for Musicology and the Régi Zeneakadémia at the Franz Liszt Memorial House and Museum in Hungary, as well as the Haus der Kulturen der Welt and the Universität der Künste in Berlin.

Shelby received her Master of Music degree from the University of Maryland and her Bachelor of Music degree from Ithaca College. She is the co-founder for Mosaic Children's Choir, a group that incorporates movement, drama, dance, and performs in non-traditional spaces. She was the coordinator for the class piano program at the University of Maryland, where she also taught class piano and gave private lessons to piano minors. She currently maintains a private studio in Central Virginia and works as the choral and orchestral pianist at St. Anne's-Belfield in Charlottesville. Recent teachers include Bradford Gowen, Read Gainsford, and Jennifer Hayghe.

## The Philadelphia Suite

“I composed Philadelphia Suite during a time of great transition. My family and I had just moved out of our New York City apartment to our new home in New Jersey. My two young children and I stayed with my parents in my childhood home, in Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia, while my husband renovated our New Jersey home. It was during this time that I composed Philadelphia Suite for violist Brett Deubner.

Growing up, Chestnut Hill was for me a place full of magic, yearning, playfulness, heartbreak (or so I may have thought), wonder, happiness, and so much more. The nostalgia of this rich emotional landscape was triggered many times over during that summer, by watching my three-year old son chasing fireflies and my year-old daughter tottering after him (Firefly Prelude); the musical voices of my many relatives at a summer party (Urban Hootenanny), and the lush, evocative air in Fairmount Park where I loved to take endless soulful walks while growing up (Memory, A Close Call and Kingfisher).

Philadelphia Suite is about these memories and others. It is also about my observations of the place where I was a child filtered through the experiences of my own children.

The piece is dedicated with love and gratitude to my parents.”

—Amanda Harberg

## TOMRIS and The Black Sea, Op. 1

“The name of the first piece comes from Tomris Uyar, an important female poet and writer. She is a very important female figure for modern Turkey after the declaration of the republic. She has written very important books. At the same time, şehir is also a very important example for independent, free, hard-working modern Turkish women. I wanted to reflect the free and independent attitude in her stories in this music. The dramatic structure of the piece reflects not only her ideas but also some basic elements of Turkish music. It is possible to create different effects by hitting the instrument with the hands and fingers. Lyrical music prevails, and what was important for me here was to create memorable melodies just like Tomris did in her works.

The second piece, *Black Sea*, takes its name from the Black Sea region in the north of Turkey. The water of the Black Sea is sometimes rough and sometimes wavy, just like the unique style of its people. The meter used in

this piece (9/8) is a frequently used irregular rhythm pattern in Turkish music. This piece, which I composed during my time living in the Black Sea region, is inspired by the typical Black Sea dance music, horon.”

—Bariş Kerem Bahar

## **Jhula Jhule**

“When I was first asked to write a piece based upon Indian folksong, I cast a wide net for source material, listening to everything from Bengali Bauls to Rajasthani folk singing. However, the material I felt most connected to in the end didn’t come to me from a distant corner of India, but in the most common way folk music has historically been transmitted: through the generations of my own family.

This piece uses two folk melodies. The first is a song called Ankhon vina andharon re (meaning, “without eyes, it remains dark”), which I found on a recording my mother’s father made long before I was born. Though I was his only grandchild who never met him, I certainly inherited his love of music. We still have recordings of my grandfather singing songs in many languages – English, Marathi, Konkani, Portuguese and others – which I listen to from time to time, imagining what it might have been like to know him.

The other song comes to me from my grandmother, my father’s mother. My father’s parents lived with us for most of my childhood, and I grew up speaking to my grandmother only in Gujarati, a language that I spoke to no one else until she died in 2007. As a baby, she would often sing me this lullaby (jhula-jhule is the sound of a swing, rocking back and forth) – it is the only musical memory I have of her.

Working on this piece was very special for me. I spent most of my childhood as a first-generation American unconsciously trying to separate my home life from my outside life. I became aware very early on that there was no real resonance for my Indian culture in my American surroundings. As a composer, I’ve often quoted from pieces I love (mostly by other western composers, and more recently from Hindustani bandishes). But this is the first time I ever felt able to bring songs from my own family into my music, and into the western concert hall. I think – I hope – I’ve finally found a point of resonance.”

—Reena Esmail

## **Sonata for Viola and Piano in E-flat Major, Op. 120, no. 2**

“This rich, warm product of Brahms’s later years was originally conceived for the clarinet. While writing his G major String Quintet in the summer of 1890 at Ischl, his holiday haunt, Brahms decided he would retire from composing. Yet the following spring he became so enamored of the playing of Richard Mühlfeld, principal clarinetist of the Meiningen orchestra, that in the next few years he wrote four works all featuring the instrument: the Clarinet Trio and the Clarinet Quintet, both composed mostly in the summer of 1891, and the two Clarinet Sonatas, op. 120, written in the summer of 1894. In order to reach a wider audience Brahms also produced alternate versions of all these works, substituting the viola for the clarinet. He even made violin versions of the Trio and of the two Sonatas.

Brahms was drawn to Mühlfeld as a musician, not for his flash and technical brilliance, but for his warm tone, sophistication, and sensitivity—qualities Brahms emphasized in the four late clarinet works. In arranging the Sonatas for viola Brahms transposed certain passages an octave lower and introduced some double stops, but the works were already well suited for the deep, mellifluous tone of the viola; the piano part was left unchanged. With these Sonatas Brahms broke new ground in the repertoire for both the clarinet and the viola.

The Sonatas follow Brahms’s tendency to compose in pairs – usually contrasting in character. The E-flat major Sonata projects a more relaxed feeling in its outer movements, which surround an impassioned scherzo a less orthodox three-movement sequence.”

© Jane Vial Jaffe

# Next in our UVA Chamber Music Series

## Chamber Music Series - Faculty Chamber Ensembles

Sunday, March 2, 2025  
3:30pm, Old Cabell Hall

## Chamber Music Series - Kelly Peral, *oboe*

Sunday, April 6, 2025  
3:30pm, Old Cabell Hall

---

### *Special Thanks To:*

The Department of Music and all the students, interns,  
and volunteers who made this performance possible.

---

For more information about any of our events visit  
[music.virginia.edu/events](https://music.virginia.edu/events), subscribe to our weekly music e-mail  
at [music.virginia.edu/subscribe](https://music.virginia.edu/subscribe),  
or follow [uvamusic](#) on social media.

UNIVERSITY of VIRGINIA

MCINTIRE DEPARTMENT of

  
**music**