



Chee-Yun Kim



Ignace "Iggy" Jang



Quack Moore

# 'Strings at the Hilo Palace'

By **KATIE YOUNG YAMANAKA**  
Special to the Tribune-Herald

It's a match of talent and dedication, now 6 years old, that brings professional world-class musicians to the Hilo stage each year to reveal the electrifying possibilities of classical chamber music.

"Strings at the Hilo Palace" is part of the Hawaii Performing Arts Festival summer lineup of concerts, with Ignace "Iggy" Jang, Chee-Yun Kim, Quack Moore and friends set to perform at 7 p.m. July 16.

This year's event features approximately 30 HPAF string program students

in the orchestra, conducted by Jang, with pianist Moore, cellist Parry Karp and string program artistic adviser Kim.

The music selection will highlight everything from a Brazilian tango to concertos to one of the most popular classical music pieces of all time — Vivaldi's "Four Seasons" — showcasing the talents of renowned violinist Chee-Yun Kim.

"This is a concert that will tickle all of your senses," says Jang, HPAF string and woodwind program director and also the concertmaster for the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra. "'Four Seasons' is a work that is done in big cities often, but it hasn't been performed in Hilo for

a long time. The music is very evocative and colorful. The way Chee-Yun plays, people will not just hear the spring, but they will smell the flowers blooming."

Chee-Yun Kim has performed on five continents, and is winner of the 1990 Avery Fisher Career Grant.

She performs regularly with the world's foremost orchestras, including the New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, London Philharmonic and Dallas Symphony Orchestra, playing the Stradivarius "Ex-Strauss" (Cremona, 1708), which is on loan

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HPAF string students perform in 2015.  
Courtesy photos



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through the efforts of the Samsung Foundation of Culture of Korea and the Stradivari Society of Chicago.

"This concert is going to feature a great repertoire," Kim says. "We try to cater to the Hilo audience and give them a taste of what we're doing and get them excited about classical music."

Kim is known to bring beauty to the stage not only in her music but in her wardrobe as well.

"She's a walking fashion show," says HPAF executive director Genette Freeman. "Many of the ladies, as well as myself, look forward to what stunning gown she'll perform in next."

Freeman says that when you attend a performance by Kim, you get something worthy of a concert at Lincoln Center or Carnegie Hall.

"Not only that, but there is an aura of beauty and elegance about her that is compelling," she explains. "These concerts are in intimate venues, where you are close enough to witness the physicality of what they're doing — the artists' facial expressions and how they use their bodies. It's fascinating, and a sensory experience like no other."

Freeman adds that Jang is masterful to watch as well. "You can't keep your eyes and ears off of him," she says. "He is arguably the best-known classical artist in Hawaii, and he brings a career of international performances with him."

Says Kim, "People who have never been to a classical music concert will come up to me after our Hawaii performances and ask when we're coming back. If I can hear that from at least one audience member, then I feel it's a job well done. If we can share our passion for music with even one more person,

Chee-Yun Kim has performed on five continents and is winner of the 1990 Avery Fisher Career Grant.

Courtesy photo



it makes the world that much more beautiful."

Kim, who comes from her home base of Dallas each year for HPAF, adds that the Palace Theater is the perfect venue for those new to classical music because there's no pressure.

"The Palace Theater is a really unusual venue than other halls I play in during the regular season," she says. "It has charm, and it's more relaxed than traditional concert halls. You can talk to the audience. There's no pressure. Just come as you are."

Kim says that audience members shouldn't feel they have to be silent throughout the performance either.

"Laugh and clap — we love enthusiasm!" she says. "We appreciate it when we see people enjoying the music because we feed off that energy too."

Hilo's own Quack Moore, (otherwise known as Cheryl Hardwick), is a familiar face at the Palace Theater as well,

having served on the theater's board of directors for 12 years, and she continues to serve as musical director for the theater's annual musicals.

Moore, a pianist, retired to Hilo in 2001 after a career in New York City, where she spent 25 years with "Saturday Night Live" as a band member, composer and music director. She also holds a master's degree from Juilliard School of Music and won two Emmys as a composer for "Sesame Street."

"This is a once-a-year event that people really look forward to," says Moore. "Nobody works as hard as Iggy to pull this together. What's amazing about this concert is that there are so many musicians visiting from the mainland that are from a caliber you seldom get to hear in Hilo."

Moore says that it's a thrill for her to have this opportunity right at her doorstep each year.

"If I were in New York

still, I would probably never get to do this," she says. "There would be a line of people who wanted to play with people like Iggy and Chee-Yun. So I'm lucky to have this opportunity every summer to sit with them and do some chamber music."

Jang notes that there is some other homegrown talent in the orchestra as well by way of Hilo-born French horn player Alyssa Lassiter, a student at UH-Manoa.

Jang expanded his HPAF reach this year with a new woodwind program, whose students will round out the orchestra sound for Jang's thriving string program students at the Palace Theater and other HPAF concerts this month.

While rehearsal time is short, Jang is working behind the scenes nearly year-round to put things together.

"When I'm putting together the program, it's a blend between what I think the performers will like and what

the audience will like. Sometimes we travel across the globe through music, and sometimes we travel through time.

"This concert is really for the community to enjoy what both the faculty and students do. It's also to share how colorful classical music can be."

Moore adds that people might be surprised by how much they like the strings concert.

"Seeing the students play and the energy and talent on stage, as well as the variety in the program, really takes some people by surprise," she says. "If people want to allow themselves to have a new experience in music, this would be the one to have."

Sponsored in part by Robert Shapiro and Young Kim, tickets for "Strings at the Hilo Palace" are \$20, available at the Palace Theater box office, by calling 934-7010 or online at [www.hawaiiperformingartsfestival.org](http://www.hawaiiperformingartsfestival.org).