



Cellist **Sophie Shao**, winner of the prestigious Avery Fisher Career Grant and top prizes at the Rostropovich and Tchaikovsky competitions, is a versatile and passionate artist whose performances the New York Times has described as “eloquent, powerful,” the LA Times noted as “impressive” and the Washington Post called “deeply satisfying.” Shao has appeared as soloist to critical acclaim throughout the United States and has commissioned Howard Shore’s cello concerto *Mythic Gardens*, performing the premiere with Leon Botstein and the American Symphony Orchestra, the UK premiere with Keith Lockhart and the BBC Concert Orchestra, and European premiere with Ludwig Wicki and the 21st Century Orchestra. She also premiered Richard Wilson’s *The Cello Has Many Secrets* and Shih-Hui Chen’s multimedia concerto *Our Son is Not Coming Home to Dinner* with Jerry Hou and the Evergreen Symphony Orchestra. Shao has appeared as soloist throughout the United States, Europe and Asia, with the Houston Symphony, National Symphony Orchestra of Taiwan, National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine, and Pacific Symphony.

Ms. Shao is also committed to promoting chamber music of living composers, and performs Elena Ruehr’s *Cello Sonata No. 2*, a work written for her and Amy I-lin Cheng. Her recording of Herschel Garfein’s *The Layers* on Acis Records inspired Gregory Berg to write in the Journal of Singing: “Sophie Shao’s playing of this piece borders on the miraculous. Her tone is unfailingly gorgeous and deeply expressive. Has anybody ever made a cello sing more beautifully than this?” Shao has given recitals in Suntory Hall in Tokyo, the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, Middlebury College, Phillips Collection, University of Notre Dame, Bargemusic, and performed the complete Bach Suites at Union College. Her dedication to chamber music has conceived her popular “Sophie Shao and Friends” groups and performs in festivals around the country such as Chamber Music Northwest, Vail, Santa Fe, and Festival Mosaic, where she was featured as artist-in-residence in 2025. She has attended the Marlboro Music Festival, Ravinia Steans Institute, and a member of Chamber Music Society Two, a young artist residency of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. She is a dedicated music educator, presenting a lecture “Why Bach is Still Relevant in the 21st Century” and Bach recital at the National Gallery of Art, artist-in-residence at the Zeta Charter Schools in the Bronx, masterclasses at University of Michigan, Juilliard, Indiana University, Soochow University in Taipei, and associate professor at the University of Connecticut, where she teaches Cello and is coordinator of Chamber Music. She has previously taught at Vassar College, Princeton University, and Bard Conservatory.

Ms. Shao’s recordings include the Complete Bach Suites, Andre Previn’s “Reflections” for Cello and English Horn and Orchestra on EMI Classics, Richard Wilson’s *Diablerie* and *Brash Attacks*

and Barbara White's *My Barn Having Burned to the Ground, I Can Now See the Moon* on Albany Records, Howard Shore's original score for the movie *The Betrayal* on Howe Records, *Marlboro Music Festival's 50th Anniversary* on Bridge Records, Herschel Garfein's *The Layers* on Acis Records, and Howard Shore's *Mythic Gardens* on Sony Classical. Her new solo album, *CanCan Macabre*, is now available on Centaur Records.

A native of Houston, Texas, Ms. Shao began playing the cello at age six, and studied with Shirley Trepel, the principal cellist of the Houston Symphony. At age thirteen she enrolled at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, studying cello with David Soyer and chamber music with Felix Galimir. After graduating from the Curtis Institute, she continued her cello studies with Aldo Parisot at Yale University, receiving a B.A. in Religious Studies from Yale College and an M.M. from the Yale School of Music, where she was enrolled as a Paul and Daisy Soros Fellow.

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