

Contact: Diana Gonzalez

**PRESENTATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA:
"SCHOOL OF MUSIC AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA"**

Action Requested: Receive the presentation.

Executive Summary: Azeem Ward and Sean Botkin will provide performances. Mr. Ward, accompanied by Serena Hou, will play the *Ballade for Flute and Piano* by Frank Martin; Mr. Botkin will play the *Pasiónata* by Robert Washut.

The School of Music at the University of Northern Iowa is recognized nationally and internationally as one of the top music schools in the Midwest. The school, accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music, offers undergraduate and graduate degree programs to 332 music majors, as well as music courses and ensembles to hundreds of students in degree programs across the UNI campus. The School of Music has the largest undergraduate music undergraduate program in the state of Iowa and has more graduates teaching in the state of Iowa than any other institution.

Last year, UNI choirs, bands and student ensembles toured New York, Ireland, Iceland, Norway, Italy, Costa Rica, and throughout the Midwest. The Northern Iowa Symphony Orchestra recently toured throughout Brazil, and UNI Opera Students performed with the National Symphony Orchestra in San Jose, Costa Rica. The award-winning Jazz Band I will tour Cuba in Spring 2017. The UNI Panther Marching Band, which is the largest university band in the state of Iowa, will perform at the New Year's Day parade in Rome in January 2017. While teaching at UNI, current UNI faculty musicians have performed and presented in more than 30 countries and 38 states in the United States. Faculty performances and presentations have been extensive with prestigious invitations continuing to events/venues located around the world.

AZEEM WARD, FLUTIST (UNI GRADUATE STUDENT)

Azeem Ward began graduate studies in music performance at the University of Northern Iowa with Dr. Angeleita Floyd in January 2016. In June 2015, he received a Bachelor of Music in flute performance at the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB). While at UCSB, he was featured as a soloist with multiple ensembles across campus, composed for various ensembles, performed in the University Chamber Orchestra, Wind Ensemble, Jazz Ensembles, and Ensemble for Contemporary Music. Azeem has also won competitions, such as the UCSB Orchestral Soloist Competition (2012), the Performing Arts Scholarship Foundation competition (2013), and was awarded honorable mention in the Dorothy Van Waynen Scholarship Competition (2014).



In May 2015, Azeem became an international flute sensation when his senior flute recital went viral and was viewed by over 55,000 people. His signature blend of jazz, classical, and beatbox flute stylings has earned him features on Jimmy Kimmel Live and BuzzFeed, and in publications, such as The Tab, The Independent, and others. Azeem's senior flute recital was hailed by Kimmel as "the most anticipated flute recital in the history of the country." As he pursues new aspirations in recording, composing, producing, artist managing, teaching, and soloing at the University of Northern Iowa, he realizes that his journey is just beginning.

SEAN BOTKIN, PIANIST - ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF MUSIC

Pianist Sean Botkin began studying the piano at age five with his mother, making his first orchestral appearance four years later with the Honolulu Symphony. He went on to study privately with Neal O'Doan at the University of Washington and, under his direction, performed with the Seattle Symphony, Spokane Symphony, and Seattle Philharmonic Orchestra. Sean has garnered prizes in an impressive list of international piano competitions. A graduate of Stanford University, the Juilliard School, and Indiana University at South Bend, Sean has studied with eminent artists Adolph Baller, Martin Canin, and Alexander Toradze.



Sean has performed extensively in the United States, Europe, Central America, South America, Asia, and Russia. Concerto and recital performances include Kazan and St. Petersburg, Russia; Tbilisi and Kutaisi, Georgia; Salzburg Festival; Ravenna Festival; Stresa Festival; Ruhr Klavier Festival; Gilmore Festival; London; Cagliari; Rome; Florence; Bologna; Palermo; Lisbon; Tokyo; Seoul; Bogotá; and San José (Costa Rica). He made his New York debut at Alice Tully Hall in 1993. In 2009, his compact disc recording was released and he performed a series of concerts in Europe sponsored by Alexander Rachmaninoff and the Rachmaninoff Foundation. In 2012, he performed Rachmaninoff's *4th Piano Concerto* with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra at Ravinia, conducted by Gianandrea Noseda, and in 2013 with the Orchestra of the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia. In May 2015, Sean performed in Tbilisi, Georgia as part of the Easter to Ascension Festival. Other recent performances include Rachmaninoff's *Piano Concerto No. 2* in Waverly and Cedar Falls, Iowa, Rachmaninoff's *Trio élégiaque No. 1 in G minor* on the New York Philharmonic Ensembles concert in Merkin Hall in October 2015, and a solo recital at Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall in New York in 2016.

ACCOMPANIST: SERENA HOU

Serena Hou, UNI adjunct instructor, is an accomplished pianist and native of Hsin-Chu, Taiwan. She graduated with honors and degrees in piano performance from the Presbyterian Bible College of Arts (Bachelor of Music) in Taiwan and the University of Northern Iowa (Master of Music). Since 2008, she has served as a professional accompanist in the UNI School of Music and has performed for hundreds of UNI students, guest artists, and faculty members each year at studio, seminar, recital and competition performances, as well as during jury examinations and weekly applied music lessons.



UNI PROFESSORS:

DR. ANGELEITA FLOYD, PROFESSOR OF FLUTE (teacher)

Angeleita Floyd is a highly respected musician, conductor, and educator; she has served as Professor of Flute at the University of Northern Iowa since 1986. With her unique flair for insightful teaching and sensitive musical interpretation, Dr. Floyd has mentored numerous prize-winning students on the regional and national level. She regularly serves as master teacher and conductor at flute festivals and residencies throughout the United States, South America, Central America, Sweden and Europe. In 2013, she was honored to receive the National Flute Association's Distinguished Service Award and the James F. Lubker Faculty Research Award (UNI). Most recently, she was selected by the Board of Regents, State of Iowa, to receive the 2014-2015 Regents Award for Faculty Excellence.

ROBERT WASHUT, PROFESSOR OF MUSIC (composer)

Robert Washut is Professor of Music at the University of Northern Iowa, where he earlier served as Director of Jazz Studies and currently teaches music theory and jazz courses/ensembles. An accomplished jazz composer and arranger, Washut has received numerous commissions from collegiate and high school jazz ensembles, professional jazz artists, and symphony orchestras. He also has served as a jazz composer-in-residence at numerous universities around the country. He is in demand as a clinician and adjudicator nationally, and has conducted all-state jazz bands in 15 states.

During his 22 years as director of the award-winning UNI Jazz Band One, Washut recorded 11 CDs (two of which earned 5-star ratings from DownBeat magazine), toured Europe three times, consistently received "Outstanding Band" recognition at collegiate jazz festivals throughout the Midwest, and was awarded three "Outstanding Performance" citations in DownBeat's Annual Student Music Awards. At UNI, he was the recipient of the Distinguished Scholar Award in 2015 and the College of Humanities, Arts and Sciences Dean's Award for Excellence in Scholarship, Research and Creative Activity in 2014. He received the Outstanding Teaching Award in 1996.