
MEGAN BLEDSOE WARD

Bio

Megan Bledsoe Ward has been hailed by Downbeat Magazine for her “sharp musical intelligence” and “scintillating plays of light and subtle colors.” Her debut album, Pacific Harp Project, was awarded the 2016 Na Hoku Hanohano Award for Instrumental Album of the Year by the Hawaii Academy of Recording Arts.

Ward holds a Doctor of Musical Arts Degree in Harp Performance from University of Washington, where she studied harp with Heidi Lehwalder and Valerie Muzzolini Gordon. Ward’s 2012 doctoral dissertation, The Harp in Jazz and American Pop Music, is regarded as an authoritative work on the subject and was featured on the National Public Radio show “Jazz Night In America,” hosted by Christian McBride.

Ward studied harp with Kathleen Bride at Eastman School of Music, where she holds a Master of Music Degree in Harp Performance and Literature, a Master of Arts Degree in Music Theory Pedagogy, and a Bachelor of Music Degree in Harp Performance and Literature with a Minor in Mathematics. At Eastman, Ward served as a Teaching Assistant in both the Music Theory Department and the Conducting and Ensembles Department. She also studied composition and orchestration with Jennifer Bellow.

Ward was named the Alaskan Young Artist of the Year in 2007 and was awarded the prestigious Performer's Certificate from Eastman School of Music in the same year. In 2012, Ward was named the Mortar Board Alumni/Tolo Foundation’s Music Performance Scholar of the Year. She received the Wayne Barlow Award for Excellence in Harp Performance and Academics in 2010. Ward was a winner of the University of Washington's 2011-2012 Concerto Competition for performing Mozart's "Concerto for Flute and Harp" with flutist Meese Agrawal. In addition, Ward's solo harp composition "Fantasy on a Red Wheelbarrow" was performed at the USA-International Harp Competition in 2010. Ward also won Best Arrangement for “My Favorite Things” in the 2018 Wild Strings International Jazz Harp Composition Competition.

Ward has performed with the Hawaii Symphony Orchestra, Hawaii Opera Theatre, Hawaii Vocal Arts Ensemble, Anchorage Symphony Orchestra, Anchorage Opera, Anchorage Concert Chorus, Alaska Chamber Singers, Port Angeles Symphony Orchestra, Washington-Idaho Symphony, Skagit Opera Company, Federal Way Symphony, Philharmonia Northwest, Sammammish Symphony, Orchestra of the Southern Finger Lakes, Eastman Composer's Sinfonietta, Genesee Symphony, Musica Nova New Music Ensemble, Geneseo Symphony Orchestra, Cayuga Chamber Orchestra, Ithaca College Contemporary Ensemble, Cornell Wind Ensemble, as well as with several chamber groups. She is also the founder and leader of [Pacific Harp Project](#), an award-winning new jazz ensemble.

Ward currently performs as a solo, chamber, and orchestral harpist with ensembles throughout the United States. She is regularly commissioned to compose and arrange new works for various ensembles. Ward serves as adjunct instructor at Pacific Rim University and Chaminade University, in addition to instructing private harp students.