

A rock violinist himself, Aaron Meyer knows something about being a bit wicked and a tad wild with the bow and stringed instrument.

And, when he watches — and hears — young Kiarra Saito-Beckman, Meyer continues to be very impressed.

“She attacks the violin like she’s going to rip it in half,” says Meyer, who will joyfully play alongside Saito-Beckman at his holiday concerts this week. “The maturity and focus she plays with ... wow. What she’s doing on violin is like competing for gold medals in any sport.

“For me to stumble upon someone like her is unique and remarkable.”

Meyer stops short of saying Saito-Beckman is the best violin prodigy he has ever heard. But the 15-year-old from Bend is clearly on her way to great things, he says.

Indeed, Saito-Beckman has focused on a classical career, and she plans to attend a prestigious music school after her days at Summit High School in Bend.

It was there at Summit where Meyer first heard of her in March. Meyer played a benefit concert for the Summit music department, and a teacher told him about the young violinist.

Meyer later received a video of Saito-Beckman playing “Carmen Fantasy” by Franz Waxman, an extremely difficult arrangement for violin, he says.

“I said, ‘C’mon, 15 years old, it’s going to be amazing and blow me away or be awful,’” he says. “After the first couple notes, I was blown away. I thought, ‘This kid can do anything with the violin.’”

Meyer immediately invited her to perform in the 2014 Aaron Meyer Holiday Concert Series, which takes place 7 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 18, 7:30 p.m. Friday, Dec. 19, and 2 and 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 20, at First Congregational Church, 1126 S.W. Park Ave. (\$30-\$40, \$25 children/students/seniors, [aaronmeyer.com](#)). She’ll play “Carmen Fantasy,” as well as some traditional holiday music. She had also joined Meyer, his violin playing father Julian Meyer, and musical partner and guitarist Tim Ellis to record the “Father and Son” CD at Kung Fu Bakery

Recording Studio.

Saito-Beckman is excited about playing holiday music in a nonclassical way, although she’ll team with the Meyers on a Vivaldi concerto movement.

“This is not typical Christmas music,” she says. “It’s really exciting.

“I thought this would be super fun to play with him. ... I would love to continue to have fun and branch out in alternative styles. Having a wider view of music overall makes you a more well-rounded player. It helps with musical decisions and adds to playing.”

Saito-Beckman was adopted from Vietnam by Bob Beckman and Jan Saito. She first picked up a violin at age 3. Her sister also played violin, and her mother teaches piano.

“Music has always been a part of our household routine,” she says.

She has been a solo performer with the Charleston (S.C.) Symphony Orchestra, Central Oregon Symphony, Oregon Symphony, Oregon Ballet Theatre Orchestra and Coeur d’Alene Symphony. She has won several competitions, and attends the prestigious Meadowmount School for Music in the summer months. Itzhak Perlman attended Meadowmount.

Meyer, who calls himself a mentor and defers any credit to her two instructors, has gotten to know Saito-Beckman’s parents.

“Her parents don’t make her practice. She practices six hours a day,” he says. “Her focus is mind-boggling.”

He adds: “She’s just a cool kid. She’s not only a master on violin, but her stage presence is amazing, great with the audience, humble and down to earth, a nice person. ... She hits a home run everywhere she plays, and people freak out.”

Meyer plays with various musicians throughout the year, but he looks forward to his holiday events, which he calls “like our harvest in winemaking.” He has played in Bismarck, N.D., and British Columbia, lots of concerts locally, and corporate engagements at Nike and Columbia Sportswear. The season spikes with the four performances at the First Congregational Church, where he has played concerts around the holidays for the past 13 years.

“It’s a lot of fun, a lot of music, and I like the families and kids,” he says.

Next to him will be a very talented teen.

“I just think that the kind of music he does is really neat,” Saito-Beckman says. “I’ve never heard anything quite like it. I’ve not heard much violin and rock music together. It sounds awesome, upbeat, you want to tap your foot.”

Meyer knows that Saito-Beckman could excel at anything.

“I know she’ll do great, it’s just a matter of how she wants to design her career,” he says. “She’s 15. It’s just a matter of time for bigger things to come. She’s focused on a classical path, but she has abilities to do anything.”



Photo Credit: COURTESY OF FROM THE TOP, INC. - Kiarra Saito-Beckman, a violin prodigy from Bend, will be a featured performer in the Aaron Meyer Holiday Concert Series this week.