

MIRO BIOGRAPHY

Hailed by the New York Times as possessing “explosive vigor and technical finesse”, the dynamic **Miró Quartet**, one of America's highest-profile chamber groups enjoys its place at the top of the international chamber music scene. Now in its second decade, the quartet continues to captivate audiences and critics around the world with its startling intensity, fresh perspective, and mature approach.

Founded in 1995 at the Oberlin Conservatory, the Miró Quartet met with immediate success winning first prize at the 50th annual Coleman Chamber Music Competition in April 1996, and taking both the first and grand prizes at the Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition two months later. Earning both the First Prize and the Pièce de Concert Prize at the 1998 Banff International String Quartet Competition, the Miró Quartet also won the prestigious Naumburg Chamber Music Award in 2000. In 2005, the Quartet was the first ensemble ever to be awarded the coveted Avery Fisher Career Grant. They received the Cleveland Quartet Award that year as well.

Recent Miró Quartet seasons have included concerts in some of the world's most important concert venues, such as Amsterdam's Concertgebouw, the Berlin Philharmonic's Kammermusiksaal, the Konzerthaus in Vienna, Italy's Festival Internazionale Quartetto d'Archi Reggio Emilia, the Dresden Music Festival, London's Wigmore Hall and the Palacio Real de Madrid. The Miró Quartet has been Quartet-in-Residence at the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center Two in New York City, and was named to the Distinctive Debut Series of Carnegie Hall, which in conjunction with ECHO (European Concert Hall Organization) provided debut appearances in Cologne, Stockholm, Brussels, London, Vienna, Amsterdam and Athens. In recent seasons, the ensemble has collaborated with such artists as Leif Ove Andsnes, Joshua Bell, Eliot Fisk, Lynn Harrell, Midori, Jon Kimura Parker and Pinchas Zukerman. The Miró Quartet is also a favorite of numerous summer festivals having appeared regularly at the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, Chamber Music Northwest, La Jolla Summerfest, Orcas Island Chamber Music Festival, and the White Pine Festival.

Highlights of the Miró Quartet's 2008-09 season included a critically acclaimed return performance at Carnegie Hall as well as performances in Denver, Dallas, Rochester, Ft. Worth, Pittsburgh, Toronto, and Vancouver among many others. The 2009-10 season includes tours of Europe, Malaysia and Japan as well as performances across the US, Canada and the Caribbean. The Quartet will also return to New York to finish the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center's Beethoven quartet cycle at the newly renovated Alice Tully Hall.

The Quartet has been heard on numerous national radio broadcasts, including National Public Radio's Performance Today and Minnesota Public Radio's Saint Paul Sunday. Internationally, it has been featured on radio networks across Europe, Canada and Israel. The Quartet has also been seen on ABC's World News Tonight, A&E's Breakfast with the Arts, and on various programs of the Canadian Broadcasting Company. At the invitation of Isaac Stern, the Quartet performed in a live broadcast at the Jerusalem Music Center in Israel and was featured in the PBSTV "American Masters" documentary: "Isaac Stern: Life's Virtuoso".

In addition to a mastery of the standard repertoire, the Quartet maintains a fierce devotion to contemporary music. The Miró Quartet has commissioned and performed music by such composers as Brent Michael Davids, Leonardo Balada, Kevin Puts, Chan Ka Nin, Dominic Maican and David Schober, and Gunther Schuller. The Miró Quartet serves as the Faculty String Quartet-in-Residence at the Sarah and Ernest Butler School of Music at the University of Texas at Austin. Its members violinists Daniel Ching and Sandy Yamamoto, violist John Largess, and cellist Joshua Gindele - teach private students and coach chamber music there, while maintaining an active international touring schedule. With the Miró on campus, the Butler School of Music at the University of Texas at Austin is one of only a small group of universities whose faculties include a world-class string quartet. Deeply committed to fostering the next generation of musicians, the quartet

was on faculty at the Hugh A. Glauser School of Music at Kent State University before their current position in Austin. On short notice, the Quartet filled in for both Isaac Stern and Henry Meyer, leading master classes in Lucerne, Switzerland and Jeunesses Musicales Deutschland. In the summers, the Miró Quartet has taught and performed at the Sunflower Music Festival, the Norfolk Chamber Music Festival, Lake Tahoe Music Festival, and the Kent/Blossom Music Festival. The Quartet gives frequent master classes at many institutions around the world.

The Miró Quartet has released several recordings, most recently the Op. 18 quartets of Beethoven on the Vanguard Classics label. The Quartet has recorded music by George Crumb and Rued Langgaard - the performance of Crumb's Black Angels receiving international acclaim, including the French "Diapason d'Or". The Quartet plays Mendelssohn's final string quartet (Op. 80) and Schubert's Quintet in C, with celebrated cellist Matt Haimovitz, on an Oxingale CD titled "Epilogue". In 2009, the Miró Quartet began an exciting new live recording venture in collaboration with Naxos and Longhorn Records. The first recording featuring quartets by Antonín Dvořák and Kevin Puts will be released in the Fall of 2009.

The Miró Quartet is named for the Spanish artist Joan Miró, whose surrealist works — with subject matter drawn from the realm of memory and imaginative fantasy — are some of the most original of the 20th century. Additional information about the Quartet may be found at www.miroquartet.com

INDIVIDUAL BIOGRAPHIES

Daniel Ching, violin

Daniel Ching, a founding member of the Miró Quartet, began his violin studies at the age of 3 under tutelage of his father. At age 5, he entered the San Francisco Conservatory Preparatory Division on a full twelve-year scholarship, where he studied violin with Serban Rusu and Zaven Melikian, and chamber music with Susan Bates. At the age of 10, Daniel was first introduced to string quartets.

A graduate of the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, Daniel studied violin with Kathleen Winkler, Roland and Almita Vamos, and conducting with Robert Spano and Peter Jaffe. He completed his Masters degree at the Cleveland Institute of Music, where he studied with former Cleveland Quartet violinist Donald Weilerstein. He also studied recording engineering and production with Thomas Knab of Telarc, and subsequently engineered the Miró Quartet's first promotional disc.

Daniel is on faculty at the Sarah and Ernest Butler School of Music at the University of Texas at Austin, where he teaches private violin students and coaches chamber music. He concurrently maintains an active international touring schedule as a member of the Miró Quartet.

Daniel is a discerning connoisseur of all things cinematic and electronic. Before he became a busy parent, Daniel was an avid skier and a dedicated reader of science fiction—he looks forward to returning to those passions, some day. In his free time, Daniel enjoys hosting happy hours with friends and lounging at home with his wife Sandy (also a member of the quartet), their two sons, and two cats.

Sandy Yamamoto, violin

A member of the Miró Quartet since 1996, Satoko Sandy Yamamoto has performed throughout North America, Europe, and Asia as a soloist and chamber musician, garnering praise from audiences and critics alike. Since her solo debut with the North Carolina Symphony at the age of 11, Sandy has appeared as a soloist with numerous orchestras including the Winston-Salem Symphony, Durham Symphony, Asheville Symphony Orchestra, St. Barths Festival Orchestra, International Music Program Orchestra, and the Cleveland Institute of Music Orchestra among others.

With the Miró Quartet, she was a top prizewinner in the Naumburg and Banff competitions and received both the Avery Fisher Career Grant and the Cleveland Quartet Award. Sandy was invited to be a guest speaker and role model for the winners of the 2003 Glamour Magazine's Top Ten College Women, which is an annual scholarship competition that recognizes outstanding women in their field.

Upon winning the North Carolina National Bank Competition at age 13, Sandy received a full scholarship to the North Carolina School for the Arts. She continued her studies at the Cleveland Institute of Music where she received her Bachelors and Masters degrees. Her principal teachers were Elaine Richey, David Cerone, and former Cleveland Quartet violinist Donald Weilerstein.

Sandy teaches both violin and chamber music at the Sarah and Ernest Butler School of Music at the University of Texas at Austin. When she is not touring or teaching, Sandy enjoys being at home with her husband Daniel Ching (also a member of the Quartet), their two sons and two cats, and indulging in her two guilty pleasures: massages and HGTV.

John Largess, viola

Violist John Largess began his studies in Boston at age 12 in the public schools, studying with Michael Zaretsky of the Boston Symphony, and later as a student of Michael Tree at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. In 1995, he graduated from Yale University to join the Colorado String Quartet as interim violist with whom he toured the United States and Canada teaching and concertizing. The following year he was appointed principal violist of the Charleston Symphony Orchestra in South Carolina, a position he held until joining the Miró Quartet in 1997.

Also an active speaker and writer about all things chamber-musical, in 2004 Mr. Largess was invited to give a week-long audience lecture series as a part of the Eighth International String Quartet Competition at the Banff Centre for the Arts in Alberta, Canada; he repeated this series in 2007, and will do so again in 2010.

With his training in Greek and Latin Literature and his Bachelor's degree in Archeology from Yale University, as well as studies at the Hebrew University in Israel, he has participated in excavations in Greece, Israel, and Jordan. John loves to cook gourmet cuisine, particularly French pastry and fine desserts; luckily, he also enjoys exercising. John is a trained yoga instructor, having studied Vinyasa Power Yoga with Baron Baptiste. He also practices Kundalini, Bikram, and Astanga styles, and teaches yoga at 24 Hour Fitness and the Bodhi Yoga studio in Austin, Texas where he lives. When not standing on his head, he enjoys making his Tibetan Singing Bowl sing.

John serves as Senior Lecturer and Coordinator of String Chamber Music at the University of Texas at Austin School of Music.

Joshua Gindele, cello

Cellist Joshua Gindele, a founding member of the Miró Quartet, began his cello studies at the age of 3 playing a viola his teacher had fitted with an endpin. As cellist for the Miró, Joshua has won numerous international awards including an Avery Fisher Career Grant, the Naumburg Chamber Music Award and the Cleveland Quartet Award and has shared the stage with Pinchas Zuckerman, Joshua Bell, Midori, Matt Haimovitz, Eliot Fisk, Leif Ove Andnes, and The Oak Ridge Boys. He continues to perform across four continents and on some of the world's most prestigious concert stages.

In 2006 Joshua co-founded www.classicallounge.com. This is an online networking site where you can meet musicians, both professional and amateur, discover new talent or get discovered, share music, post and get concert information, share opinions, post classified ads and much more. The site was sold to www.classicalconnection.com in August of 2009.

In his free time he regularly hikes, climbs, runs, goes to the gym, plays tennis and golf, skis, cooks French food and enjoys the occasional glass of wine.

Joshua serves as Senior Lecturer at the University of Texas at Austin where he teaches a select number of private cello students and coaches chamber music

Anton Nel

Anton Nel, winner of the first prize in the 1987 Naumburg International Piano Competition enjoys a remarkable and multifaceted career that has taken him throughout North and South America, Europe, Asia, and South Africa. Recent highlights in the US include performances with the Cleveland Orchestra, and the Symphonies of San Francisco, Boston, and Detroit. He has an active repertoire of more than 100 works for piano and orchestra, including the newly discovered Third Concerto by Felix Mendelssohn of which he gave the North American premiere in November of 1997. His coast-to-coast recital appearances have included numerous performances on the Great Performers at Lincoln Center series in New York, the Library of Congress in Washington, DC, as well as the Ambassador Auditorium in Pasadena. A favorite at summer festivals he has performed with the Chicago Symphony at the Ravinia Festival, at Lincoln Center's Mostly Mozart Festival, as well as at the Aspen and Blossom Music Festivals (where he is on the artist-faculties), among many others. Over the years he has regularly collaborated with some of the world's foremost artists including members of the Juilliard and Cleveland Quartets, and cellist Zara Nelsova. With acclaimed violinist Sarah Chang he recently completed a highly successful tour of Japan as well as appearing at a special benefit concert for Live Music Now in London, hosted by HRH the Prince of Wales. In addition to concerts throughout North America and his sixteenth tour of South Africa (where he will perform the Beethoven Concerto cycle in Cape Town), he will be making return visits to Japan and France as well as undertake his debut tour of Korea during the 2002-3 season. Stephen Paulus has recently completed a new Piano Concerto for Mr. Nel, and the world premiere will take place in New York in March. He has three solo CDs (including a recital disc for EMI) as well as several chamber music recordings to his credit.

Following an auspicious debut at the age of twelve with Beethoven's C Major Concerto after only two years of study, the Johannesburg native captured first prizes in all the major South African competitions while still in his teens, toured his native country extensively and became a well-known radio and television personality. A student of Adolph Hallis, he made his European debut in France in 1982, and in the same year graduated with highest distinction from the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. He came to the United States in 1983 attending the University of Cincinnati, where he pursued his Masters and Doctor of Musical Arts degrees under Bela Siki and Frank Weinstock. In addition to garnering many awards from his alma mater during this three-year period he was also a top prizewinner at the 1984 Leeds International Piano Competition in England and won several first prizes at the Joanna Hodges International Piano Competition in Palm Desert in 1986. Eager to pursue dual careers in teaching and performing he was appointed to the faculty of the University of Texas at Austin at the age of 23, followed by professorships at the Eastman School of Music, and the University of Michigan, where he was chairman of the piano department. In September 2000, Anton Nel was appointed as the Priscilla Pond Flawn Regents Distinguished Professor of Piano and Chamber music at the University of Texas at Austin. Since his return he has been the recipient of both the Austin-American Statesman's Critics Circle Award for his performance of the Rachmaninov Second Concerto, as well as the University Cooperative Society/College of Fine Arts award for extra-curricular achievement. He was also recently appointed Visiting "Extraordinary" Professor at the University of Stellenbosch, and continues to teach master classes worldwide.