

Jupiter String Quartet – Group Biography

The **Jupiter String Quartet** is a particularly intimate group, consisting of violinists Nelson Lee and Meg Freivogel, violist Liz Freivogel (Meg's older sister), and cellist Daniel McDonough (Meg's husband, Liz's brother-in-law). Now enjoying their 16th year together, this tight-knit ensemble is firmly established as an important voice in the world of chamber music. In addition to their performing career, they are artists-in-residence at the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana, where they maintain private studios and direct the chamber music program.

The quartet has performed across the United States, Canada, Europe, Asia, and the Americas in some of the world's finest halls, including New York City's Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center, London's Wigmore Hall, Boston's Jordan Hall, Mexico City's Palacio de Bellas Artes, Washington, D.C.'s Kennedy Center and Library of Congress, Austria's Esterhazy Palace, and Seoul's Sejong Chamber Hall. Their major music festival appearances include the Aspen Music Festival and School, Bowdoin Music Festival, Lanaudiere Festival, West Cork (Ireland) Chamber Music Festival, Caramoor International Music Festival, Music at Menlo, Maverick Concerts, Madeline Island Music Festival, Rockport Music Festival, the Banff Centre, Yellow Barn Festival, Skaneateles Festival, Encore Chamber Music Festival, and the Seoul Spring Festival, among others.

Their chamber music honors and awards include the grand prizes in the Banff International String Quartet Competition and the Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition in 2004. In 2005, they won the Young Concert Artists International auditions in New York City, which quickly led to a busy touring schedule. They received the Cleveland Quartet Award from Chamber Music America in 2007, followed by an Avery Fisher Career Grant in 2008. From 2007-2010, they were in residence at the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center's Chamber Music Two and, in 2009, they received a grant from the Fromm Foundation to commission a new quartet from Dan Visconti for a CMSLC performance at Alice Tully Hall. In 2012, they were appointed as artists-in-residence and faculty at the University of Illinois, where they continue to perform regularly in the beautiful Krannert Center for the Performing Arts.

The Jupiter String Quartet feels a particular connection to the core string quartet repertoire; they have presented the complete Bartok string quartets at the University of Illinois and the complete cycle of Beethoven string quartets at the Aspen Music Festival and School, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the Lanaudiere Festival in Quebec. Also strongly committed to new music, they have commissioned string quartets from Syd Hodkinson, Hannah Lash, Dan Visconti, and Kati Agócs; a quintet with baritone voice by Mark Adamo; a piano quintet by Pierre Jalbert.

The quartet can be heard in numerous recordings on labels including Azica Records, Marquis Classics, and Deutsche Grammophon. Their next release is a recording of contemporary works with piano alongside Australian pianist Bernadette Harvey to be released on Marquis Records

The Jupiters place a strong emphasis on developing relationships with future classical music audiences through educational performances in schools and other community centers. They believe that, because of the intensity of its interplay and communication, chamber music is one of the most effective ways of spreading an enthusiasm for "classical" music to new audiences.

Early exposure to chamber music brought these four musicians together. Meg and Liz grew up playing string quartets with their two brothers and they grew to love chamber music during weekly coachings with cellist Oliver Edel, who taught generations of students in the Washington, D.C. area. Nelson's parents are pianists (his father also conducts) and his twin sisters, Alicia and Andrea, are both

musicians. Although Daniel originally wanted to be a violinist, he chose the cello because the organizers of his first string program declared that he had “better hands for the cello,” and is happy that he ended up where he did.

Jasper String Quartet – Group Biography

Winner of the prestigious CMA Cleveland Quartet Award, Philadelphia's Jasper String Quartet is the Professional Quartet in Residence at Temple University's Center for Gifted Young Musicians and the Founder and Artistic Director of Jasper Chamber Concerts.

The Jaspers have been hailed as “sonically delightful and expressively compelling” (The Strad) and the New York Times named their latest album, Unbound, as one of the 25 Best Classical Recordings of 2017. “The Jaspers... match their sounds perfectly, as if each swelling chord were coming out of a single, impossibly well-tuned organ, instead of four distinct instruments.” (New Haven Advocate)

Current Projects

The Quartet launched their inaugural season of Jasper Chamber Concerts in 2016, a series in Philadelphia devoted to world class performances of masterworks from around the world and Philadelphia, featuring Philadelphia-connected composers and performers on each concert .The Quartet continues with the third season in 2018-19.

The Jasper String Quartet also looks forward to their 2019 commission of Lera Auerbach, Akira Nishimura, Chris Theofanidis and Joan Tower for 4 Seasons | 4 composers, a work bringing the brilliant muse of the seasons to the string quartet genre.

The Quartet completed their latest commission tour of Aaron Jay Kernis’ 3rd String Quartet "River" at Wigmore Hall and their Carnegie Hall Recital with the work received a glowing review in The Strad. The Jasper String Quartet's next album on Sono Luminus will feature Kernis Quartet No. 3 and Debussy Quartet. This, their 5th album, completes the Kernis Quartet Cycle and adds to their recordings of Beethoven Op. 59, No. 3, Beethoven Op. 131 and Schubert Death and the Maiden. Their 2017 album, Unbound, features the first recordings of quartets by Donnacha Dennehy, Annie Gosfield, Judd Greenstein, Ted Hearne, David Lang, Missy Mazzoli and Caroline Shaw.

Community Engagement

The Quartet has performed hundreds of outreach programs in schools and enjoys educational work of all types. In 2018, the Quartet received their second Picasso Project Grant from Public Citizens for Children and Youth. This grant supports the Quartet's work with a South Philadelphia Public Elementary throughout the spring, culminating in a performance together. In addition, Fischhoff National Chamber Music Association recognized the Quartet's "outstanding and imaginative programming for children and youth in the United States" with their 2016 Educator Award.

Our History

In 2008, the Jaspers swept through the competition circuit, winning the Grand Prize and the Audience Prize in the Plowman Chamber Music Competition, the Grand Prize at the Coleman Competition, First Prize at Chamber Music Yellow Springs, and the Silver Medal at the 2008 and 2009 Fischhoff Chamber Music Competitions. They were also the first ensemble honored with Yale School of Music’s Horatio Parker Memorial Prize, an award established in 1945 and selected by the faculty for “best fulfilling... lofty musical ideals.” In 2010, they joined the roster of Astral Artists after winning their national auditions.

The Quartet was the 2010-12 Ensemble-in-Residence at Oberlin Conservatory and, in conjunction with Astral Artists, was awarded a 2012 Chamber Music America grant through its Residency Partnership Program for work in Philadelphia schools. From 2009-2011, the Jaspers were the Ernst C. Stiefel String Quartet-in-Residence at the Caramoor Center for Music and Arts (Katonah, NY). They were the first ensemble to be invited for a second year as such.

Our Philosophy

The Jaspers perform pieces emotionally significant to its members ranging from Haydn and Beethoven through Berg, Ligeti, and living composers. They have commissioned string quartets from some of today's best composers, including Aaron Jay Kernis, Andrew Norman, Nicholas Omiccioli, Conrad Tao and Annie Gosfield. Critics and audiences commend the Jasper String Quartet's "programming savvy" (clevelandclassical.com) and they have performed throughout the United States and in Canada, England, Italy, Japan, Korea, Norway and Panama.

JSQ Origin

Formed at Oberlin Conservatory, the Jaspers began pursuing a professional career in 2006 while studying with James Dunham, Norman Fischer, and Kenneth Goldsmith as Rice University's Graduate Quartet-in-Residence. In 2008, the quartet continued its training with the Tokyo String Quartet as Yale University's Graduate Quartet-in-Residence.

The Jasper String Quartet is named after Jasper National Park in Alberta, Canada and is comprised of violinists J Freivogel and Karen Kim, violist Sam Quintal, and cellist Rachel Henderson Freivogel.

