

# CECILIA STRING QUARTET

*Min-Jeong Kob and Sarah Nematallah, violins*

*Caitlin Boyle, viola*

*Rachel Desoer, cello*

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Hailed for its "powerful" (Chicago Sun-Times) and "dauntingly perfect" (Berliner Zeitung) performances, the Cecilia String Quartet performs for leading presenters around the world. Past engagements include performances at the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Berlin Konzerthaus, Prague's Rudolfinum, the Library of Congress, the Buffalo Chamber Music Society, and London's Wigmore Hall. CSQ's live concert recordings have been broadcast on more than a dozen international public radio networks, including Australia (ABC Classical FM), Canada (CBC/SRC), the United States (WQXR), Germany (DeutschlandRadio), and England (BBC Radio 3). The Cecilia String Quartet is currently based in Toronto Canada, where it is the James D. Stewart Quartet-in-Residence at the University of Toronto's Faculty of Music.

In addition to performing, the CSQ records for ANALEKTA. The group's debut album of music by Dvořák in 2012 was acclaimed for its "deeply felt imperativeness" (The Strad), and its 2013 recording featuring music by Janáček, Berg, and Webern, was applauded for "unleashing the ecstasy and angst of the music" (Gramophone Magazine). The Quartet's 2016 recording of string quartets by Felix Mendelssohn was nominated for a JUNO Award, and was named as one of Gramophone Magazine's 10 Best Mendelssohn Recordings.

Prize-winners at several international competitions, including Osaka (2008) and Bordeaux (2010), the Ceciliias were awarded First Prize at the 2010 Banff International String Quartet Competition (BISQC), where they also won the prize for the best performance of the commissioned work. Their commitment to new works can be seen through their project *Celebrating Canadian Women in Music*, a spotlight on a 'quartet' of immensely talented female Canadian composers, involving four new commissions that the CSQ will premiere and record.

Enthusiastic educators and mentors to the next generation of chamber musicians, the CSQ members have held teaching posts at festivals, conservatories, and universities across Canada and the United States, both as an ensemble and as individuals. All of the CSQ members are adjunct professors at the University of Toronto, where they work with music performance majors, as well as engage in collaborative projects with the Composition Department and Department of Humanities. Initiatives developed by the CSQ at the University of Toronto include the Music Mentorship Program, and the String Quartet Composition Competition.

Deeply committed to outreach, the CSQ began developing educational presentations on classical music and the string quartet while it served as String-Quartet-in-Residence at San Diego State University from 2007-2009. Since that time, the group has conducted hundreds of educational presentations across Canada, the United States, Italy, and France. The Quartet has presented for a wide variety of organizations, such as the Monarch School for Homeless Youth, Veteran's Village



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for Homeless Veterans, Learning Through the Arts at the RCM, and the SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory. CSQ also developed a series of concerts called Xenia Concerts that were customized to appeal to, and be welcoming of, children on the autism spectrum and their families.

Min-Jeong Koh plays on a ca. 1767 Joannes Baptista Guadagnini violin, Sarah Nematallah plays on an 1851 Jean Baptiste Vuillaume violin, and Rachel Desoer performs on a 1929 Carlo Giuseppe Oddone cello, all on loan from an anonymous donor. Caitlin Boyle plays on a 2002 viola by Joseph Curtin. The Quartet would like to thank the anonymous donor, the Canada Council for the Arts, the Ontario Arts Council, and the Toronto Arts Council for their generous support.



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