

Zakarias Grafilo, violin • Frederick Lifszitz, violin • Paul Yarbrough, viola • Sandy Wilson, cello

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Having celebrated its 35th Anniversary in 2016, the Alexander String Quartet has performed in the major music capitals of five continents, securing its standing among the world's premier ensembles. Widely admired for its interpretations of Beethoven, Mozart, and Shostakovich, the quartet's recordings of the Beethoven cycle (twice), Bartók, and Shostakovich cycle have won international critical acclaim. The quartet has also established itself as an important advocate of new music through over 30 commissions from such composers as Jake Heggie, Cindy Cox, Augusta Read Thomas, Robert Greenberg, Martin Bresnick, Cesar Cano, and Pulitzer Prize-winner Wayne Peterson. A new work by Tarik O'Regan, commissioned for the Alexander by the Boise Chamber Music Series, had its premiere in October 2016, and a work for quintet from Samuel Carl Adams is planned for premiere in early 2019 with pianist Joyce Yang.

The Alexander String Quartet is a major artistic presence in its home base of San Francisco, serving since 1989 as Ensemble in Residence of San Francisco Performances and Directors of The Morrison Chamber Music Center at San Francisco State University.

The Alexander String Quartet's annual calendar of concerts includes engagements at major halls throughout North America and Europe. The quartet has appeared at Lincoln Center, the 92nd Street Y, and the Metropolitan Museum in New York City; Jordan Hall in Boston; the Library of Congress and Dumbarton Oaks in Washington; and chamber music societies and universities across the North American continent. The quartet recently returned as faculty to the Yale School of Music's Norfolk Chamber Music Festival, a nexus of their early career. Recent overseas tours have brought them to the U.K., the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Italy, Germany, Spain, Portugal, Switzerland, France, Greece, the Republic of Georgia, Argentina, Panamá, and the Philippines. Their recent return and tour of Poland for the Beethoven Easter Festival has been beautifully captured in the new (2017) award-winning documentary film, *Con Moto: The Alexander String Quartet*.

Among the eminent musicians with whom the Alexander String Quartet has collaborated are pianists Joyce Yang, Roger Woodward, Anne-Marie McDermott, Menachem Pressler, Marc-André Hamelin, and Jeremy Menuhin; clarinetists Joan Enric Lluna, David Shifrin, Richard Stoltzman, and Eli Eban; soprano Elly Ameling; mezzo-soprano Joyce DiDonato; violinist Midori; cellists Lynn Harrell, Sadao Harada, and David Requiro; and jazz greats Branford Marsalis, David Sanchez, and Andrew Speight. The quartet has worked with many composers including Aaron Copland, George Crumb, and Elliott Carter, and has long enjoyed a close relationship with composer-lecturer Robert Greenberg, performing numerous lecture-concerts with him annually.

The Alexander String Quartet added considerably to its distinguished and wide-ranging discography over the past decade, now recording exclusively for the FoghornClassics label. There were three major releases in the 2013-2014 season: The combined string quartet cycles of Bartók and Kodály ("If ever an album had "Grammy nominee" written on its front cover, this is it." –*Audiophile Audition*); the string quintets and sextets of Brahms with Toby Appel and David Requiro ("a uniquely detailed, transparent warmth" –*Strings Magazine*); and the Schumann and Brahms piano quintets with Joyce Yang ("passionate, soulful readings of two pinnacles of the chamber repertory" –*The New York Times*). Their recording of music of Gershwin and Kern was released in the summer of 2012, following the spring 2012 recording of the clarinet quintet of Brahms and a new quintet from César Cano, in collaboration with Joan Enric Lluna, as well as a disc in collaboration with the San Francisco Choral Artists. An album of works by Cindy Cox was released in 2015. Their recordings of Mozart's "Prussian" Quartets and Piano Quartets with Joyce Yang will be released in 2018.

The Alexander's 2009 FoghornClassics release of the complete Beethoven cycle was described by *Music Web International* as performances "uncompromising in power, intensity and spiritual depth," while *Strings Magazine* described the set as "a landmark journey through the greatest of all quartet cycles." In fall 2017, Foghorn released a high resolution remastered version of their acclaimed recording of the complete Shostakovich quartets. The label released a three-CD set (*Homage*) of the Mozart quartets dedicated to Haydn in 2004. A recording of the complete quartets of Pulitzer prize-winning San Francisco composer, Wayne Peterson, was released in the spring of 2008. BMG Classics released the quartet's first recording of Beethoven cycle on its Arte Nova label to tremendous critical acclaim in 1999.

The Alexander String Quartet was formed in New York City in 1981 and captured international attention as the first American quartet to win the London International String Quartet Competition in 1985. The quartet has received honorary degrees from Allegheny College and Saint Lawrence University, and Presidential medals from Baruch College (CUNY). The Alexander plays on a matched set of instruments made in San Francisco by Francis Kuttner (born in Washington, D.C., 1951). This year marks the 30th anniversary of these instruments, known as the Ellen M. Egger quartet.

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