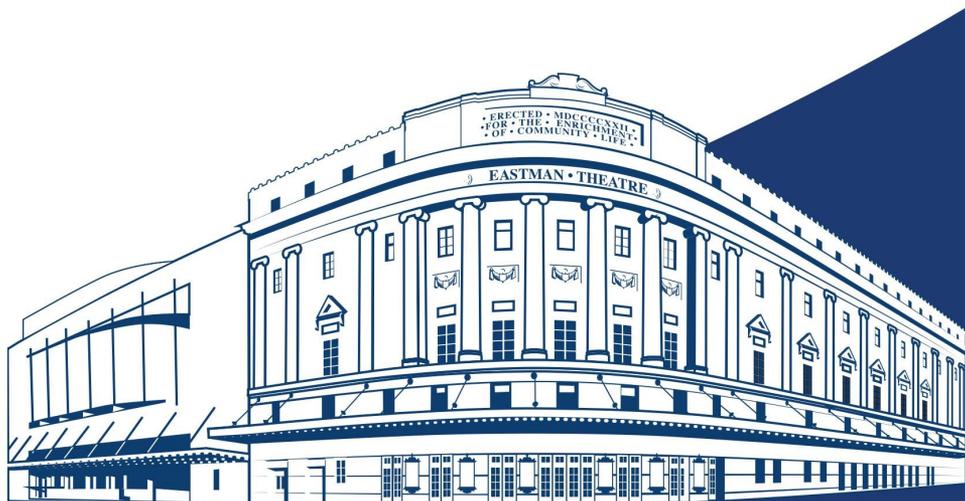


JAMES E. CLARK CHAMBER
MUSIC RESIDENCY

JACK QUARTET

Tuesday, March 19, 2024
Hatch Recital Hall
12:30 PM



EASTMAN
SCHOOL OF MUSIC
UNIVERSITY of ROCHESTER

PROGRAM

Songs from the Seventh Floor (2022)

Johnny MacMillan

String Quartet No. 1 (1951)

Fantasia

Allegro scorrevole

Adagio

Variations

Elliott Carter

(1908-2012)

JACK QUARTET

Christopher Otto, violin

Austin Wulliman, violin

John Pickford Richards, viola

Jay Campbell, cello

PROGRAM NOTES

String Quartet No. 1 (2015)

Elliott Carter

Among the lessons taught to me during the composition of my First Quartet was on about my relationship with performers and audiences. For as I wrote, an increasing number of musical difficulties arose for prospective performers and listeners, which the musical conception seemed to demand. I often wondered whether the quartet would ever have any performers or listeners. Yet within a few years of its composition it won an important prize and was played more than any work I had written up to that time. It even received praised from admired colleagues. Up to this time, I had quite consciously been trying to write for a certain audience – not that which frequented concerts of traditional music, nor that which had supported the avant-garde of the '20's (which in the '40's had come to seem elitist) but a new, more progressive and more popular audience. I had felt that it was my professional and social responsibility to write interesting, direct, easily understood music.

With this quartet, however I decided to focus on what had always been one of my own musical interests, that of 'advanced' music, and to follow out, with a minimal concern for their reception, my own musical thoughts along these lines. Now I think there is every reason to assume that if a composer has been well taught and has had experience, then his private judgment of comprehensibility and quality is what he must rely on if he is to communicate importantly.

The First Quartet was written in the undisturbed quiet of the Arizona desert, and, like the desert horizons I saw daily while it was being written, the quartet present a continuous unfolding and changing of expressive characters – one woven into the other or emerging from it – on a large scale. The general plan was suggested by Jean Cocteau's film *Le sang d'un poète*, in which the entire dream-like action is framed by an interrupted slow-motion shot of a tall chimney being dynamited. Just as the chimney begins to fall apart, the shot is broken off and the entire movie follows after which the shot of the chimney is resumed at the point it left of, showing it disintegration in midair, and closing the film with its collapse on the ground. A similar interrupted continuity is employed in this quartet's starting with a cadenza for cello alone that is continued by the first violin alone at the very end. On one level, I interpret Cocteau's idea (and my own) as establishing the difference between external time (measured by the falling chimney, or the cadenza) and internal dream

PROGRAM NOTES

time (the main body of the work) – the dream time lasting but a moment of external time but from the dreamer's point of view, a long stretch. In the First Quartet, the opening cadenzas also act as an introduction to the rest, and when it reappears at the end, it forms the last variation in a set of variations.

The First Quartet is designed in four large sections: Fantasia, Allegro scorrevole, Adagio and Variations. This scheme is broken by two pauses, one in the middle of the Allegro scorrevole and other just after the Variations have been started by the cello, while the other instruments were concluding the Adagio. The first section, Fantasia, contrasts many themes of different character frequently counterpointed against each other. It concludes with the four main ideas being heard together, fading in and out of prominence. This leads directly to a rapid Allegro scorrevole, a sound-mosaic of brief fragments, interrupted once by a dramatic outburst, then resumed, again interrupted by a pause, again resumed, and finally interrupted by another outburst that forms the beginning of the Adagio.

During this extended slow movement, the two muted violins play soft, contemplative music answered by an impassioned rough recitative of the viola and cellos. This Adagio forms the extreme point of divergence between simultaneous ideas in the quartet and has been led up to and is led away from by many lesser degrees of differentiation. The last section, Variations, consists of a series of different themes repeated faster at each successive recurrence, some reaching at their speed vanishing point sooner than others.

— *Elliott Carter*

MEET THE ARTISTS

Undeniably our generation's "leading new-music foursome," the GRAMMY-nominated **JACK Quartet's** "stylistic range, precision and passion have made the group one of contemporary music's indispensable ensembles" (*The New York Times*). Comprising violinists Christopher Otto and Austin Wulliman, violist John Pickford Richards, and cellist Jay Campbell, JACK was founded in 2005 and operates as a nonprofit organization dedicated to the performance, commissioning, and appreciation of 20th and 21st century string quartet music. Through intimate, longstanding relationships with many of today's most creative voices, the quartet has a prolific commissioning and recording catalog and has been nominated for three GRAMMY Awards and is the 2024 recipient of Chamber Music America's Michael Jaffee Visionary Award.



JACK is featured in the ongoing celebrations of John Zorn's 70th birthday, including an album release of his complete string quartets, major global tour dates, and a premiere with Barbara Hannigan. Other season highlights include a three-concert day at Wigmore Hall, the premiere of Natacha Diels' *Beautiful Trouble* in Philadelphia, an Australian tour, and the 5th edition of JACK Studio.

Through its successful nonprofit model, the quartet has both self-commissioned and been commissioned to create hundreds of new works. The world's top composers choose JACK because of its singular dedication to innovation and experimentation, realized through the invisible labor of extensive studio time and the support of full-time leadership staff and a Board of Directors.

Committed to helping dismantle outmoded classical music pipelines for composers, JACK's all-access initiative JACK Studio funds collaborations with a selection of artists each year, who receive money, workshop time, mentorship, and resources to develop new works for string quartet. JACK receives more than 500 applications each season, and selects up to 15 composers or artists. More than 40 composers have worked with JACK through JACK Studio thus far.

MEET THE ARTISTS

Among many honors, JACK has earned an Avery Fisher Career Grant and Fromm Music Foundation Prize; been selected as *Musical America's* 2018 "Ensemble of the Year; and received Lincoln Center's Martin E. Segal Award, New Music USA's Trailblazer Award, and the CMA/ASCAP Award for Adventurous Programming.

JACK has been nominated for three GRAMMY Awards, the most recent being their albums of music by John Luther Adams – nominated in the 2022 and 2023 Best Ensemble Performance category. Other albums include music by Helmut Lachenmann, Catherine Lamb, Du Yun, Elliott Sharp, Zosha di Castri, Iannis Xenakis, and an upcoming release of the complete quartets of Elliott Carter.

The JACK Quartet makes its home in New York City, where it is the Quartet in Residence at the Mannes School of Music at The New School. They also teach each summer at New Music on the Point in Vermont. JACK has long-standing relationships with the University of Iowa String Quartet Residency Program, where they teach and collaborate with students each fall and spring, as well as with the Lucerne Festival Academy, of which the four members are all alumni. Learn more at www.jackquartet.com.

We acknowledge with respect the Seneca Nation, known as the "Great Hill People" and "Keepers of the Western Door" of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. We take this opportunity to thank the people whose ancestral lands the Eastman School of Music of the University of Rochester currently occupies in Rochester, New York.

UPCOMING EASTMAN SERIES CONCERTS

Tickets for all series concerts can be purchased at EastmanTheatre.org

EASTMAN PIANO SERIES

Joyce Yang

Kilbourn Hall

Thursday, March 21, 2024 at 7:30 PM

Blessed with “poetic and sensitive pianism” (Washington Post), pianist Joyce Yang captivates audiences with her virtuosity, lyricism and interpretive sensitivity. As a Van Cliburn International Piano Competition silver medalist and Avery Fisher Career Grant recipient, Yang will showcase her colorful musical personality in works of Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninoff, Bach, Aaron Kernis, and Stravinsky.

FACULTY ARTIST SERIES

Carlos Sanchez-Gutierrez & Robert Morris, composers

Hatch Recital Hall

Thursday, March 28, 2024 at 7:30 PM

UPCOMING STUDENT ENSEMBLE CONCERTS

All student performances are free unless otherwise noted.

Trombone Choir

Kilbourn Hall

Wednesday, March 20, 2024 at 7:30 PM

Musica Nova

Kilbourn Hall

Friday, March 22, 2024 at 7:30 PM

Music of Takemitsu, Pesca, and Rands

Frühling Posaunen

Kilbourn Hall

Sunday, March 24, 2024 at 3:30 PM



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