

THE ALEXANDER STRING QUARTET

Biography

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

Having celebrated its 25th Anniversary in 2006, 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 has also established itself as an important advocate of new music through over 25 commissions and numerous premiere performances. In 1999 BMG Classics released the Quartet's nine-CD set of the Beethoven cycle on its Arte Nova label to tremendous critical acclaim. The FoghornClassics label released a three-CD set (*Homage*) of the Mozart quartets dedicated to Haydn in 2004. Foghorn released the a six-CD album (*Fragments*) of the complete Shostakovich quartets in 2006 and 2007, and a recording of the complete quartets of Pulitzer prize-winning San Francisco composer, Wayne Peterson, was released in the spring of 2008. A new recording of the Beethoven cycle will follow in 2009. The Alexander String Quartet is a major artistic presence in its home base of San Francisco, serving there as directors of the Morrison Chamber Music Center at the School of Music and Dance in the College of Creative Arts at San Francisco State University and Ensemble in Residence of San Francisco Performances.

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. 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, and the Philippines.

The Alexander String Quartet's 25th anniversary was also the 20th anniversary of its association with New York City's Baruch College as Ensemble in Residence. This landmark was celebrated through a performance by the ensemble of the Shostakovich string quartet cycle at Engelman Recital Hall in the Baruch Performing Art Center in April 2006. Of these performances, *The New York Times* wrote, "The intimacy of the music came through with enhanced power and poignancy in the Alexander quartet's vibrant, probing, assured and aptly volatile performances. ... Seldom have these anguished, playful, ironic and masterly works seemed so profoundly personal."

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