

UC San Diego

ARTPOWER



ISIDORE STRING QUARTET



Dear ArtPower Friends,

For two decades, ArtPower at UC San Diego has been a leader in arts and culture, enriching the lives of countless individuals through diverse and captivating programming. ArtPower's 20th anniversary season provides us with the opportunity to reflect on the organization's remarkable journey and its enduring commitment to bringing world-class performing arts to our community.

Founded in 2003, ArtPower was conceived with a simple yet profound mission: to engage, energize, and transform the diverse cultural life of UC San Diego and the greater region through the performing and media arts. Over the years, ArtPower has consistently delivered a diverse array of performances that span genres with the goal of developing more empathetic students and community members who are better prepared to engage in the world around them.

Tonight, you are in for an evening of musical enchantment and profound expression as we showcase the Isidore String Quartet, renowned for their exquisite interpretation and masterful execution of classical repertoire. With their seamless blend of precision and emotion, we invite you on a journey through the rich tapestry of chamber music as you experience the captivating synergy of four virtuosic musicians.

As we continue this milestone season, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to those who have invested their time, talent, and treasure into ArtPower at UC San Diego. Thank you for being part of the ArtPower legacy.

Cheers,

A handwritten signature in white ink that reads "Colleen".

Colleen Kollar Smith

Chamber Music/USA

ISIDORE STRING QUARTET

Feb. 9, 2024 at 7:30 pm
Department of Music's
Conrad Prebys
Concert Hall

Phoenix Avalon, *violin*
(first on Mozart
and Childs)

Adrian Steele, *violin*
(first on Mendelssohn)

Devin Moore, *viola*

Joshua McClendon, *cello*

Program

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–91)

String Quartet in C Major, K.465 "Dissonant"
Adagio-Allegro
Andante cantabile
Menuetto (Allegretto)
Molto allegro

Billy Childs (b. 1957)

String Quartet No. 2 "Awakening"
Wake Up Call
The White Room
Song of Healing

Intermission

Felix Mendelssohn (1809–47)

String Quartet in E-flat Major, Opus 44, No. 3
Allegro vivace
Scherzo (Assai leggero e vivace)
Adagio non troppo
Molto allegro con fuoco

The Isidore String Quartet
appears by arrangement
with David Rowe Artists
www.davidroweartists.com

About the Program

String Quartet in C Major, K.465 "Dissonant"

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Born January 27, 1756, Salzburg

Died December 5, 1791, Vienna

When Mozart moved to Vienna in 1781, the towering figure in music was Franz Joseph Haydn, then nearly 50. One of the first works Mozart encountered in Vienna was the set of six string quartets Haydn had just composed as his Opus 33. Mozart was impressed. Haydn had taken the string quartet, which for the previous generation had been a divertimento-like entertainment, and transformed it. He liberated the viola and cello from what had been purely accompanying roles and made all four voices equal partners; he further made each detail of rhythm and theme and harmony an important part of the musical enterprise. Under Haydn's inspired hands, the string quartet evolved from entertainment music into an important art form. Mozart, who was 25 when he arrived in Vienna, quickly grasped what the older master had achieved with the string quartet and embarked on a group of six quartets of his own. We normally think of Mozart as a fast worker, but he worked for three years on these quartets, revising and refining until he had them just the way he wanted. When the six quartets were published in 1785, Mozart dedicated them to Haydn—we know them as Mozart's "Haydn Quartets"—and conceded that they were indeed "the fruit of long and laborious toil."

The Quartet in C Major, the last of the six and nicknamed the "Dissonant" Quartet, was completed on January 14, 1785. The nickname comes from its extraordinary slow introduction, a span of 22 bewildering measures that left early audiences confused and threatened. The quartet is nominally in C major, and the music opens with a steady pulse of C's from the cello, but as the other three voices make terraced entrances above, their notes (A-flat, E-flat, and A—all wrong for the key of C major) grind quietly against each other, unmooring us from any sense of tonal stability and leaving us unsettled, uncertain of the music's character or direction. But order is restored at the *Allegro*, where the music settles into radiant C major and normal sonata form. This movement is quite straightforward, flowing broadly along its bright C-major energy; the development concentrates on the first subject, Mozart offers repeats of both exposition and development, and an ebullient coda draws the movement to a quiet close. Mozart specifies that the second movement should be *Andante cantabile*, and it does sing, though that lyric main idea evolves and grows more conflicted as the movement proceeds. Those tensions subside, and the

movement almost whispers its way to the pianissimo close. The Menuetto powers its way along a rock-ribbed strength, but Mozart surprises us when the trio moves unexpectedly into urgent C minor. After these stresses, the concluding *Allegro* returns to the bright spirits of the opening movement. The form here is one of those magical amalgamations in which Mozart was able to fuse rondo and sonata form. There is something both serious and lighthearted about this movement, and its firm conclusion—in resounding C major—reminds us how far we have traveled from the harmonic uncertainty of the very beginning of the first movement.

Mozart may have been deeply impressed by Haydn's quartets, but now it was Haydn's turn to be amazed. When he heard the "Dissonant" Quartet and two others of this cycle performed at a garden party in Vienna in February 1785, Haydn pulled Mozart's father Leopold aside and offered as sincere a compliment as any composer ever gave another: "Before God and as an honest man I tell you that your son is the greatest composer known to me either in person or by name. He has taste and, what is more, the most profound knowledge of composition."

String Quartet No. 2 "Awakening"

Billy Childs

Born March 8, 1957, Los Angeles

Audiences will most readily think of Billy Childs as a jazz pianist and composer. He studied piano and composition at the Community School of the Performing Arts sponsored by the University of Southern California, went on to tour with J.J. Johnson and Freddie Hubbard, and eventually began to release solo albums that have won a number of Grammy Awards. But classical music has remained important to Childs, and he has had works commissioned and performed by the Los Angeles Philharmonic under Esa-Pekka Salonen, Detroit Symphony under Leonard Slatkin, Kronos Quartet, Los Angeles Master Chorale, American Brass Quintet, and others.

Commissioned by the Ying Quartet in 2012, Childs' String Quartet No. 2 was inspired by a harrowing episode in the composer's life. Two years earlier, his wife suffered a pulmonary embolism, had to be rushed to the hospital, and recovered only after extremely intense treatment. Childs' three-movement quartet depicts the process of that dangerous episode and of her painful journey back to health. There have, of course, been musical works that depict the recovery from illness. The middle movement of Beethoven's String Quartet in A Minor, Opus 132, subtitled "Hymn of Thanksgiving to the Godhead from an Invalid in the Lydian Mode," depicts his feeling of new strength as he recovered from a debilitating illness. Schoenberg's String Trio, Opus 45, depicts the moment when he had a heart attack, his heart stopped,

and he was saved only by a hypodermic injection straight into his heart. Childs takes a broader approach to his wife's illness, composing a string quartet that not only takes us on a journey through that illness but also captures the difficult emotional experience it became for both the composer and his wife.

Each of the three movements was inspired by a different stage in that journey. *Wake Up Call* depicts the moment Childs received the telephone call that his wife had been hospitalized and that she was undergoing emergency treatment. The music here is disordered, full of violence, speed, and dissonance. The movement is in ternary form: this opening disorder gives way to a more reflective central episode before a return of the anguished opening material.

The White Room is set in the hospital as the composer waits for news of his wife. That wait is harrowing, and this eerie music incorporates the sounds of hospital machines: the beeping of monitors, the sounds of the machines themselves, the sound of a human heartbeat.

Song of Healing depicts his wife's recovery, but that recovery does not bring unalloyed triumph. Rather, it brings uncertainty as the couple feels disoriented in the aftermath of what has happened—their relationship has been redefined by this trauma. In a musical dialogue between violin and cello, Childs traces the voices of the couple as they come to terms with this experience and are able to reconcile their complex emotions. The quartet concludes peacefully.

String Quartet in E-flat Major, Opus 44, No. 3

Felix Mendelssohn

Born February 3, 1809, Hamburg

Died November 4, 1847, Leipzig

The Quartet in E-flat Major is among the least familiar of Mendelssohn's six string quartets. It is the last (though second in order of composition) of a set of three quartets that Mendelssohn published in 1839 and dedicated to the Crown Prince of Sweden. These were extraordinarily busy years for Mendelssohn (but so apparently was every year in the brief life of this driven man). In 1835 he had been named conductor of the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, and now he poured his energy into turning it into what we think of as a "modern" orchestra: Mendelssohn raised standards to virtuoso levels, programmed both new and familiar repertory, and established a base of public support through subscription concerts. In March of 1837 he married, and that fall he conducted at the Birmingham Music Festival; during the summer of 1838 he would conduct at the Lower Rhine Music Festival in Cologne. In the midst of all these responsibilities, Mendelssohn still made time to

compose, and he wrote the Quartet in E-flat Major during the busy concert season, completing the score on February 6, 1838, three days after his 29th birthday.

The dramatic opening *Allegro vivace* is an unusually long movement, based largely on the sharply-defined theme heard immediately in the first violin. The pick-up to this theme, a swirl of four 16th-notes, will recur throughout the movement, functioning both thematically and as an accompaniment figure. This music is extroverted and energetic, soaring throughout the range of all four instruments and making effective contrasts of dynamic and mood.

The second movement is a scherzo, and Mendelssohn specifies that he wants the performance “Very fast and light.” The music pulses continually forward on its 6/8 meter, and trills from all four instruments contribute to the music’s feeling of endless energy before the sudden, surprising close on quiet pizzicato strokes. The slow movement belongs largely to the first violin, with the other voices providing steady accompaniment beneath its soaring melodies. The concluding *Molto Allegro con fuoco* is aptly-named, for this movement feels fiery in its rush of energy. Again the first violin is given a part full of virtuoso prominence, but now Mendelssohn demands similar playing from the other three voices as well. The conclusion is almost orchestral in its powerful textures.

—Program Notes by Eric Bromberger

About the Artists

Isidore String Quartet

Adrian Steele and Phoenix Avalon, violins

Devin Moore, viola

Joshua McClendon, cello

Winners of a 2023 Avery Fisher Career Grant, and the 14th Banff International String Quartet Competition in 2022, the New York City-based Isidore String Quartet was formed in 2019 with a vision to revisit, rediscover, and reinvigorate the repertory. The quartet is heavily influenced by the Juilliard String Quartet and the idea of ‘approaching the established as if it were brand new, and the new as if it were firmly established.’

The members of the quartet are violinists Adrian Steele and Phoenix Avalon, violist Devin Moore, and cellist Joshua McClendon. The four began as an ensemble at the Juilliard School, and following a break during the global pandemic reconvened at the Kneisel Hall Chamber Music Festival in the summer of 2021 under the tutelage

of Joel Krosnick. In addition to Mr. Krosnick, the ISQ has coached with Joseph Lin, Astrid Schween, Laurie Smukler, Joseph Kalichstein, Roger Tapping, Misha Amory, Timothy Eddy, Donald Weilerstein, Atar Arad, Robert McDonald, Christoph Richter, Miriam Fried, and Paul Biss.

Their Banff triumph brings extensive tours of North America and Europe, a two-year appointment as the Peak Fellowship Ensemble-in-Residence at Southern Methodist University in Dallas beginning in 2023–24, plus a two-week residency at Banff Centre including a professionally produced recording, along with extensive ongoing coaching, career guidance, and mentorship.

The Isidore Quartet has appeared on major series in Chicago, Pittsburgh, Seattle, Durham, Washington (JFK Center), San Antonio, Toronto, Montreal, and Ottawa, and has collaborated with a number of eminent performers including James Ehnes, Jeremy Denk, Shai Wosner, and Jon Nakamatsu. Their 2023–24 season will feature appearances in Berkeley (Cal Performances), Boston (Celebrity Series), Washington DC (Phillips Collection), New York (92nd St. Y), Chicago, Baltimore, Ann Arbor, Denver, Houston, Indianapolis, Tucson, Phoenix, Santa Fe, La Jolla, Aspen, Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, and at Dartmouth College, and Spivey Hall in Georgia, among many others. European highlights include Edinburgh, Lucerne, Brussels, Amsterdam, Hanover, Frankfurt, and Hamburg's ElbPhilharmonie.

Outside the concert hall the quartet has worked with PROJECT: MUSIC HEALS US providing encouragement, education, and healing to marginalized communities—including elderly, disabled, rehabilitating incarcerated and homeless populations—who otherwise have limited access to high-quality live music performance. They have also been resident ensemble for the Contemporary Alexander School/Alexander Alliance International. In conjunction with those well-versed in the world of Alexander Technique, as well as other performers, the ISQ explores the vast landscape of body awareness, mental preparation, and performance practice.

The name Isidore recognizes the ensemble's musical connection to the Juilliard Quartet: one of that group's early members was legendary violinist Isidore Cohen. Additionally, it acknowledges a shared affection for a certain libation—legend has it a Greek monk named Isidore concocted the first genuine vodka recipe for the Grand Duchy of Moscow!

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A portion of funding for ArtPower is provided by the UC San Diego Student Services Fee Committee.

Donor list and PowerPlayer list reflecting gifts and pledges received after July 1, 2022.

THE CHRISTOPHER AND PATRICIA WEIL INSPIRATION CHALLENGE

ArtPower at UC San Diego relies on donations to provide free tickets to students. In supporting ArtPower, individuals contribute not only to the cultural enrichment of the UC San Diego community but also to the cultivation of a generation of Changemakers who understand the profound role that art plays in shaping a better, more interconnected world.

The Christopher and Patricia Weil Inspiration Challenge provides a dollar-for-dollar match, up to \$50,000, for all new, upgraded sponsor gifts, or multi-year pledges in support of ArtPower at UC San Diego. Donors with a qualifying gift for the Inspiration Challenge will be recognized at the total matched gift level. To make your gift visit artpower.ucsd.edu.



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BOARTE PIANO TRIO



CHAMBER MUSIC | POLAND

Fri, April 5 at 7:30 pm

Dept. of Music's

Conrad Prebys Concert Hall

Tickets: \$50–65

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Tickets via SSO

The Boarte Piano Trio was enthusiastically created by three of the most dedicated and outstanding Polish musicians of our time. The promisingly gifted pianist Konrad Skolarski, the breathtaking virtuoso Jarosław Nadrzycki, and the sensational cellist Karol Marianowski are all acclaimed artists in their country and abroad and are laureates of many international music competitions, each with a long history of performances all over Europe, North and South America, as well as Asia.

Beethoven: Piano Trio in C minor, op. 1 no. 3

Pärt: *Fratres* (arr. for piano trio)

Felix Mendelssohn: Piano Trio in C minor, op. 66 no. 2

