

Borealis String Quartet

At the vanguard among exciting quartets of their generation, the Borealis String Quartet has created a sensation with its dynamic performances, passionate style, and refined musical interpretations. With a sound called “radiant” by *Strad*, the Borealis String Quartet has performed to critical acclaim and sold-out concert halls throughout North America. The Quartet is sponsored by the influential Chimei Culture Foundation of Taiwan, allowing them the use of four historic instruments and offering the opportunity for the Quartet to teach and perform extensively throughout Taiwan each year.

Formed in the fall of 2000, the Borealis String Quartet established a stellar reputation so quickly that its concerts became instant sell-outs. The Borealis made its New York City debut for Brooklyn Friends of Chamber Music in 2003, and in 2004-05, the Quartet returned to New York to perform for Schneider Concerts and made its first appearance for Music Toronto. Subsequent seasons have seen the Quartet performing on prestigious series throughout North America, including performances in the 2008-09 season at New York’s Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Seattle Symphony’s Benaroya Hall, and at the National Academy of Sciences in Washington, D.C., and in the 2009-10 season at New York’s People’s Symphony Concerts and for Portland Friends of Chamber Music. The 2010-11 season will feature a performance for SUNY at Buffalo’s Slee Beethoven Cycle as well as a repeat appearance at Music Toronto.

A longtime favorite at Canadian festivals, the Quartet’s summer venues have included the Vancouver Chamber Music Festival, the Festival of the Sound in Ontario, the Indian River Festival on Prince Edward Island, and the Baies des Chaleurs Festival in New Brunswick. The Borealis made its first U.S. festival appearance at the Mendocino Music Festival in California, and in the summer of 2009 undertook a ten-day residency at Mexico’s Festival de Música de Cámara de Aguascalientes.

Devoted to performing other chamber music repertoire, the Borealis has collaborated with many different artists, including clarinetist James Campbell, pianist Luba Dubinsky, and cellist Sadao Harada. Additionally, the Quartet has worked and collaborated with members of the Borodin, Emerson, and Tokyo String Quartets. The Borealis has also dedicated itself to the promotion of new works, including those by Murray Schafer and Steven Chatman, and have commissioned works from Imant Raminsh, Kelly-Marie Murphy, and John Oliver. The Borealis String Quartet’s critically acclaimed CD – *Classic Borealis* (Skylark Records) – was nominated for a Western Canadian Music Award. Additionally, the Quartet will be producing a number of recordings for the Chimei Foundation over the next three years.

The Borealis String Quartet acknowledges the support of the Province of British Columbia through the British Columbia Arts Council.

Individual Biographies

Photos by Steven Lemay

Patricia Shih



PATRICIA SHIH, violinist, became a student of the legendary Josef Gingold at Indiana University at age 14. He described her as “one of the greatest talents that I have ever taught. Her great technique, inborn musicality, sense of style, and virtuosity are unequalled.” Ms. Shih has appeared worldwide as soloist and recitalist in major venues including Wigmore Hall in London and Carnegie Hall in New York, where she performed Wieniawski’s *Concerto No. 1* at age 15. The same year, she won the Special Prize at the Wieniawski International Competition in Poland. The recipient of numerous awards, including the Sylvia Gelber Award for the most outstanding young Canadian musician and the Mozarteum Prize in Salzburg, Ms. Shih has performed as guest soloist with major orchestras such as the Royal Philharmonic, the National Symphony Orchestra of Mexico, the Munich Chamber Orchestra, and the Toronto,

Singapore, and Seattle Symphonies. Her DVD of Vivaldi’s Chaconne was featured on the Classic FM Channel across Europe, and a documentary of her career was televised across North America on the Biography Channel.

Violin: Lorenzo Storioni (Cremona, c 1780)

Yuel Yawney



YUEL YAWNEY, violinist, has performed extensively in Canada, the United States and the Czech Republic, where he completed his advanced training at the Prague Academy with Joseph Suk. He also studied at the Harid Conservatory in Florida and at the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University in Texas. Frequently appearing as soloist and chamber musician, he has been heard at the Kneisel Hall Chamber Music Festival, the Banff Summer Festival, Domaine Forget, and the Scotia Festival.

Violin: Giovanni Battista Rogeri (Cremona, 1698)

Nikita Pogrebnoy



NIKITA POGREBNOY, violist, was born in St. Petersburg, Russia, where he graduated from the world-famous St. Petersburg Conservatory with highest honors. He came to the United States at the invitation of Victor Rosenbaum, the director of the Longy School of Music, who, after hearing Mr. Pogrebnoy's performance, awarded him a full scholarship to study in Cambridge. Mr. Pogrebnoy won the Valentino Bucchi International Competition for Viola in Rome, and has appeared as both a soloist and with various chamber ensembles across Europe, Spain, Central America, and the U.S. A regular performer at festivals, including the International Musical Arts Institute in Fryeburg, Maine, and the Colorado Music Festival, Mr. Pogrebnoy has also been featured on National Public Radio.

Viola: Pietro Giovanni Mantegazza (Milano, 1791)

Shih-Lin Chen



SHIH-LIN CHEN, cellist, joined the quartet in July 2006. A native of Taiwan, he is the recipient of a number of awards and the winner of both the concerto and chamber music competitions at the Guandu Music Festival. Taiwan's National Council for Cultural Affairs selected Mr. Chen for its National Chamber Music Seed Project in 2001. In addition, he has performed in Taiwan's National Concert Hall and has toured extensively throughout his home country, Asia, and North America. His principal teachers have included Sergei Mnojin at the National Taipei University of the Arts and Paul Katz at the New England Conservatory of Music. Mr. Chen has received coaching from Yo-Yo Ma, Nathaniel Rosen, and Donald Weilerstein.

Cello: Lorenzo Storioni (Cremona, 1778)



Jean-François Latour

The vibrant young Canadian pianist Jean-François Latour has established a reputation as a poetic and imaginative artist with brilliant technique and a strong personal voice who can communicate across cultures and generations. Leon Fleisher, with whom he studied at the Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore, calls Latour “a highly gifted and intelligent young artist with fine musical instincts.” Recognized as one of

Canada's most talented young pianists, Jean-François Latour has performed throughout Canada at major venues such as the Institut Canadien in Québec City, the National Arts Center in Ottawa, and the Place des Arts in Montréal and in many major cities of Europe and North America, including Paris, Toulouse, Geneva, Hamburg, Brussels, Washington D.C., Baltimore and Chicago. He was recently named Young Soloist of the Year by the French Language Public Radio Network. As a result, M. Latour's live performances have been broadcast by the Radio Suisse-Romande, Italian National Radio-RAI, Belgian Radio-Television, and the Société Radio-Canada.

Jean-François Latour made his orchestral debut at the age of eleven with the Orchestre Symphonique de Trois-Rivières. Since then, he has performed with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, the Victoria Symphony, the Orchestre Métropolitain du Grand Montréal, the Orchestre Symphonique de Québec, the Hilton Head Orchestra, and the Orchestre Symphonique de la Montérégie among others. He has played under the direction of Timothy Vernon, Christopher Wilkins, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Victor Pull, Agnes Grossman, Marc David, Christopher Warren-Green and Lara Webber. His festival appearances include the Orford Music Festival, the Festival d'été de Québec, the Festival du Domaine Forget, the Festival international de musique de Lanaudière, the Fontana Chamber Music Festival in Michigan, and the Vermont Mozart Festival. As a chamber musician, Jean-François Latour has collaborated with Alain Trudel, Philippe Magnan, Jens Lindeman, and the Pacifica Quartet.

In 2005, M. Latour played the piano on stage in performances of *Les 24 Préludes de Chopin* by the Marie Chouinard Dance Company in both Tokyo and Montréal. He also made his China debut with a recital and master classes at the Wuhan Conservatory of Music. A documentary film of his visit was made for national broadcast. This summer, Mr. Latour was featured at the Festival International de Lanaudière, at the Festival du Domaine Forget, and at the Festival de Musique de Lachine (Montréal).

M. Latour's honors include several first prizes in the Canadian Music Competition, a top prize in the Stepping Stones Competition, and first prize in the Concours National de Piano de Sucy-en-Brie in France. He served as a member of the jury for the 2004 Canadian Music Competition.

In May 2002, Jean-François Latour completed the prestigious Artist Diploma program at the Peabody Conservatory of Music, where he was a full scholarship student of Leon Fleisher. He also holds a Graduate Performance Diploma from Peabody and an Artist Diploma from the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto, where he was a student of Marc Durand and Leon Fleisher. He earned his Bachelor's and Master's degrees at the University of Montréal, where he studied with Marc Durand. Mr. Latour has also worked with John Perry, André Laplante, Ellen Mack, Marek Jablonsky and Gilbert Kalish.

M. Latour is the recipient of a Career Grant from the Canadian Council for the Arts. He resides in Montreal.