



**2024/2025**

**77<sup>th</sup> SEASON**

**Friends of Chamber Music present the Isidore String Quartet in concert  
at the Vancouver Playhouse, Tuesday, April 15, 2025, at 7:30pm**

**ISIDORE STRING QUARTET**

**Adrian Steele – violin**  
**Phoenix Avalon – violin**  
**Devin Moore – viola**  
**Joshua McClendon – cello**



New York  
and the

The Isidore String Quartet was formed in 2019 in City. Winners of a 2023 Avery Fisher Career Grant, 14th Banff International String Quartet Competition in 2022, the group shares a vision to revisit, rediscover, and reinvigorate the string quartet repertoire. The ensemble is heavily influenced by the Juilliard String Quartet and their idea of “approaching the established as if it were brand new, and the new as if it were firmly established.”

Violinists Adrian Steele and Phoenix Avalon, violist Devin Moore, and cellist Joshua McClendon began the quartet at Juilliard, and following a break during the pandemic reconvened in 2021 under the tutelage of Joel Krosnick. In addition, the ISQ has received coaching from 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 has brought the Isidore extensive tours of North America and Europe, a two-year appointment as the Peak Fellowship Ensemble-in-Residence at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, plus a two-week residency at the Banff Centre including a professionally produced recording, ongoing coaching, career guidance, and mentorship.

The Isidore Quartet has appeared in Chicago, Boston, Pittsburgh, New York, Berkeley, Seattle, Durham, Tucson, Phoenix, Santa Fe, Baltimore, Washington DC, Denver, Ann Arbor, San Antonio, Houston, La Jolla, Toronto, Montreal, Edmonton, Calgary, Vancouver, and Ottawa, and has collaborated with eminent performers including James Ehnes, Jeremy Denk, Shai Wosner, and Jon Nakamatsu. European highlights have included 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 the 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 through one of

that group's early members, legendary violinist Isidore Cohen (who later joined the Beaux Arts Trio). Additionally, it acknowledges a shared affection for a certain libation, because legend has it that a Greek monk named Isidore concocted the first genuine vodka recipe for the Grand Duchy of Moscow!

The Isidore String Quartet is represented by David Rowe Artists.

## Programme

*String Quartet No. 19 in C Major, K465 "Dissonance"*

*Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)*

**Adagio: Allegro**  
**Andante cantabile**  
**Menuetto: Allegro**  
**Allegro**

A large number of Mozart's works were commissioned, some were material for his own concerts, and others were designed to demonstrate his fitness for a particular position or to influence a prospective employer. Only a few compositions, this quartet amongst them, were composed in order to fulfill Mozart's inner being. The K465 String Quartet is the last of six that Mozart wrote in Vienna between 1782 and 1785. These quartets, stated by Mozart to be "the fruit of long and arduous toil", were inspired by, and dedicated to Joseph Haydn. The subtitle, "Dissonance", is thought to have been derived from the adverse comments of audiences who thought that they heard "wrong" notes in the 22-measure introduction. Some performers in Italy even returned the parts to the publishers for corrections! Indeed, both during and after Mozart's lifetime, the Adagio has been the subject of much criticism.

Although Mozart never explained the dissonance in the introduction to the quartet, it is thought that it was his way of accentuating the contrast of the bright radiance of the rest of the movement. The bustling themes of the **Allegro** which follow the dissonant introduction are more telling as a result of their juxtaposition to the tense opening. After a rhythmic development, a quiet coda concludes the movement.

The **Andante** is one of Mozart's most intimate and personal creations. The mood is quiet and gentle. After the leading theme there is a transition to the second theme by means of a simple but sublime conversation between the first violin and the cello. Near the end of the movement, one hears an enchanting new lyrical countermelody set against echoes of the violin and cello duet.

The **Menuetto**, confident and forthright, crackles with energy. It is partnered by a trio in the minor key, full of dynamic contrasts well suited to the agile wide-leaping theme.

The **Finale** is written in Mozart's favourite Rondo-Sonata form. It delights the listener with free and happy motifs, each more charming and joyful than the previous. Happy and vigorous throughout, there is nevertheless a suggestion of a darker emotion. The coda brings the quartet to a glorious conclusion.

*String Quartet No. 3, "Unrequited"*

*Billy Childs (1957- )*

Born in Los Angeles in 1957, Billy Childs was already proficient at the piano by age six. At age 16, he was accepted into the University of Southern California's Community School for the Performing Arts, studying music theory and piano with some of the world's most renowned musical scholars. He graduated from USC in 1979 with a degree in composition.

"Unrequited, String Quartet #3, was conceived as a commentary on the story of Intimate Letters: String Quartet #2, by Leos Janáček. The first thing - the only thing, really - that popped into my mind was the tragedy of unrequited love (hence the name, Unrequited). When I first heard Janáček's Intimate Letters performed live, the emotion of the piece jumped out at me: the wild shifts of tempo, the beautiful and plaintive melodies, the stark dynamic contrasts. I wanted to illustrate my perspective on this strange

relationship between Janáček and Kamila Stösslová, by telling the story of a man who goes through different phases of emotion, before finally coming to terms with the fact that his love for her is one-sided - it will never be returned the way he would like. I sought to compose *Unrequited* so that it moves, like the five stages of grief, through a variety emotions - from romantic, pure love, through paranoid, obsessive, neurotic possessiveness, arriving finally at despondent acceptance.

This piece was commissioned by Madelyn, Jerald, and Lee Jackrel and is dedicated to and premiered by the Lyris Quartet.”

—Note by Billy Childs

## **Intermission**

*String Quartet No. 12 in E-flat Major, Opus 127*

*Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)*

**Maestoso – Allegro**  
**Adagio, ma non troppo e molt cantabile**  
**Scherzando vivace – Presto**  
**Finale**

When the Schuppanzigh Quartet premiered this masterpiece in 1825, the audience was bewildered. With all of Beethoven's late quartets, it took the world half a century to catch up with his genius and recognize the significance and greatness of his music.

The conventional sonata form is modified in the **Maestoso**. After the first ponderous chords, the initial subject delights with its characteristic tune. This is varied and skillful and is followed by another lyrical tune. The three-note figures from the opening theme's first bars return in the development. Finally, the little quaver figure from the opening's third bar returns in the coda.

The **Adagio** is structured as a theme with five variations and a coda. A long, sustained melody of great beauty, this departs from classical construction by providing new rhythms and melodies in each variation. At the end, the short and lovely coda fades to pianissimo.

The **Scherzo** offers a rhythmic and playfully varied cello figure, taken from the quartet's opening. The Trio, played presto, breaks off suddenly. The movement concludes with a brief return to the motif.

In the **Finale**, a rambling first violin melody is followed by a humourous tune. The development is based on both subjects. At the close, the pace ebbs in a long diminuendo. The coda is startlingly original; the initial figure is played in turn by each instrument in different keys, accompanied by the others against a triplet base. A return to E-flat Major marks the climax; after a slow drop to pianissimo, the work ends abruptly and in bleak resignation with two loud chords.

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We are thrilled to announce the dates and groups for our 78<sup>th</sup> season, the **2025-2026 Friends of Chamber Music concert series!**

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|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Tue 14 Oct 2025 7:30 pm  | Aris Quartet (1st FCM concert)        |
| 2. Tue 28 Oct 2025 7:30 pm  | Esme Quartet (2nd FCM concert)        |
| 3. Tue 11 Nov 2025 7:30 pm  | Modigliani Quartet (2nd FCM concert)  |
| 4. Sun 01 Feb 2026 3:00 pm  | Casals Quartet (2nd FCM concert)      |
| 5. Sun 15 Feb 2026 3:00 pm  | Castalian Quartet (1st FCM concert)   |
| 6. Tue 24 Feb 2026 7:30 pm  | Takacs Quartet (28th FCM concert)     |
| 7. Sun 15 Mar 2026 3:00 pm  | Mandelring Quartet (10th FCM concert) |
| 8. Tue 24 Mar 2026 7:30 pm  | Trio Boheme (1st FCM concert)         |
| 9. Tue 31 Mar 2026 7:30 pm  | Dover Quartet (2nd FCM concert)       |
| 10. Tue 28 Apr 2026 7:30 pm | Calder Quartet (1st FCM concert)      |

Please make note of the dates (including 3 Sunday matinées) and ensembles.

\*Artists are subject to change without notice.

Programmes have not yet been finalised.

Subscription packages and single tickets for the 2025-2026 season will go on sale after the end of the 2024-2025 concert series.