



2025/2026

78<sup>th</sup> SEASON

**Friends of Chamber Music present the Calder Quartet in concert  
at the Vancouver Playhouse, Tuesday, April 28, 2026, at 7:30 pm**

**Benjamin Jacobson – violin**

**Tereza Stanislav – violin**

**Jonathan Moerschel – viola**

**Eric Byers – cello**



Hailed as "Superb" and "imaginative, skillful the New York Times, the Calder Quartet audiences exploring a broad spectrum of always striving to fulfill the composer's vision in their performances. The group's distinctive artistry is exemplified by a musical curiosity brought to everything they perform and has led them to be called "one of America's most satisfying - and most enterprising - quartets". (Los Angeles Times)

creators" by captivates repertoire,

Winners of a prestigious 2014 Avery Fisher Career Grant, they are widely known for the discovery, commissioning, recording and mentoring of some of today's best emerging composers. In addition to performances of the complete Beethoven and Bartok quartets, the Calder Quartet's dedication to commissioning new works has given rise to premieres of dozens of string quartets by established and up-and-coming composers including Peter Eötvös, Andrew Norman, Christopher Rouse, Ted Hearne and Christopher Cerrone. Inspired by innovative American visual artist Alexander Calder, the Calder Quartet's desire to bring immediacy and context to the works they perform creates an artfully crafted musical experience.

Recent highlights include Carnegie Hall, Kennedy Center, Disney Hall, Lincoln Center, Metropolitan Museum of Art, multiple performances at Wigmore Hall, Barbican, Salzburg Festival, Donaueschingen Festival, Frankfurt Alte Oper, Tonhalle Zurich, IRCAM Paris, Hamburg's Elbphilharmonie and the Sydney Opera House. They have performed as soloists with the Cleveland Orchestra and LA Philharmonic and have collaborated with musicians including Thomas Adès, Peter Eötvös, Anders Hillborg, Daniel Bjarnasson, Andrew Norman, Audrey

Luna, Johannes Moser, Joshua Bell, Menahem Pressler, Joseph Kalechstein, Paul Neubauer, Iva Bittová and Edgar Meyer.

The quartet signed an exclusive, multi-disc record deal with Pentatone records in 2017, starting with a release featuring the music of Beethoven and Swedish composer Anders Hillborg. Previously, the quartet recorded for Signum Classics, BMC, Bridge Records and E1, recording the quartets of Peter Eötvös with soprano Audrey Luna, Thomas Adès' chamber music with the composer at the piano, early works of Terry Riley, the chamber music of Christopher Rouse, Mozart piano concertos with pianist Anne-Marie McDermott, and Ravel and Mozart quartets.

In 2011, the Calder Quartet launched a non-profit dedicated to furthering its efforts in commissioning, presenting, recording, and education, collaborating with the Getty Museum, Segerstrom Center for the Arts, and the Barbican Centre in London. The Calder Quartet formed at the University of Southern California's Thornton School of Music and continued studies at the Colburn Conservatory of Music with Ronald Leonard, and at the Juilliard School, receiving the Artist Diploma in Chamber Music Studies as the Juilliard Graduate Resident String Quartet. The quartet regularly conducts master classes and has taught at the Colburn School, the Oberlin School, the Juilliard School, Cleveland Institute of Music, University of Cincinnati College Conservatory, and USC Thornton School of Music.

The Calder Quartet is represented by Colbert Artists Management, Inc.

## PROGRAMME

*String Quartet No. 2, "Company" (1984)*

*Philip Glass (1937- )*

- I. ♪ = 96
- II. ♪ = 160
- III. ♪ = 96
- IV. ♪ = 160

Philip Glass is an American composer and pianist. Widely regarded as one of the most influential composers of the late 20th century, Glass' work is associated with minimalism, being constructed from repetitive phrases and shifting layers. He described himself as a composer of "music with repetitive structures", which he helps to evolve stylistically. He has written 15 operas, numerous chamber operas and musical theatre works, 15 symphonies, 12 concertos, nine string quartets, various other chamber music pieces, and many film scores. He has been nominated for four Grammy Awards, including for *String Quartet No. 2* (1988). He has been nominated for three Best Original Score Oscars, for *Kundun* (1997), *The Hours* (2002), and *Notes on a Scandal* (2006).

String Quartet No. 2, “*Company*”, finished in January 1983, was intended as instrumental music for an adaptation of Samuel Beckett's novella, *Company*. Glass composed this work 17 years after his first quartet, even though it was not initially conceived as chamber music, but for a theatre production. The composer then decided to extract the music he had written for the theatre show, redesigning it to be a concert work on its own. Composed in four movements, the quartet lasts roughly nine minutes. The main theme is subjected to minor key arpeggios in all four movements. The music is monochrome, with all four movements closely related to each other.

***String Quartet No. 4, “Amazing Grace” (1973)***

***Ben Johnston (1926-2019)***

Ben Johnston was an American contemporary music composer, known for his use of “just intonation”. He was called “one of the foremost composers of microtonal music” and “one of the best non-famous composers this country has to offer”. Johnston was already composing when he started working with innovative composer Harry Partch building just intonation instruments and writing music. He then studied with Darius Milhaud, John Cage. Later, he worked with a notation system that allowed him to compose music for traditional instruments using microtones.

Johnston's early efforts in just composition drew heavily on the accomplishments of post-Webern serialism. His 7-limit String Quartet No. 4 "Amazing Grace", was commissioned by the Fine Arts Music Foundation of Chicago. Composed in 1973, the quartet unfolds in a single movement which progresses through a collection of increasingly complex variations on the folk hymn, *Amazing Grace*. Probably Johnston's best-known composition, it was first recorded by the Fine Arts Quartet in 1980, and has also been recorded by the Kronos Quartet.

***String Quartet in B Minor, Opus 11 (1936)***

***Samuel Barber (1910-1981)***

**Molto allegro e appassionato**

**Molto adagio; Molto allegro (come prima)**

Samuel Barber was one of the most distinguished members of the generation of American composers who came to maturity shortly before the Second World War. Born in Westchester, Pennsylvania, he began piano lessons at age six and started composing music a year later. He entered the Curtis Institute at age fourteen as a member of the first class of 1924. There he studied piano and became a fully-fledged composer. His music is rich in texture, always melodic, and rooted in traditional compositional techniques. Because of his fondness for rich Romantic textures and lyricism, Barber was not an innovator but he produced music of beauty and substance with a distinct personal stamp.

Barber composed this quartet in 1936 while he was on a Pulitzer Traveling Scholarship. The Pro Arte String Quartet first performed the work in Rome during December that year.

The opening **Molto allegro** bursts forth with a bold unison statement, which is made more striking by its slightly awkward rhythmic pattern. This subsides into a quiet chorale-like section

in a flexible tempo, which is interrupted by a short skittish transformation of the opening melody. A wide-ranging legato melody follows and finally, all three subjects return for the recapitulation.

The **Adagio** is built around one long sinuous theme which moves slowly and deliberately in a step-wise motion. Beginning calmly, the theme rises to an exciting climax with all the instruments straining at the upper limits of their ranges. The Adagio concludes with a subdued, somber coda. Then, after a brief pause, the themes of the first movement are restated, bringing the entire work back to its original character.

At Arturo Toscanini's request, Barber transcribed a string orchestra arrangement of the second movement, known as the Adagio for Strings. This version of the music has been featured in many movies over the years.

## INTERMISSION

*Sabina (arr. for string quartet) (2006/2020)*

*Andrew Norman (1979- )*

Andrew Norman is an American composer of contemporary classical music whose texturally complex music is influenced by architecture and the visual arts.

“Like many of the buildings in Rome, this piece is the product of a long gestation marked by numerous renovations, accretions, and ground-up reconstructions. What has emerged is a collection of portraits—nine in all—of my favorite Roman churches. The music is, at different times and in different ways, informed by the proportions of the churches, the qualities of their surfaces, the patterns in their floors, the artwork on their walls, and the lives and legends of the saints whose names they bear. The more I worked on these miniatures, the less they had to do with actual buildings and the more they became character studies of imaginary people, my companions for a year of living in the Eternal City.

*Sabina* uses the same musical ideas as the last movement of the set. This material, sketched after an early morning visit to one of Rome's oldest churches, has proven a useful vehicle for exploring the sonic range of string instruments.” – Andrew Norman, composer

*String Quartet No. 2 in A Minor (1935)*

*Florence Price (1887-1953)*

**Moderato**  
**Andante cantabile**  
**Juba: Allegro**  
**Finale: Allegro**

Florence Price was an American composer, pianist, and educator whose work spans three decades, during which she wrote more than 300 musical compositions during challenging times.

An influential member of the Black Renaissance in Chicago during the 1930s, in 1933, her *Symphony No. 1 in E Minor* was performed by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. This event made Price the first African American woman composer to have a symphony premiered by a major American orchestra. In 2009, 56 years after her death, a collection of unpublished scores and manuscripts by Price was discovered in a rundown house in Illinois. These works have been edited and published, sparking renewed interest in her work internationally. For example, the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra presented her Violin Concerto No. 2 in May 2022.

First published by Schirmer in 2019 (one of these rediscovered pieces), Price's String Quartet No. 2 in A Minor was composed in 1935. This quartet is the composer's largest chamber music work, written in four movements.

The first movement, **Moderato**, starts with a quiet ostinato. That contrasts with both the transition's chromaticism and the lyricism of the second subject. This second subject includes "blue notes", showing Price mixing musical elements of her African American heritage with the Eurocentric string quartet tradition. Tensions in the music of this movement are shed in a wild coda.

A gentle, rocking lyricism launches the second movement, **Andante cantabile**, bringing the melancholy beauty of African American musical idioms into the tradition-bound stylistic vocabulary of the mid-twentieth-century string quartet. The latter style adds plenty of dissonances to the sound of this movement.

The main theme of the third movement, **Juba: Allegro**, is in the style of a Juba dance or "hambone", a patently African lively dance that involves body slapping, foot stomping, and hand clapping. This section frames a more relaxed allegretto that is likewise based on African American dance idioms.

The last movement puts Price's advanced harmonic technique on display in a rondo form of remarkable breadth, concluding a work we are thrilled to have back in the string quartet repertoire.

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## **2026-2027 Friends of Chamber Music**

**Subscriptions & single tickets available online by May 15, 2026**

**All concerts at the Vancouver Playhouse**

1. Tue 22 Sep 2026 7:30 pm                      Takacs Quartet (Hungary/USA)
2. Tue 13 Oct 2026 7:30 pm                      Busch Trio (Netherlands)
3. Tue 17 Nov 2026 7:30 pm                      Terra String Quartet (USA)

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| 4. Tue 01 Dec 2026 7:30 pm | Escher Quartet (USA)        |
| 5. Sun 31 Jan 2027 3:00 pm | Dudok Quartet (Netherlands) |
| 6. Tue 02 Mar 2027 7:30 pm | Sitkovetsky Trio (UK)       |
| 7. Tue 09 Mar 2027 7:30 pm | Fauré Quartet (Germany)     |
| 8. Tue 23 Mar 2027 7:30 pm | Notos Quartet (Germany)     |

\*Artists and programmes are subject to change without notice.

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