



PARKER QUARTET 2019-20 BIOGRAPHY

“...exceptional virtuosity [and] imaginative interpretation.”-*The Washington Post*

Inspiring performances, luminous sound, and exceptional musicianship are the hallmarks of the Grammy Award-winning Parker Quartet. Renowned for its dynamic interpretations and polished, expansive colors, the group has rapidly distinguished itself as one of the preeminent ensembles of its generation, dedicated purely to the sound and depth of their music. The Quartet has appeared at the world’s most important venues since its founding in 2002.

Following a 2019 summer season that had the ensemble crossing North America for appearances at music festivals from Banff to Bard, the Parker Quartet began its sixth year as faculty members of Harvard University’s Department of Music in the group’s role as Blodgett Artists-in-Residence. Recent seasons included performances and residencies around the United States and Europe, including at the University of Iowa, the University of Chicago, the Wigmore Hall, the University of South Carolina, the Schubert Club, Skidmore College, and Kansas City’s Friends of Chamber Music.

The Quartet has been influential in projects ranging from the premiere of a new octet by Zosha di Castri alongside the JACK Quartet at the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity; to the premiere of Augusta Read Thomas’s *Helix Spirals*, a piece inspired by the Meselson-Stahl DNA replication discovery; to the “Schubert Effect,” in collaboration with pianist Shai Wosner at the 92nd Street Y. Other recent highlights include appearances at Carnegie Hall, the Library of Congress, the Slee Series in Buffalo, and New York’s Lincoln Center Great Performers series. The Quartet also continues to be a strong supporter of their friend and frequent collaborator Kim Kashkashian’s project *Music for Food* by participating in concerts throughout the United States for the benefit of various food banks and shelters.

The Quartet has been particularly focused on recording projects this past year. For ECM Records, they recorded Dvořák’s Viola Quintet, joined by Kim Kashkashian, as well as Kurtág’s *Six Moments Musicaux* and *Officium breve in memoriam*. Under the auspices of the Monte Carlo Festival Printemps des Arts, they recorded a disc of three Beethoven quartets, due to be released this fall. The Quartet’s recording featuring Mendelssohn’s Quartets Op. 44, Nos. 1 and 3, was widely lauded by the international press, and their debut commercial recording of Bartók’s String Quartets Nos. 2 and 5 for Zig-Zag Territoires won praise from *Gramophone*: “The Parkers’ Bartók spins the illusion of spontaneous improvisation... they have absorbed the language; they have the confidence to play freely with the music and the instinct to bring it off.” Their Naxos recording



of György Ligeti's complete works for string quartet won the 2011 Grammy Award for Best Chamber

Music Performance (the last string quartet to win this category).

Recent collaborations include those with acclaimed artists like violist Kim Kashkashian, featured on their recent Dvořák recording; violinist Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg; pianists Anne-Marie McDermott, Orion Weiss, Vijay Iyer, and Shai Wosner; members of the Silk Road Ensemble; Kikuei Ikeda of the Tokyo String Quartet; clarinetist and composer Jörg Widmann; and clarinetists Anthony McGill and Charles Neidich.

Founded and currently based in Boston, the Parker Quartet's numerous honors include winning the Concert Artists Guild Competition, the Grand Prix and Mozart Prize at France's Bordeaux International String Quartet Competition, and Chamber Music America's prestigious Cleveland Quartet Award. Now Blodgett Artists-in-Residence at Harvard University's Department of Music, and also in-residence at the UofSC School of Music, the Quartet's numerous residencies have included serving as Artists-in-Residence at the University of St. Thomas (2012–2014), Quartet-in-Residence at the University of Minnesota (2011–2012), Quartet-in-Residence with the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra (2008-2010), and as the first-ever Artists-in-Residence with Minnesota Public Radio (2009-2010).

The Parker Quartet's members hold graduate degrees in performance and chamber music from the New England Conservatory of Music and the Juilliard School, and the Quartet was part of the New England Conservatory's prestigious Professional String Quartet Training Program from 2006–2008. Some of their most influential mentors include the original members of the Cleveland Quartet as well as Kim Kashkashian, György Kurtág, and Rainer Schmidt.

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