

THE SHANGHAI QUARTET
SUN., Oct. 1, 2017 | 3PM

AHN TRIO
SUN., Oct. 22, 2017 | 3PM

LES DÉLICES
SUN., Nov. 12, 2017 | 3PM



2017-18
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SUN., Mar. 18, 2018 | 3PM

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THE SHANGHAI QUARTET

Weigang Li, violin | Yi-Wen Jiang, violin | Honggang Li, viola | Nicholas Tzavaras, cello

Oct. 1, 2017 | 3:00 p.m. | Beall Concert Hall

String Quartet No. 1 in E flat Major, Op.12 Felix Mendelssohn
 Adagio non troppo – Allegro non tardante (1809-1847)
 Canzonetta (Allegretto)
 Andante espressivo
 Molto Allegro e vivace

String Quartet No. 1 in E minor (Bologna) Frank Bridge
 Adagio – Allegro appassionato (1879-1941)
 Adagio molto
 Allegretto grazioso – Allegro vivace
 Allegro agitato

INTERMISSION

String Quartet in E-flat Major, Op. 51 Antonín Dvořák
 Allegro ma non troppo (1841-1904)
 Dumka (Andante con moto – Vivace)
 Romanza (Andante con moto)
 Finale (Allegro assai)

Weigang Li, violin
 Yi-Wen Jiang, violin
 Honggang Li, viola
 Nicholas Tzavaras, cello

for string quartet and orchestra with the Singapore Symphony (BIS). Delos released the Quartet's most popular disc, *Chinasong*, a collection of Chinese folk songs arranged by Yi-Wen Jiang reflecting on his childhood memories of the Cultural Revolution in China. The complete Beethoven String Quartets, a highly praised, seven-disc project, can be heard on an acclaimed Camerata set, released in 2009.

A diverse and interesting array of media projects include a cameo appearance playing Bartok's String Quartet No. 4 in Woody Allen's film *Melinda and Melinda* to PBS television's *Great Performances* series. Violinist Weigang Li appeared in the documentary *From Mao to Mozart: Isaac Stern in China*, and the family of cellist Nicholas Tzavaras was the subject of the film *Music of the Heart*, starring Meryl Streep. The Shanghai Quartet is the subject of a documentary film, *Behind the Strings*, currently in production, to be released this year.

The Shanghai Quartet currently serves as Quartet-in-Residence at the John J. Cali School of Music, Montclair State University in New Jersey, Ensemble-in-Residence with the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra, and visiting guest professors of the Shanghai Conservatory and the Central Conservatory in Beijing. They are proudly sponsored by Thomastik-Infeld Strings.

*The Shanghai Quartet is represented in North America by
 California Artists Management — Calartists.com*

and Orchestra in Isaac Stern Auditorium. Among innumerable collaborations with noted artists, they have performed with the Tokyo, Juilliard and Guarneri Quartets, cellists Yo-Yo Ma and Lynn Harrell, pianists Menahem Pressler, Peter Serkin, Jean-Yves Thibaudet and Yuja Wang, pipa virtuoso Wu Man and the vocal ensemble Chanticleer. The Shanghai Quartet has been a regular performer at many of North America's leading chamber music festivals, including Maverick Concerts where they recently made their 27th consecutive annual appearance.

The Quartet has a long history of championing new music and juxtaposing traditions of Eastern and Western music. With more than 30 commissioned works, their recent premieres include Du Yun's *Tattooed in Snow* (2015), Zhao Lin's *Red Lantern* (2015) for pipa and string quartet, and *String Quartet No. 12, Fantasia notturna* by William Bolcom (2017). The Quartet's 30th Anniversary season in 2013 brought five new commissions; *Bullycide* by David Del Tredici; *Fantasie* by Australian composer Carl Vine; a concerto for string quartet and symphony orchestra by Jeajoon Ryu; *Verge Quartet* by Lei Liang and *Scherzo* by Robert Aldridge, commissioned by Yu Long and the Beijing Music Festival. Their 25th anniversary season featured commission works by Penderecki (*String Quartet No. 3: Leaves From an Unwritten Diary*), Chen Yi (*From the Path of Beauty*), Vivian Fung, and jazz pianist Dick Hyman. The Penderecki quartet was premiered at the composer's 75th birthday concert in Poland, followed by numerous performances worldwide. It was featured again at the composer's 80th Birthday celebration in 2013. Chen Yi's *From the Path of Beauty*, co-commissioned with Chanticleer, premiered in San Francisco, with performances at Tanglewood and Ravinia, Beijing and Shanghai. Other important commissions and premieres include works by Bright Sheng, Lowell Lieberman, Sebastian Currier, Marc Neikrug, and Zhou Long. The tradition continues with a forthcoming work by Tan Dun composed for their 35th Anniversary in 2018.

The Shanghai Quartet has an extensive discography of more than 30 recordings, ranging from the Schumann and Dvorak piano quintets with Rudolf Buchbinder to Zhou Long's *Poems from Tang*

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847) was a child prodigy whose technical virtuosity and artistic creativity reminded nineteenth-century Europe of the late Mozart in the wake of the French Revolution. The esteemed Goethe, who met Mendelssohn through the boy's composition teacher, Zelter, remarked "what your pupil already accomplishes, bears the same relation to the Mozart of that time that the cultivated talk of a grown-up person bears to the prattle of a child."

The Mendelssohn family supported Felix's musical precocity, and ensured that the growing artist had full access to excellent teachers, collaborators, and other musicians to test out his musical ideas (a theatre was built in the Mendelssohn home to premiere Felix's works). He studied keyboard under renowned pianistic virtuoso Ignaz Moscheles (who admitted that he had little to teach Mendelssohn) and aesthetics under the great philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel at the University of Berlin.

Of Mendelssohn's six string quartets written between 1827 and 1847, Op. 12 in E-flat is the second in this genre, composed in 1829. Written in the midst of his grand tour of Europe, Mendelssohn composed this quartet during a trip to England. The Op. 12 quartet echoes the late quartets of Beethoven in style and concept, but also carries striking stylistic similarities to Mendelssohn's *Scottish Symphony in A minor*, Op. 56 and *Die Hebriden Overture*, Op. 26.

Born in Brighton, **Frank Bridge** (1879-1941) studied at the Royal College of Music in London from 1899 to 1903 under composer Charles Villiers Stanford. Though best remembered as a composition instructor of Benjamin Britten, Bridge was also a prominent English violist and conductor, having performed with the Joachim Quartet and the English String Quartet through the second decade of the 20th century.

Coming to explore the 12-tone procedures of the second Viennese school later in his career, Bridge's first string quartet of 1906 exhibits a late-nineteenth-century French sensibility in

the combinations of sensuous use of harmony and intervallic parallelisms that echo the aesthetic sensibilities of Fauré and Debussy. The first movement offers a tense and strained aesthetic, while the second movement presents a ponderous melancholia. Playful dignity pervades the third movement while the fourth movement depicts an agitated modernism.

Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904) composed his String Quartet No. 10 in E-flat, Op. 51 on the cusp of his international fame. Having won multiple awards for his original compositions between 1874 and 1878, there came increasing demands for his music to be performed internationally starting at the end of 1878. Brahms, who was on the composition jury—unbeknownst to Dvořák—recommended Dvořák’s compositions to the publisher Simrock, who commissioned what became the Slavonic Dances, Op. 46.

Dvořák’s growing international reputation led to an invitation in 1891 from Jeanette Thurber, president of the National Conservatory of Music in New York. Thurber offered Dvořák the position of director of the conservatory at the then unheard of salary of \$15,000 (twenty-five times his salary at the Prague Conservatory). Dvořák accepted the post and served as the director of the conservatory from 1892 to 1895.

Dvořák composed more than forty works for ensembles with strings. It was Jean Becker who commissioned String Quartet No. 10, asking specifically for Dvořák to incorporate Slavonic features in the writing. Dvořák responded to Becker’s request, writing a piece that incorporated polka elements in movement I, dumka (originating as a folk ballad or lament, typically melancholy with contrasting lively sections) in movement II, and the skočná (a rapid duple meter dance) in the fourth movement.



THE SHANGHAI QUARTET

Weigang Li, violin
Yi-Wen Jiang, violin
Honggang Li, viola
Nicholas Tzavaras, cello

“A wonderfully ferocious and illuminating performance.”
— Washington Post

Renowned for its passionate musicality, impressive technique and multicultural innovations, the Shanghai Quartet has become one of the world’s foremost chamber ensembles. Its elegant style melds the delicacy of Eastern music with the emotional breadth of Western repertoire, allowing it to traverse musical genres including traditional Chinese folk music, masterpieces of Western music and cutting-edge contemporary works.

Formed at the Shanghai Conservatory in 1983, the Quartet has worked with the world’s most distinguished artists and regularly tours the major music centers of Europe, North America and Asia. Recent festival performances range from the International Music Festivals of Seoul and Beijing to the Festival Pablo Casals in France and the Beethoven Festival in Poland, as well as numerous concerts in all regions of North America. The Quartet has appeared at Carnegie Hall in chamber performances and with orchestra; in 2006 they gave the premiere of Takuma Itoh’s Concerto for Quartet