



New Orford String Quartet

**Saturday, March 8, 2025
7:30 p.m.**

Almonte Old Town Hall





Photo by Dahlia Katz

PROGRAMME

String Quartet No. 15 in D minor, K. 421

W. A. Mozart (1756–1791)

Allegro moderato

Andante

Menuetto

Allegretto ma non troppo – Più allegro

Dreams (Yume)

Ian Cusson (b. 1981)

Sunshine Through the Rain

The Peach Orchard

Village of the Watermills

---Intermission---

String Quartet No. 14 in D minor, D. 810

Franz Schubert (1797–1828)

“Death and the Maiden”

Allegro

Andante con moto

Scherzo: Allegro molto

Presto

ABOUT NEW ORFORD STRING QUARTET

Four musicians with equally stellar pedigrees formed the New Orford String Quartet with the goal of developing a new model for a touring string quartet. Their concept – to bring four elite orchestral leaders and soloists together on a regular basis over many years to perform chamber music at the highest level – has resulted in a quartet that maintains a remarkably fresh perspective while bringing a palpable sense of joy to each performance. The *Toronto Star* has described this outcome as “nothing short of electrifying.”

The New Orford String Quartet has seen astonishing success, giving annual concerts for national CBC broadcast and receiving unanimous critical acclaim, including two Opus Awards for Concert of the Year, and a 2017 JUNO Award for Best Classical Album. Recent seasons have featured return engagements in Chicago, Montreal and Toronto, as well as their New York City debut on Lincoln Center’s Great Performers series.

The original Orford String Quartet gave its first public concert in 1965 and became one of the best-known and most illustrious chamber music ensembles. After more than 2,000 concerts on six continents, the Orford String Quartet gave its last concert in 1991. Two decades later, in July 2009, the New Orford String Quartet took up this mantle, giving its first concert for a sold-out audience at the Orford Arts Centre. The Quartet has since gone on to perform concerts throughout North America and lead residencies at the University of Toronto, Schulich School of Music, Mount Royal University, and Syracuse University. In September 2017, the Quartet became Ensemble in Residence at the University of Toronto and was recently named Artistic Directors of the Prince Edward County Music Festival, where they made their curatorial debut in September 2018.

In 2011, the Quartet recorded its debut album of the final quartets of Schubert and Beethoven, released by Bridge Records to international acclaim. The recording was hailed as one of the top CDs of 2011 by *La Presse* and CBC In Concert and nominated for a JUNO Award in 2012. Critics have described the recording as “...flawless... a match made in heaven!” (*Classical Music Sentinel*); “a performance of rare intensity” (*Audiophile Audition*); and “nothing short of electrifying... listen and weep.” (*Toronto Star*). Their follow-up album of the Brahms Op.51 Quartets was equally well-received and won the 2017 JUNO for best chamber music album.

The New Orford String Quartet is dedicated to promoting Canadian works, both new commissions and neglected repertoire from the previous century. New Orford String Quartet projects have included performances of major Canadian string quartets from the 20th century including works by Glenn Gould, Sir Ernest MacMillan, Jacques Hétu, R. Murray Schafer, and Claude Vivier, as well as commissions of new works from composers such as Francois Dompierre, Gary Kulesha, Airat Ichmouratov, and Tim Brady. The Quartet thrives on exploring the rich chamber music repertoire; recent collaborations include those with pianists Marc-André Hamelin and Menahem Pressler.

The Quartet regularly tours in the major cities of North America, including Washington, D.C., Toronto, and Los Angeles; at the same time, the members feel strongly about bringing this music to areas that don't often hear it, and as a result perform frequently in remote rural locations and smaller Canadian communities. The New Orford String Quartet are Artists-in-Residence at Western University in London, ON.

Andrew Wan



Andrew Wan was named concertmaster of the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal (OSM) in 2008. As soloist, he has performed worldwide under conductors such as Rafael Payare, Maxim Vengerov, Vasily Petrenko, Bernard Labadie, Carlo Rizzi, Peter Oundjian, Xian Zhang, Michael Stern, and James DePreist, and has appeared in recitals with artists such as the Juilliard Quartet, Vadim Repin, Marc-André Hamelin, Daniil Trifonov, Menahem Pressler, Jörg Widmann, Emanuel Ax, James Ehnes, and Gil Shaham. His discography includes Grammy-nominated and JUNO, Felix and Opus award-winning releases on the Onyx, Bridge, and Naxos labels with the Seattle Chamber Music Society, New York's Metropolis Ensemble, and the New Orford String Quartet. In the fall of 2015, he released

a live recording of all three Saint-Saëns violin concerti with the OSM and Kent Nagano under the Analekta label to wide critical acclaim. His recent live album of works for violin and orchestra by Bernstein, Moussa and Ginastera with Nagano and the OSM won a 2021 JUNO Award for Classical Album of the Year – Large Ensemble. He enjoys a close collaborative relationship with Charles Richard-Hamelin, with whom he has recorded the entire Beethoven piano and violin sonata cycle. Mr. Wan graduated from The Juilliard School with a Bachelor of Music, Master of Music and Artist Diploma degrees, is currently Artistic Director of the Prince Edward County Chamber Music Festival and for the 2017–18 season was Artistic Partner of the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra. Associate Professor of Violin at the Schulich School of Music at McGill University, he was the recipient of the Part-Time Teaching Award at the Schulich School in 2019. He has sat as guest concertmaster for the Pittsburgh Symphony, Houston Symphony, Indianapolis Symphony National Arts Centre, Toronto Symphony, and Vancouver Symphony orchestras.

Andrew Wan performs on a 1744 Michel'Angelo Bergonzi violin and gratefully acknowledges its loan from the David Sela Collection. He also enjoys the use of an 1860 Dominique Peccatte bow from Canimex.

Jonathan Crow



Jonathan Crow has been Concertmaster of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra since 2011. A native of Prince George, British Columbia, he earned his Bachelor of Music in Honours Performance from McGill University in 1998, at which time he joined the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal (OSM) as Associate Principal Second Violin. Between 2002 and 2006, Jonathan Crow was the Concertmaster of the OSM; during this time, he was the youngest concertmaster of any major North American orchestra. He continues to perform as guest concertmaster with orchestras around the world, including the National Arts Centre Orchestra, Pittsburgh Symphony, Mahler Chamber

Orchestra, Filarmonia de Lanaudiere, and Pernambuco Festival Orchestra (Brazil). Jonathan Crow has also performed as a soloist with most major Canadian orchestras including the OSM, Toronto and Vancouver symphonies, the National Arts Centre and Calgary Philharmonic, the Victoria, Nova Scotia and Kingston symphonies, and Orchestra London, under the baton of such conductors as Charles Dutoit, Sir Yehudi Menuhin, Sir Andrew Davis, Peter Oundjian, Kent Nagano, Mario Bernardi, and João Carlos Martins.

Jonathan Crow joined the Schulich School of Music at McGill University as an Assistant Professor of Violin and was appointed Associate Professor of Violin in 2010. Current and former students of Mr. Crow have received prizes at competitions around the world, including the Menuhin International Violin Competition, OSM Competition, Shean Competition, CBC Radio's NEXT competition, Eckhardt-Grammatte Competition, Canadian Music Competition, and Stulberg International String Competition, and work regularly with orchestras such as the National Arts Centre Orchestra, Toronto Symphony Orchestra, OSM, Camerata Salzburg, Konzerthausorchester Berlin, Verbier Chamber Orchestra, Vienna Kammerphilharmonie, and Vienna Symphony Orchestra. Jonathan Crow is currently Associate Professor of Violin at the University of Toronto.

In 2016 Jonathan Crow was named Artistic Director of Toronto Summer Music, which announced record attendance in his first full season. An avid chamber musician, he has performed at chamber music festivals throughout North America, South America and Europe including the Banff, Ravinia, Orford, Domaine Forget, Seattle, Montreal, Ottawa, Incontri in Terra di Sienna, Alpenglow, Festival Vancouver, Pernambuco (Brazil), Giverny (France) and Strings in the Mountains festivals. As an advocate of contemporary music, he has premiered works by Canadian composers Michael Conway Baker, Eldon Rathburn, Barrie Cabena, Gary Kulesha, Tim Brady, Francois Dompierre, Ana Sokolovic, Marjan Mozetich, Christos Hatzis, Ernest MacMillan, and Healey Willan. He also includes in his repertoire major concerti by such modern composers as Ligeti, Schnittke, Bernstein, Brian Cherney, Rodney Sharman, Vivian Fung, and Cameron Wilson.

Jonathan Crow has recorded for ATMA, Bridge, CBC, Oxingale, Skylark, and XXI-21 labels and is heard frequently on Chaîne Culturelle of Radio-Canada, CBC Radio Two, and National Public Radio, along with Radio France, Deutsche Welle, Hessischer Rundfunk, and the RAI in Europe.

Sharon Wei



Canadian violist Sharon Wei is a dynamic and multi-faceted musician, establishing herself as one of the most respected violists on the scene today. She has appeared as concerto soloist with orchestras such as Symphony of the Redwoods, Kingston Symphony, Sinfonia Toronto, Orchestra of Southern Utah, San Francisco Chamber Orchestra, and Connecticut Valley Chamber Orchestra, and in 2022 premiered Richard Mascall's "Ziigwan" viola concerto with the London Symphonia. She has performed recital tours with pianist Angela Park under the auspices of Debut Atlantic and Prairie Debut.

As a chamber musician, she regularly takes part at international festivals such as Verbier, Marlboro, Prussia Cove, Banff, Seattle, and Ravinia. Sharon Wei has performed with renowned musicians including James Ehnes, Lynn Harrell, Peter Wiley, Gary Hoffman, Claude Frank, Joseph Silverstein, James Campbell, and the Amernet, New Orford and St. Lawrence string quartets. She co-founded Ensemble Made in Canada in 2006. Their

Mosaïque Project won a 2021 JUNO for Classical Album of the Year and toured to every province and territory in Canada in both traditional venues and eclectic ones such as the seabed of Hopewell Rocks at low tide.

Sharon Wei has been guest principal violist of the Cincinnati Symphony, Canadian Opera Company, and Ensemble Matheus in Paris. Recently, she was a guest violist with the Los Angeles Philharmonic on their 2021 Grammy recording of Charles Ives's Symphonies.

Sharon Wei was on faculty at Yale and Stanford University and is currently Associate Professor of viola at Western University. She has given

masterclasses at the American Viola Society Festival, Beijing Conservatory, and universities across Canada. In summers she is a regular faculty violist at Curtis Summerfest, Scotia Festival, Tuckamore Festival, and Orford Academy. At Western she has created a course for performance majors in which students learn off-stage initiatives such as networking, grant writing, website design, and managing finances. Sharon Wei won the viola prize at Yale University and has been the recipient of grants through the Canada Council for the Arts, Ontario Arts Council, FACTOR and Western University.

Brian Manker



Principal Cellist of the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal (OSM) since 1999, Brian Manker enjoys a diverse and varied musical career as a performer and teacher. In addition to being a frequent concerto soloist with the OSM, and his work with the New Orford String Quartet, he is a member of the Adorno Quartet.

Brian Manker has performed throughout North America as a member of the Harrington String Quartet, the Cassatt Quartet, and the Atlanta Chamber

Players, and performed chamber music with many distinguished artists including Walter Trampler, Laurence Lesser, Gary Graffman, Lee Luvisi, and Jean- Philippe Collard. A Grand Prize winner as a member of the Harrington Quartet at the Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition, Mr. Manker also received a special commendation from Sir Yehudi Menuhin at the Portsmouth International String Quartet Competition.

Formerly the co-director of Festival Alexandria (Ontario), Brian Manker has participated in many music festivals, including Norfolk, Blossom, Chamber Music East, Roundtop, Swannanoa, the Ottawa Chamber Music Festival,

masterclasses at Orford, Domaine Forget, and at the Canton International Summer Music Academy in China. He has performed for radio, television, and internet broadcasts on the CBC, WFMT Chicago, and WQXR New York, and can be heard on his 2010 recording of the complete Bach Cello Suites on STORKCLASSICS, as well as numerous recordings of chamber music and of course with the OSM. Mr. Manker served on the jury of the prestigious and historic Prague Spring International Cello Competition in 2006.

Currently on the faculty of the Schulich School of Music of McGill University, Brian Manker has also taught at West Texas State and Emory Universities. In 2007, he launched the Beethoven Project, which aims to perform all the quartets of Beethoven in their proper context, the private salon. As a companion to this project, he maintains a blog at <http://bquartets.blogspot.com/>. He also enjoys a critically acclaimed sonata recital partnership with the pianist André Laplante. Brian Manker plays on a cello made by Pietro Guarneri of Venice in 1729, and a bow by François Pecatte loaned by Canimex.

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