

Dover-Escher Octet

Dover Quartet

“...the Dover Quartet players have it in them to become the next Guarneri String Quartet – they’re that good.” – *The Chicago Tribune*

The phenomenal Dover Quartet catapulted to international stardom following a stunning sweep of the 2013 Banff Competition, at which they won every prize. Named the Cleveland Quartet Award-winner, and honored with the coveted Avery Fisher Career Grant, the Dover has become one of the most in-demand ensembles in the world. The Quartet’s rise from up-and-coming young ensemble to occupying a spot at the top of their field has been “practically meteoric” (*Strings*). With its burnished warmth, incisive rhythms, and natural phrasing, the Quartet’s distinctive sound has helped confirm its status as “the young American string quartet of the moment” (*New Yorker*). The Quartet serves as the quartet-in-residence for the Bienen School of Music at Northwestern University, Chamber Music Northwest, Artosphere, the Amelia Island Chamber Music Festival, and Peoples’ Symphony in New York, and was recently named the first-ever quartet-in-residence for the Kennedy Center.

In 2018-19 the Dover Quartet performs more than a hundred concerts around North America, including performances at the Kennedy Center, San Francisco Performances, the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, Spivey Hall, Boston’s Celebrity Series, the Chamber Music Society of Detroit, and Carnegie Hall. In addition, the Dover’s season features tours of Hong Kong, Europe, and Australia, collaborations with Emanuel Ax, Inon Barnatan, Peter Serkin, Anthony McGill, and Roomful of Teeth, and premieres of new works by Caroline Shaw and Matan Porat. The Quartet was thrilled to be invited by the maverick filmmaker and cultural icon David Lynch to be featured at his Los Angeles Festival of Disruption.

Cedille Records released the Quartet’s sophomore album, entitled *Voices of Defiance: 1943, 1944, 1945* in October 2017. The recording takes listeners on a powerful journey through works written during World War II by Viktor Ullmann, Dimitri Shostakovich, and Simon Laks. The 2016-17 season saw the release of its all-Mozart debut recording on the Cedille label, a nod to the 1965 debut album of the Guarneri Quartet, whose founding violist, the late Michael Tree, joined the Dover Quartet on the recording.

In addition, the group has participated in three complete Beethoven quartet cycles, including the University at Buffalo’s famous “Slee Cycle” – which has presented annual Beethoven quartet cycles since 1955 and has featured the likes of the Budapest, Guarneri, and Cleveland Quartets – and will record the cycle over the next three seasons. The group’s world-class collaborators have included pianists Anne-Marie McDermott, Emanuel Ax, Marc-André Hamelin, Jean-Yves Thibaudet, Peter Serkin, and Jon Kimura Parker; violists Roberto Díaz and Cynthia Phelps; bassist Edgar Meyer; and the Pacifica and Escher Quartets.

In the spring of 2016, the Dover Quartet was recognized with the Hunt Family Award, one of the inaugural Lincoln Center Emerging Artist Awards, and in past years has taken top prizes at the Fischhoff Competition and the Wigmore Hall International String Quartet Competition. All four Quartet members are consummate solo artists: first violinist Joel Link took first prize at the Menuhin Competition; violinist Bryan Lee and violist Milena Pajaro-van de Stadt have appeared as soloists with the Philadelphia Orchestra and Tokyo Philharmonic, respectively; and cellist Camden Shaw released a solo album debut on the Unipheye Music label. As *Strad* observes, “With their exceptional interpretative maturity, tonal refinement, and taut ensemble,” the Dover Quartet is “pulling away from their peers.”

Hailed as “the next Guarneri Quartet” (*Chicago Tribune*), the Dover Quartet draws from the lineage of that distinguished ensemble, as well that of the Cleveland and Vermeer Quartets; its members studied at the Curtis Institute of Music and Rice University’s Shepherd School of Music, where they were mentored extensively by Shmuel Ashkenasi, James Dunham, Norman Fischer, Kenneth Goldsmith, Joseph Silverstein, Arnold Steinhardt, Michael Tree, and Peter Wiley. It was at Curtis that the Quartet first formed, and its name pays tribute to *Dover Beach* by fellow Curtis alumnus Samuel Barber. The group has since returned for residencies to Rice in 2011-13, and to Curtis, where it became the conservatory’s first Quartet-in-Residence, in 2013-14. In addition, in 2015 the Dover was appointed the first Resident Ensemble of Peoples’ Symphony Concerts in the 116-year history of New York City’s oldest concert series.

The Dover Quartet is dedicated to sharing its music with under-served communities and is actively involved with Music for Food, an initiative enabling musicians to raise resources and awareness in the fight against hunger.

Escher Quartet

The Escher String Quartet has received acclaim for its expressive, nuanced performances that combine unusual textural clarity with a rich, blended sound. A former BBC New Generation Artist, the quartet has performed at the BBC Proms at Cadogan Hall and is a regular guest at Wigmore Hall. In its home town of New York, the ensemble serves as Season Artists of The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, where it has presented the complete Zemlinsky Quartets Cycle as well as being one of five quartets chosen to collaborate in a complete presentation of Beethoven’s string quartets. Last season, the quartet toured with CMS to China. Within months of its inception in 2005, the ensemble came to the attention of key musical figures worldwide. Championed by the Emerson Quartet, the Escher Quartet was invited by both Pinchas Zukerman and Itzhak Perlman to be Quartet in Residence at each artist’s summer festival: the Young Artists Programme at Canada’s National Arts Centre; and the Perlman Chamber Music Programme on Shelter Island, NY. The quartet has since collaborated with artists including David Finckel, Leon Fleischer, Wu Han, Lynn Harrell, Cho Liang Lin, Joshua Bell, Paul Watkins and David Shifrin, as well as jazz saxophonist Joshua Redman, vocalist Kurt Elling, legendary Latin artist Paquito D’Rivera and Grammy award-winning guitarist Jason Vieaux. In

2013, the quartet became one of the very few chamber ensembles to be awarded the prestigious Avery Fisher Career Grant.

The Escher Quartet has made a distinctive impression throughout Europe, performing at venues such as Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Berlin Konzerthaus, London's Kings Place, Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Slovenian Philharmonic Hall, Auditorium du Louvre and *Les Grand Interprètes* series in Geneva. With a strong collaborative approach, the group has appeared at festivals such as Heidelberg Spring Festival, Incontri in Terra di Siena Festival, Dublin's Great Music in Irish Houses, Risør Chamber Music Festival in Norway, Hong Kong International Chamber Music Festival and Perth International Arts Festival in Australia.

The current season sees another extensive European tour, including debuts at Musik und Kunstfreunde Heidelberg, de Singel Antwerp, Budapest's kamara.hu festival and Bath Mozarfest. Alongside its growing success in Europe, the Escher Quartet continues to flourish in its home country, performing at Alice Tully Hall in New York, Kennedy Center in Washington DC, Chamber Music San Francisco, and the Ravinia, Caramoor and Music@Menlo festivals.

Currently String Quartet in Residence at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas and Tuesday Musical in Akron, Ohio, the quartet fervently supports the education of young musicians and has given masterclasses at institutions such as the Royal Academy of Music in London and Campos do Jordão Music Festival in Brazil.

In Autumn 2016, the quartet released the third and final volume of the complete Mendelssohn Quartets on the BIS label. The set has been received with the highest critical acclaim; Volume II was listed in the Top 10 CDs of 2016 by the Guardian and hailed for its "sheer finesse" by Gramophone, whilst Volume III was nominated for a BBC Music Magazine Award. The quartet has also recorded the complete Zemlinsky String Quartets in two volumes, released on the Naxos label in 2013 and 2014 respectively, to accolades including five stars in the Guardian with "Classical CD of the Year", a Recommendation in The Strad, "Recording of the Month" on MusicWeb International and a nomination for a BBC Music Magazine Award.

The Escher Quartet takes its name from Dutch graphic artist M.C. Escher, inspired by Escher's method of interplay between individual components working together to form a whole.