

THE SOUNDS OF THE STRING QUARTET

featuring the

Cecilia String Quartet



Min-Jeong Koh & Sarah Nematallah, violins

Caitlin Boyle, viola

Rachel Desoer, cello

Meet the Cecilia String Quartet

Praised for their 'extraordinary commitment and maturity' (Montreal Gazette) and 'talent, passion and mastery' (Jacques Robert, JR Multimedia), the Cecilia String Quartet was one of Canada's most exciting young ensembles. Since their formation in 2004, they were the recipients of many prestigious awards, including first prize at the 2010 Banff International String Quartet Competition, and were the Ensemble-in-Residence at the University of Toronto's Faculty of Music.

The CSQ has performed in concert across North America and Europe. Committed to educating the next generation of music lovers, the CSQ has taught at Indiana University's Summer String Academy, the Austin Chamber Music Festival in Texas, McGill University's Schulich School of Music in Montreal, QuartetFest at Laurier University in Waterloo, and San Diego State University's School of Music and Dance in California. They take their name from the patron saint of music, St. Cecilia. Visit www.ceciliastringquartet.com to read up on all things Cecilia!

Learn about the String Quartet!

*How many people are in a string quartet?
What instruments are in a string quartet?*



Unlike an orchestra, the string quartet has no conductor to lead them. They play together by communicating with their eyes, ears, and bodies...

The string quartet, a **chamber music** ensemble, is one of the most important genres in classical music. Since the late 18th century many of history's most important composers have written string quartets, with the body of repertoire numbering in the hundreds.

Explore what chamber music is, what is special about it:

- why is it called chamber music?
- where is it played/sung?
- what is unique about chamber music? The string quartet?
- who are some famous chamber musicians today?

Who wrote a lot of music for string quartet?

Joseph Haydn



Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart



Ludwig van Beethoven



Dmitri Shostakovich



Bela Bartok

Research one of the composers that was mentioned above OR a composer of your choosing who composed a string quartet.

What country was your composer from?

What year was he/she born? What year did he/she die?

What are some of the most famous pieces he/she wrote?

What are some interesting facts you learned about this composer? These facts could be about the composer's music, or the composer's life.



LISTENING



A string quartet can make many different types of sounds, each evoking a different mood or character.

Look up recordings of the Cecilia String Quartet from YouTube, listen to the media files from the Debut Atlantic website, or retrieve sound files on iTunes from one of the pieces listed below. Listen activity and answer the following questions.

a) Describe quantitative characteristics of the music (was it loud? soft? fast? slow?).

b) Describe the mood/character of what you listened to.

c) Describe the types of sound qualities string instruments can invoke, and what you heard in one of the suggested pieces below (bright, dark, harsh, thin, etc.).

Here are some suggestions of excerpts from string quartets.

These excerpts feature a wide variety of sounds and characters.

Bela Bartok, String Quartet No.2, 2nd Movement (Allegro molto capriccioso)

Ludwig van Beethoven, Quartet Op.59 No.3, 2nd Movement (Andante con moto quasi Allegretto)

George Crumb, Black Angels, Part 1, Threnody 1 (Night of the Electric Insects)

Claude Debussy, Quartet in G Minor, 2nd Movement (Assez vif et bien rythmé)

Joseph Haydn, String Quartet Op.77 No.1, 3rd Movement (Menuetto: Presto)

Felix Mendelssohn, Quartet Op.44 No.2, 2nd Movement (Scherzo: Allegro di molto)

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, String Quartet KV.156, 1st Movement (Presto)

Robert Schumann, Quartet Op.41 No.1, 2nd Movement (Scherzo-Intermezzo)

Dmitri Shostakovich, Quartet No.10, 2nd Movement (Allegretto furioso)

WRITING

After listening to one of the suggested pieces, write a journal entry, poem, or story that you feel goes along with the music.

Compose your own piece!

Think about how would you make music/have a musical conversation in groups of four without any conductor or recorded accompaniment.

- How do you communicate with body gestures?
- How would you make decisions about what voices/instruments to include?
- What would you need to decide together?

Gather one or more people and use your musical instrument, body music, vocal sounds, and/or “found” sounds to make a musical conversation that expresses/reflects a chosen emotion (e.g., happiness, sadness, anger). Focus on listening to each other and being inspired by each other.

Work together to experiment with sounds and play with ideas before making final decisions. Things to think about:

- How fast do we want it to be?
- What dynamics (how loud or soft)?
- How do we start and stop together?
- Are there special points that we want to emphasize?

Record your composition!

ADDITIONAL RESEARCH

Here is a list of other composers of chamber music suitable for research:

Amy Beach
Alexander Borodin
Antonín Dvořák
Franz Schubert
Fanny Mendelssohn
Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
Maurice Ravel
Jean Sibelius
Bedrich Smetana
Johannes Brahms