



Biography

Pacifica Quartet

Simin Ganatra (violin)
Sigurbjörn Bernhardson (violin)
Masumi Per Rostad (viola)
Brandon Vamos (cello)

www.pacificaquartet.com

Recognized for its virtuosity, exuberant performance style, and often-daring repertory choices, the Pacifica Quartet has gained international stature as one of the finest chamber ensembles performing today. Recently named quartet-in-residence at the Metropolitan Museum of Art – a position held for 43 years by the Guarneri String Quartet – and named Ensemble of the Year by *Musical America*, the Pacifica received the 2009 Grammy Award for Best Chamber Music Performance.

Formed in 1994, the Pacifica Quartet quickly won chamber music's top competitions, including the 1998 Naumburg Chamber Music Award. In 2002 the ensemble was honored with Chamber Music America's Cleveland Quartet Award and the appointment to Lincoln Center's CMS Two. In 2006 the Pacifica was awarded a prestigious Avery Fisher Career Grant, becoming only the second chamber ensemble so honored in the Grant's long history. Also in 2006 the Quartet was featured on the cover of *Gramophone* and heralded as one of "five new quartets you should know about," the only American quartet to make the list.

The Pacifica Quartet tours extensively throughout the United States, Europe, Asia, and Australia, and performs in the world's major concert halls. Having given highly acclaimed performances of the complete Beethoven, Mendelssohn, and Carter string quartets in recent seasons, the Quartet presented the monumental Shostakovich cycle in Chicago and New York during the 2010-2011 season. In the summer of 2011, the Quartet performed the complete Beethoven cycle at Tokyo's famous Suntory Hall, in an unprecedented presentation of five concerts in three days. And in 2011-2012, the Quartet will take the Shostakovich cycle to London's Wigmore Hall and will also perform the complete Beethoven cycle at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

An ardent advocate of contemporary music, the Pacifica Quartet commissions and performs many new works. It has been widely praised for its single-concert performances of Elliott Carter's five-quartet cycle, performed in New York, San Francisco, and abroad. Critics have called these groundbreaking concerts "brilliant," "astonishing," and "breathtaking." In 2008 the Quartet released its Grammy Award-winning recording of Carter's quartets Nos. 1 and 5 on the Naxos label; the 2009 release of quartets Nos. 2, 3, and 4 completed the two-CD set. The Quartet's other recordings, including Mendelssohn's complete string quartets and *Declarations: Music Between the Wars*, both on the Cedille label, have also attracted international acclaim.

The members of the Pacifica Quartet live in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois, where they were appointed to the faculty of the University of Illinois in 2003 and serve as quartet-in-residence. In addition to their recent appointment as quartet-in-residence at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Pacifica Quartet also serves as resident performing artist at the University of Chicago.

2011/2012

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