

THE ST. OLAF COLLEGE DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC

presents in

GUEST ARTIST RECITAL

The Catalyst Quartet

Karla Donehew Perez, *violin*

Abi Fayette, *violin*

Paul Laraia, *viola*

Karlos Rodriguez, *cello*

MONDAY, APRIL 25, 2022 • URNESS RECITAL HALL • 7 P.M.

PROGRAM

String Quartet in B-Flat Major, Op. 76, No. 4

Joseph Haydn (1732–1809)

Strum

Jessie Montgomery (b.1981)

Five Folksongs in Counterpoint

Florence B. Price (1887–1953)

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ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Hailed by *The New York Times* at its Carnegie Hall debut as “invariably energetic and finely burnished... playing with earthy vigor,” the Grammy Award-winning **Catalyst Quartet** was founded by the internationally acclaimed Sphinx Organization in 2010. The ensemble (**Karla Donehew Perez**, violin; **Abi Fayette**, violin; **Paul Laraia**, viola; and **Karlos Rodriguez**, cello) believes in the unity that can be achieved through music and imagine their programs and projects with this in mind, redefining and reimagining the classical music experience.

The Catalyst Quartet, known for “perfect ensemble unity” and “unequaled class of execution” (*Lincoln Journal Star*), has toured widely throughout the United States and abroad, including sold-out performances at the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C., at Chicago’s Harris Theater, Miami’s New World Center, and Stern Auditorium/Perelman Stage at Carnegie Hall in New York. The quartet has been guest soloists with the Cincinnati Symphony, New Haven Symphony, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, and the Orquesta Filarmónica de Bogotá, and has served as principal players and featured ensemble with the Sphinx Organization’s featured ensemble, the Sphinx Virtuosi, on six national tours. They have been invited to perform at important music festivals such as Mainly Mozart in San Diego, the Great Lakes Chamber Music Festival, Sitka Music Festival, Juneau Jazz and Classics, Strings Music Festival, and the Grand Canyon Music Festival, where they appear annually. The Catalyst Quartet was ensemble-in-residence at the Vail Dance Festival in 2016. In 2014, they opened the Festival del Sole in Napa, California with Joshua Bell and participated in England’s Aldeburgh Music Foundation String Quartet Residency with two performances in Jubilee Hall.

Recent seasons have brought international engagements in Russia, South Korea, Mexico, Argentina, Colombia, and Puerto Rico, and expanded tours throughout the United States. The ensemble’s New York City presence has included concerts on the Café Series at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, at Columbia University’s Miller Theatre, for Schneider Concerts at The New School, and six concerts with GRAMMY Award-winning jazz vocalist Cécile McLorin Salvant for Jazz at Lincoln Center, for which the subsequent recording won the 2018 Grammy Award for Best Jazz Vocal Album. The Catalyst Quartet launched its New York concert series CQ@Howl in 2018.

Highlights of upcoming collaborations include *Encuentros*, featuring a newly commissioned work by innovative Cuban composer Jorge Amado Molina and other voices from across the Cuban diaspora; *(Im)migration: Music of Change*, a collaboration with the Imani Winds; and *CQ Minute*, a commissioning project of 10 miniature string quartets in commemoration of the quartet’s 10th anniversary with works by Andy Akiho, Kishi Bashi, Billy Childs, Paquito D’Rivera, Tania Leon, Jessie Montgomery, Kevin Puts, Caroline Shaw, Joan Tower, and one young composer to be selected from a national call for scores. The Catalyst Quartet’s latest project is *UNCOVERED*, a multi-volume set of albums to be released on Azica Records. The initiative celebrates beautifully crafted works by artists who have been overlooked and sidelined in classical music, especially because of their race or gender. Volume 1, released February 2021, includes the string quartet and quintets of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor with clarinetist Anthony McGill and pianist Stewart Goodyear. Volume 2 will feature works by Florence Price and Volume 3 and beyond will feature Coleridge-Taylor, Perkinson, William Grant Still, and George Walker, among others.

The Catalyst Quartet’s recordings span the ensemble’s scope of interests and artistry. Its debut album, *The Bach/Gould Project*, features the quartet’s own collaborative arrangement of J.S. Bach’s monumental *Goldberg Variations*, the first ever 4-voiced version of the piece, paired with Glenn Gould’s rarely heard String Quartet Op. 1. The ensemble can also be heard on *Strum* (Azica 2015), the solo debut album of composer Jessie Montgomery, who was a member violinist from 2012-2020; *Bandaneon y cuerdas* (Progressive Sounds 2017), tango-inspired music for string quartet and bandoneon by JP Jofre; and *Dreams and Daggers* (Mack Avenue Records 2017), a 2-CD GRAMMY-winning album with Cecile McLorin Salvant.

The Catalyst Quartet combines a serious commitment to diversity and education with a passion for contemporary works. The ensemble serves as principal faculty at the Sphinx Performance Academy at The Cleveland Institute of Music and Curtis Institute of Music. The Catalyst Quartet’s ongoing residencies include interactive performance presentations and workshops with Native American student composers at the Grand Canyon Music Festival and the Sphinx Organization’s Overture program, which delivers access to music education in Detroit and Flint, Michigan. Past residencies have included concerts and masterclasses at The University Of Michigan, University Of Washington, Rice University, Houston’s Society for the Performing Arts, Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, The Virginia Arts Festival, and Pennsylvania State University, as well as internationally at the In Harmony Project in England, The University of South Africa, and The Teatro De Bellas Artes in Cali, Colombia. The ensemble’s residency in Havana, Cuba for the Cuban American Youth Orchestra in January 2019, was the first by an American string quartet since the revolution.

The Catalyst Quartet members hold degrees from The Cleveland Institute of Music, Curtis Institute of Music, Juilliard School, and New England Conservatory. The Catalyst Quartet proudly endorses Pirastro strings.