



BIOGRAPHY

Performing with "a precision and involvement marking them as among the world's best quartets" (Chicago Sun-Times), the Lydian String Quartet embraces the full range of the string quartet repertory with curiosity, virtuosity, and dedication to the highest artistic ideals of music making. Residing at Brandeis University in Waltham, Massachusetts, the LSQ (or Lyds as their fans call them) continue to offer compelling, thoughtful, and dramatic performances of the quartet literature. From the acknowledged masterpieces of the classical, romantic, and modern eras to the remarkable compositions written by today's cutting edge composers, the quartet approaches music-making with a sense of exploration and personal expression that is timeless.

Inventive programming is a core piece of the Lyds' identity. In addition to traditional concerts, the quartet offers programming with themes exploring concepts of time, place, the vernacular, and identity, as well as single composer programs, all-contemporary programs, cross-cultural collaborations, and mixed media programs (video, electronics, live painting projections). Thematic programs, such as "Around the World in a String Quartet" and "Vienna and the String Quartet," help to explore both a broad prospective and a very specific focus in the world of string quartet music. The Lyds enjoy working with other artists, in traditional configurations as well as in boundary-crossing performances. Most recently, these included such musicians as tabla player Sandeep Das, pipa player Chen Yihan, and Syrian clarinetist/composer Kinan Azmeh.

The Lyds have a long-standing reputation as one of the foremost champions of new music, and have commissioned, performed, and recorded works by a Who's Who of modern composers. In 2012 their first Lydian String Quartet Commission Prize, one of the largest of such prizes in the world, drew over 400 applicants. As a result, first prize-winner Kurt Rohde wrote his epic string quartet *Treatises for an Unrecovered Past* for the Lyds, who premiered it in 2013 and recorded it in the summer of 2015. The second (2015) LSQ Commission Prize was awarded to composer Steven Snowden, who wrote *Bird Catching from Above*, premiered in 2016. The quartet is excited to announce that the 2017 winner of the LSQ Commission Prize is Saad Haddad.

Their five-year "American Originals" Project, from 1995-2000, featured music drawn from the rich repertoire of the 20th-Century American string quartet. During that time, they performed and/or recorded over sixty works by American composers, accompanying concerts with workshops, lectures, and discussions. Composer and music critic Dexter Morill refers to the Lyds as holding a "leading position" in the American string quartet repertoire. The project serves as a foundation for the diverse and ever-expanding Lydian contemporary exploration. In recognition of their work, the quartet has received numerous Chamber Music America/ASCAP Awards for Adventurous Programming, grants from the Meet the Composer/Rockefeller Foundation/AT&T Jazz Program in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Aaron Copland Fund for Music.

In the same spirit of collaboration, the Lyds enjoy working with young composers and performers at the quartet's Brandeis home as well as in mini-residencies at universities across the US and abroad. Most recently, the quartet traveled to Taiwan for a two-week residency working with young composers and



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performers at the Taipei National University of the Arts, collaborating with composer and Brandeis colleague Yui-Hui Chang while also premiering her piece "Mind Like Water." Recent residencies include the University of North Texas, Brigham Young University, the University of California at Davis, and Sacramento State University.

The LSQ has performed extensively throughout the United States at venues such as Jordan Hall in Boston; the Kennedy Center and the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.; Lincoln Center, Miller Theater, and Weill Recital Hall in New York City; the Pacific Rim Festival at the University of California at Santa Cruz; and the Slee Beethoven Series at the University at Buffalo. Abroad, the Quartet has made appearances in France, England, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Russia, Armenia, and most recently in Taiwan.

The Lyds' 29 currently available commercial recordings reflect their diverse and far-reaching repertoire, including works by Beethoven, Brahms, Ives, Ornstein, Persichetti, and Schubert as well as American contemporary composers they have long known and collaborated with such as Martin Boykan, Eric Chasalow, Peter Child, John Harbison, Lee Hyla, Steven Mackey, David Rakowski, Harold Shapero, and Yehudi Wyner. Their recording of John Harbison's String Quartet No. 3 and "The Rewaking" was chosen by both The New York Times and The Boston Globe as one of the best classical recordings of 2001. Harbison recently wrote of the quartet: "Each time I encounter the Lydian Quartet my admiration for their technical, structural, and communicative power continues to grow. They are the complete package, and the wider my travels, the deeper goes my conviction."

Of their recently released (2012) recording of Beethoven's late quartets, Paul Rapoport of Fanfare magazine writes: "these are fine and distinctive performances, recorded in very realistic sound... The dense counterpoint of the *Grosse Fuge* benefits especially from the textural clarity characteristic of these performances, and the Lydian players turn in one of the most cleanly executed and precisely articulated renditions of this difficult movement in my experience." The Boston Globe's Jeremy Eichler wrote, of the release: "These distinguished readings are full of subtlety, tonal refinement, and a sense of accumulated musical wisdom."

The Lyds' long-term residency at Brandeis allow them to collaborate with each other and colleagues around the world, partially through their yearly concert series at the Slosberg Music Center. The members of the Lydian String Quartet are Andrea Segar and Judith Eissenberg (violins), Mark Berger (viola), and Joshua Gordon (cello). All members are on the faculty of Brandeis University in Waltham, Massachusetts.