

ESCHER STRING QUARTET

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“They hold the listener spellbound from first bar to last.”
BBC Music Magazine, September 2014

The Escher String Quartet has received acclaim for its profound musical insight and rare tonal beauty. 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 Artists of The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, this season presenting the complete Zemlinsky Quartets Cycle in a concert streamed live from the Rose Studio. In 2013, the quartet became one of the very few chamber ensembles to be awarded the prestigious Avery Fisher Career Grant.

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, Vilde Frang, David Shifrin and guitarist Jason Vieaux.

The Escher Quartet has made a distinctive impression throughout Europe, with recent debuts including the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Berlin Konzerthaus and Les Grands Interprètes series in Geneva. Last season also saw debuts at London’s Kings Place and Slovenian Philharmonic Hall in Ljubljana, and festival appearances at Dublin’s Great Music in Irish Houses and the Risør Chamber Music Festival in Norway.

In the current season, the quartet undertakes further UK tours including the Wigmore Hall and makes debuts at the Heidelberg Spring Festival and De Oosterpoort Groningen in the Netherlands. The ensemble also renews its collaboration with pianist Benjamin Grosvenor in a European tour including the Auditorium du Louvre in Paris.

Alongside its growing European profile, the Escher Quartet continues to flourish in its home country, performing at Alice Tully Hall in New York, Kennedy Center in Washington DC and the Ravinia and Caramoor festivals. In 2014, the quartet gave a highly praised debut at Chamber Music San Francisco and in 2015 returned to Music@Menlo in California, focussing on the quartets of Schubert. In the 12/13 season, the ensemble performed a critically acclaimed Britten Quartets series at The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, and this season is one of five quartets chosen to collaborate in a complete presentation of Beethoven’s string quartets.

Elsewhere, the ensemble made its first Australian appearance at the Perth International Arts Festival in 2012, and last season made its debut at the Hong Kong International Chamber Music Festival. Return engagements took the quartet to the Tel Aviv Museum of Art in Israel and the Campos do Jordão Music Festival in Brazil for coaching activities. The quartet fervently supports the education of young musicians and frequently gives masterclasses, including regular coaching at the Royal Academy of Music in London.

In Spring 2015, the quartet released Volume 1 of the complete Mendelssohn Quartets on the BIS label, received warmly by critics with comments such as “This is full-blooded quartet playing in the grand, classic manner: extrovert and eloquent... hugely engaging music-making” (BBC Music Magazine) and “The Eschers sound warm, relaxed and responsive to all of Mendelssohn’s expressive nuances...” (The Guardian). The Mendelssohn series continues this season with the release of Volume 2. The quartet has also recorded the complete Zemlinsky String Quartets in 2 volumes, released on the Naxos label in 2013 and 2014 respectively. Their great critical acclaim included 5 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.