

History of the Amernet Quartet

The Emergence of One of Today's Exceptional Quartets

The Amernet String Quartet, Ensemble-in-Residence at Florida International University, has garnered worldwide praise and recognition as one of today's exceptional string quartets.

The ensemble rose to international attention after only one year of existence, after winning the Gold Medal at the 7th Tokyo International Music Competition in 1992.

Three years later the group was the First Prize winner of the prestigious 5th Banff International String Quartet Competition. The Amernet String Quartet has been described by The New York Times as "an accomplished and intelligent ensemble", and by the Nürnberger Nachrichten (Germany) as "fascinating with flawless intonation, extraordinary beauty of sound, virtuosic brilliance and homogeneity of ensemble".

The Amernet String Quartet was formed in 1991, while two of its members were students at The Juilliard School. Founding members Marcia Littley and Javier Arias have been joined by fellow Juilliard graduates, violinist Misha Vitenson and violist Michael Klotz.

Their busy performance schedule has taken the group to major musical centers and smaller cities across the United States. They also have performed concerts in Japan, Canada, Germany, France, Switzerland, Korea, Mexico, and Romania. The Amernet's New York debut was at Merkin Hall in 1994, with a return engagement in 1995. Subsequent New York appearances include Carnegie's Weill Recital Hall in 1996 and 1998, the Americas Society in 1998, and Alice Tully Hall in 1997 and 1998, which The New York Times described as "immensely satisfying... most notable for the quality of unjaded discovery that came through so vividly."

From September of 2000 until May 2004 the Amernet String Quartet was Corbett String Quartet in Residence at Northern Kentucky University, where they headed the Patricia A. Corbett String Program.

Previous to that, the group held a residency at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music where they taught chamber music for four years.

The Amernet String Quartet has received grants from the Corbett Foundation, the Greater Cincinnati Foundation, the LaSalle Foundation, the Fine Arts Fund, the Cincinnati Chamber Music Society and the Amernet Society for school outreach projects, commissions of new chamber music works and for their unique concert and conversation series. The group was the recipient of a Chamber Music Rural Residency Award in 1995. During that year they divided their time among the communities of Johnstown, Somerset and Indiana, Pennsylvania.

The Amernet Quartet has conducted workshops and master classes in Buffalo NY, Memphis TN, Erie PA, Los Angeles CA, Logan UT and other cities. They were founders of The Norse Festival, a summer chamber music workshop at Northern Kentucky University providing an opportunity for young musicians from the region to work intensively in chamber groups, under their guidance. Currently they host an annual summer Chamber Music Camp in Miami called Animato.

The group has recorded the Concerto for Clarinet, Oboe, String Quartet and Bass by John Harbison with Sara Lambert Bloom and Charles Neidich as soloists, “The Butterflies began to Sing” a work for String Quartet, Bass, MIDI keyboard and computer, by Morton Subotnick, a complete CD of quartets by American composer Stephen Dankner, as well as a recording of the Debussy String Quartet and the Chausson Concerto for Piano, Violin and String Quartet. The Amernet Quartet maintains a connection with today’s composers, and has worked closely with such composers as Anthony Brandt, John Corigliano, Stephen Dankner, David Epstein, Toshi Ichihyanagi, Gerhard Samuel, and Morton Subotnick. The Amernet String Quartet performs contemporary repertoire and commissions works from today's leading composers from all over the world.

The Amernet Quartet has collaborated in concert with numerous artists and ensembles, such as the Tokyo, the St. Lawrence, and the Ying Quartets, Steve Ansell, Yehonatan Berick, Andres Diaz, Roberto Diaz, Miriam Fried, Yehuda Hanani, Toby Hoffman, Ida Kavafian, Paul Katz, Anton Kuerti, Ruth Laredo, Anthony McGill, Rainer Moog, Eugene Pridonoff, Sandra Rivers, Shauna Rolston, Nathaniel Rosen, Eric Shumsky, James Tocco, Dame Gillian Weir and Kyung Wha-Chung, Zvi Zeitlin, and many others.

From August of 2004 to July of 2005 the Amernet Quartet served as the Ernst Stiefel Quartet-in-Residence for the Caramoor Center for the Arts.

The Amernet String Quartet was named Quartet-in-Residence at Florida International University in the Fall of 2004.