

THE ENSŌ
STRING QUARTET

Maureen Nelson, Violin

John Marcus, Violin

Robert Brophy, Viola

Richard Belcher, Cello

Thursday, May 12, 2005

8:00 p.m.

Lillian H. Duncan Recital Hall

RICE UNIVERSITY

the
Shepherd
School
of Music

PROGRAM

**String Quartet in E-flat Major,
Op. 33 No. 2**

Franz Joseph Haydn
(1732-1809)

Allegro moderato, cantabile
Scherzo. Allegro
Largo e sostenuto
Finale. Presto

String Quartet (1996)

Richard Lavenda
(b. 1955)

Powerful, fiery
Gentle, persuasive
Smooth, elegant

INTERMISSION

**String Quartet in F Major,
Op. 59 No. 1**

Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770-1827)

Allegro
Allegretto vivace e sempre scherzando
Adagio molto e mesto
Thème russe. Allegro

The reverberative acoustics of Duncan Recital Hall magnify the slightest sound made by the audience. Your care and courtesy will be appreciated. The taking of photographs and use of recording equipment are prohibited.

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*Applauded by The Strad for "its totally committed, imaginative interpretation that emphasized contrasts of mood, dynamics and articulation," and The Ann Arbor News for "crisp, incisive playing – with just the right quotient of sass," the ENSŌ STRING QUARTET is quickly becoming one of America's leading young ensembles. The group was recently awarded Second Prize in the 2004 International Banff String Quartet Competition, where they also received the prize for the best performance of the Pièce de Concert, Stewart Grant's **String Quartet No. 2, "Banff Variations."** In spring 2003, the quartet was a winner of the 2003 Concert Artists Guild International Competition, and they also earned top prizes at the Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition and Chamber Music Yellow Springs (Ohio) Competition. In April 2004, the Ensō Quartet made its New York debut with guest pianist Gilbert Kalish. In addition, the quartet recorded a CD for the NAXOS label. Future engagements include concerts at Brooklyn Friends of Chamber Music, Market Square Concerts, the Newtown (Connecticut) Friends of Chamber Music, Ramapo College in New Jersey, Music for Youth Residency in Bridgeport, Connecticut, and the Cerritos Center for the Performing Arts on the José Iturbi Gold Medal Series.*

The Ensō String Quartet has performed throughout the United States and abroad since its inception in 1999, including featured appearances at such music festivals as La Jolla SummerFest and the Great Lakes Music Festival. Other highlights from previous seasons include appearances on NPR's "St. Paul Sunday," the Mostly Music and the Dame Myra Hess Series of Chicago, the SYZGY: New Music at Rice series, and a concerto with the Rockford Symphony Orchestra and with the Champaign Urbana Symphony at the Kranert Center for Performing Arts. Past engagements also include New York's Merkin Concert Hall, the Pittsburgh Chamber Music Society, Chicago's Music in the Loft series, the Chautauqua Institution, and the Bedford (New York) Chamber Music Series with pianist Anthony Newman. Internationally, the quartet has toured Costa Rica as guest artists in the Twelfth International Costa Rica Music Festival, and they have also performed in England and Canada, where the group was a Finalist in the Banff Seventh International Quartet Competition.

Currently Lecturers in String Quartet at the Shepherd School of Music, the Ensō Quartet has also held a graduate residency at Northern Illinois University, where the group was mentored by the Vermeer Quartet. Recently the ensemble held a winter residency at the Britten-Pears Young Artists Program in Aldeburgh, England. In addition to extensive residency work at the university level, the ensemble is committed to bringing classical music to

the community, and offers numerous programs geared for children that emphasize interaction between audience and the quartet. Most recently, the group brought their educational programs to Mark O'Connor's Fiddle Camp in California and to thousands of children and teachers in schools throughout Illinois under the auspices of the Chicago-based International Music Foundation. In addition, the group performs extensively in Texas schools under the auspices of Houston Friends of Music.

The Ensō String Quartet draws together four young musicians from around the world. Its members hold degrees from the Juilliard School, the Curtis Institute of Music, the Royal Northern College of Music (United Kingdom), and the University of Canterbury (New Zealand). In addition, the group has worked with Joseph Silverstein, composer Joan Tower, and members of the Cleveland, Alban Berg, and Takács Quartets. The group has been featured in Chamber Music Magazine's "American Ensembles" column, and their performances have been broadcast on PBS, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation-ABC Classical FM, WGBH Boston Public Radio, Chicago's WFMT, and Canada's CBC radio.

The ensemble's name, ensō, is derived from the Japanese zen painting of the circle, which represents several things – perfection and imperfection, the moment of chaos that is creation, the endless circle of life, and the fullness of the spirit. More information on the Ensō String Quartet is available on the group's website – www.ensoqueartet.com.



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