

March 13th, 2025, concert
Balourdet Quartet

in memory of
Marlene Preiss

The WMCT gratefully acknowledges
Dianne Henderson
for her support of the Student Outreach Program

As a courtesy to others, please refrain from wearing perfume or other scents.
Please turn off cell phones and other noise-making devices.
No photography or recordings of any type during the performance.

Please come and meet the artists in the lobby following the concert.

Tuning Your Mind Lecture:
2025-26 Music in the Afternoon Season Presentation
Simon Fryer, WMCT Artistic Director
Open to all, 12.15 p.m. sharp
Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Building

REVISED PROGRAM for MARCH 13, 2025

String Quartet No.23
in F major, K.590

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(1756–1791)

- I. Allegro moderato, in F major
- II. Andante / Allegretto in C major
- III. Menuetto: Allegretto – Trio
- IV. Allegro, in F major

impossible inventions for string quartet

Paul Novak
(b. 1998)

- I. faster – than – light – machine
- II. quantum – clockwork
- III. anti – gravity – machine
- IV. cyborg – falling – in – love

INTERMISSION

String Quartet No. 7 in F Major,
Op. 59, No. 1 “Rasumovsky”

Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770–1827)

- I. Allegro (F major)
- II. Allegretto vivace e sempre scherzando
(B-flat major)
- III. Adagio molto e mesto - attacca (F minor)
- IV. “Thème Russe”: Allegro (F major)

REVISED NOTES for MARCH 13, 2025

“Sublime imagination and invention are the hallmarks of Mozart’s final string quartet and the first of Beethoven’s Razumovsky Quartets. These are works which constantly allure us with surprises, yet even more so offer a profound congeniality and spirituality. In addition, an exciting new commission written for the Balourdet Quartet by rising star composer Paul Novak, one of the most thoughtful musical minds of today, explores the intersection of machinery and technology with the timeless art of string playing.”

-Balourdet Quartet

ABOUT THE ARTISTS REVISED

BALOURDET QUARTET

Angela Bae, violin; Justin DeFilippis, violin;
Benjamin Zannoni, viola; Russell Houston, cello

The Balourdet Quartet stands out for their vibrant energy and masterful blend of technical precision and emotional depth that brings a fresh perspective to both beloved classics and modern compositions. Its unique closeness and willingness to take creative risks earned it the 2024 Avery Fisher Career Grant, as well as Chamber Music America's 2024 Cleveland Quartet Award. With more than 70 concerts per season, recent highlights include the Balourdet's debuts at Carnegie and Wigmore Halls, and new string quartets by composers Karim Al-Zand, Paul Novak, and Nicky Sohn through grants from Chamber Music America (2021) and the Barlow Foundation (2023). They are currently the Graduate Quartet in Residence at the prestigious Jacobs School of Music at Indiana University and are recent graduates of the New England Conservatory's Professional String Quartet Program.

Highlights of the 2024-25 season include performances at the Chamber Music Society of Detroit, the Kennedy Center, What Makes it Great at Merkin Hall, and a weeklong residency at Stanford University. Recently, they have performed at La Jolla Music Society, Rockport Chamber Music Festival, Northwestern University Winter Chamber Music Festival, and Chamber Music Houston. Collaborations include pianists Marc-André Hamelin, Simone Dinnerstein, Stewart Goodyear, Albert Cano Smit, cellist Astrid Schween, and violist Jordan Bak. During this season, they continue their position as String Quartet in Residence with the Chamber Orchestra of the Triangle in North Carolina where they curate the Up Close Chamber Music Series, serve as principals in the orchestra, and engage with the larger community of the Triangle region.

Committed to sharing their musical values with the next generation, the quartet has served regularly as faculty at the

Green Mountain Chamber Music Festival, JDR Summer Music Academy, Berkshire Summer Music, and Opus Chamber Music. They have also given masterclasses and coachings at Northwestern University, University of Michigan, Rice University, Emory University, New England Conservatory Preparatory Department, Fischhoff Chamber Music Academy, Upper Valley Chamber Music, and Wright State University.

The Balourdet journey began in 2018 in the mountains of New Mexico at the Taos School of Music, where violinists Justin DeFilippis, Angela Bae, and cellist Russell Houston first bonded as friends over long evenings of chamber music, luxurious Peppermint Schnapps and extravagant meals created by chef extraordinaire Antoine Balourdet, a renaissance man with an exceptional love of life and music. It was the friendships, a shared passion for music and food, and gratitude for the role the festival played in the formation of the quartet, that inspired the members to name the ensemble in Chef Balourdet's honor.

Soon thereafter, in the heat of a waning Texas summer, Justin, Angela, and Russell joined with violist Benjamin Zannoni at Rice University, and the Balourdet Quartet was formed. Inspired by their love for the repertoire and the excitement of having found each other, the four friends found themselves playing quartets late into the night for fun. After having been together for only one year at Rice University, and a summer at the Aspen Music Festival, they took second prize at the Nielsen International String Quartet Competition, and were selected as the only quartet admitted to Boston's historic New England Conservatory Professional String Quartet Program under the tutelage of Cleveland Quartet cellist Paul Katz.

In 2021, the Quartet won the Grand Prize at New York's Concert Artists Guild Competition, which included joint management by Concert Artists Guild in the U.S., and Young Classical Artist's Trust (YCAT) in the UK and Europe. In addition, the Balourdet has been prizewinners in Canada's Banff International String Quartet Competition, the International Premio Paolo Borciani Competition in Italy, Gold Medal winners at the Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition, and Gold Medal and Audience Prizewinners at the Yellow Springs Competition.