Faculty Recital Series

Avalon String Quartet

Blaise Magnière, violin
Richard O. Ryan Endowed Chair in Violin
Marie Wang, violin
Anthony Devroye, viola
Cheng-Hou Lee, cello

Wednesday, September 7, 2022
7:00 PM
Recital Hall

PROGRAM

String Quartet in G minor
 Leo Sowerby (1895-1968)
I. Languidly, darkly – fast, with dash
II. Very fast
III. Slowly, rhapsodically
IV. Broadly – Fugue: moderately fast, yet with broad sweep

The Seven Ages of Man*
 David Maki (b. 1966)
Paul Kassel and Mary Nighosian, narrators

-Intermission-

String Quartet in F Major, Op. 135
 Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)
I. Allegretto
II. Vivace
III. Assai lento, cantante e tranquillo
IV. Grave, ma non troppo tratto - Allegro

*World Premiere Performance
PROGRAM NOTES

The Seven Ages of Man

“All the world's a stage, 
And all the men and women merely players; 
They have their exits and their entrances, 
And one man in his time plays many parts, 
His acts begin seven ages.”

Thus begins one of Shakespeare's most famous speeches, spoken by the misanthropic Jacques in the comic masterpiece, As You Like It. It is also the basis for a new string quartet, composed by NIU School of Music Professor David Maki and performed by the Avalon String Quartet.

This piece, specially commissioned by the College of Visual and Performing Arts in honor of NIU's 125th anniversary, will have several parts, each introduced with the accompanying text performed by actress Mary Nighosian and actor (and Dean of the College of Visual and Performing Arts) Paul Kassel.

BIOGRAPHIES

AVALON STRING QUARTET

Hailed as “one of the most exciting young string quartets in America” (The Washington Post), the Avalon String Quartet has established itself as one of the country’s leading chamber ensembles and has earned international acclaim for the bold musicality and passionate intensity of its performances.

Formed in 1995 at the Norfolk Chamber Music Festival, the Quartet came to the fore after participating in Isaac Stern’s Chamber Music Workshop at Carnegie Hall in 1997. As a result, Mr. Stern invited the Avalon Quartet to perform in the Isaac Stern Chamber Music Encounters in Jerusalem and in March 2000 presented the ensemble’s Carnegie Hall debut at Weill Recital Hall. The Quartet made its New York debut on the Alexander Schneider Series at the New School in 1998. The Quartet won First Prize, the Channel Classics Prize, and the Rockport Chamber Music Festival Prize at the 1999 Concert Artists Guild Competition, which led to the critically acclaimed recording Dawn To Dusk. In 2000 the Quartet won top prize at the ARD Competition in Munich, Germany.

The Quartet is in residence at Northern Illinois University, a position formerly occupied by the distinguished Vermeer Quartet. As a part of their residency, they perform four programs annually in DeKalb and Chicago, and the members teach individual studios and coach chamber music at the school. This follows previous residencies at the Juilliard School and at Indiana University-South Bend.
The Quartet has performed in many of the major halls, including Alice Tully Hall in New York, 92nd St Y, Carnegie Hall, the Library of Congress in Washington DC, Wigmore Hall and Herculessaal in Munich. Other performances include appearances at the Caramoor Music Festival in NY, La Jolla Chamber Music Society, NPR’s St. Paul Sunday Radio, Mostly Mozart Festival at Lincoln Center, Isabella Gardner Museum, Barge Music, Dame Myra Hess and the Ravinia Festival.

Dedicated educators, the Quartet has taught at the Interlochen Quartet Institute, the Icicle Creek Chamber Music Festival, Hot Springs Music Festival, Madeline Island Music Camp, Britten-Pears School in England and the Juilliard School. The Quartet is also dedicated to outreach in various communities, including working with the Center for Abused Children in Hartford and with the Music for Youth Organization that works with the Bridgeport and Trumbull School Systems.

The Quartet’s live performances and conversations have been featured on Chicago’s WFMT-FM, New York’s WQXR-FM and WNYC-FM, National Public Radio’s Performance Today, Canada’s CBC, Australia’s ABC, the ARD in Germany and France Musique.

To find out more about Avalon, please visit their website at www.avalonquartet.com

David Maki (b. 1966) earned his degrees in Composition at Northern Illinois University (B.M.), the University of Iowa (M.M.), and the University of Michigan (D.M.A.). Maki’s works have been performed widely at regional, national, and international venues. His music has been described as “fresh and unusual” (All Music Guide), “vivid, introspective” (American Record Guide), and “meditative and beautiful” (Fanfare). Recordings can also be found on the Albany, Avid Sound, and Parma labels. He has substantial experience as a pianist and collaborative artist performing a variety of genres including classical, jazz, and new music. Maki enjoys finding inspiration from nature, literature, arts, design, and a wide variety of music in order to compose multilayered works that speak clearly. He also seeks to employ a harmonic language that varies from lushly tonal to jaggedly chromatic, within transparent formal structures. David Maki is Professor of Music and Coordinator of Music Theory and Composition at Northern Illinois University.