



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
FACULTY OF MUSIC

100 YEARS
1918-2018

New Orford String Quartet

with special guests Enrico Elisi, Alice Hong,
Heng-Han Hou, Maxime Despax and Allison Rich

Friday November 16, 2018

7:30 pm

Walter Hall, 80 Queen's Park

We wish to acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates.

For thousands of years it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat,
the Seneca, and most recently, the Mississaugas of the Credit River.

Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across
Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.

New Orford String Quartet

Jonathan Crow and Andrew Wan, violin

Eric Nowlin, viola

Brian Manker, cello

with special guests Enrico Elisi, Alice Hong, Heng-Han Hou,
Maxime Despax and Allison Rich

PROGRAM

Piano Quintet in F minor, Op. 34

Johannes Brahms
(1833-1897)

- i. Allegro non troppo
- ii. Andante, un poco Adagio
- iii. Scherzo. Allegro
- iv. Finale. Poco sostenuto

Enrico Elisi, piano

Intermission

Octet in E-flat major, Op. 20

Felix Mendelssohn
(1809-1847)

- i. Allegro moderato con fuoco
- ii. Andante
- iii. Scherzo: Allegro leggierissimo
- iv. Presto

Alice Hong and Heng-Han Hou, violin
Maxime Despax, viola
Allison Rich, cello



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BIOGRAPHIES



Four musicians with equally stellar pedigrees formed the **New Orford String Quartet** with the goal of developing a new model for a touring string quartet. Their concept – to bring four elite orchestral leaders together on a regular basis over many years to perform chamber music at the highest level – has resulted in a quartet that maintains a remarkably fresh perspective while bringing a palpable sense of joy to each performance. *The Toronto Star* has described this outcome as “nothing short of electrifying.”

Consisting of the concertmasters and principal cellist and violist of the Montreal, Detroit, and Toronto Symphonies, the New Orford String Quartet has seen astonishing success, giving annual concerts for national CBC broadcast and receiving unanimous critical acclaim, including two Opus Awards for Concert of the Year, and a 2017 Juno Award for Canada’s top Chamber Music Recording. Recent seasons have featured return engagements in Chicago, Montreal and Toronto, as well as their New York City debut on Lincoln Center’s Great Performers series.

The original Orford String Quartet gave its first public concert in 1965, and became one of the best-known and most illustrious chamber music ensembles. After more than 2,000 concerts on six continents, the Orford String Quartet gave its last concert in 1991. Two decades later, in July 2009, the New Orford String Quartet took up this mantle, giving its first concert for a sold-out audience at the Orford Arts Centre. The New Orford has since gone on to perform concerts throughout North America and lead residencies at the University of Toronto, Schulich School of Music, Mount Royal University, and Syracuse University. In September 2017 the Quartet became Ensemble in Residence at the University of Toronto, and was recently named Artistic Directors of the Prince Edward County Music Festival, where they made their curatorial debut in September 2018.

In 2011, the Quartet recorded its debut album of the final quartets of Schubert and Beethoven, released by Bridge Records to international acclaim. The recording was hailed as one of the top CDs of 2011 by *La Presse* and CBC In Concert and nominated for a Juno Award in 2012. Critics have described the recording as “...flawless... a match made in heaven!” (*Classical Music Sentinel*); “a performance of rare intensity” (*Audiophile Audition*); and “nothing short of electrifying... listen and weep” (*The Toronto Star*). Their follow-up album of the Brahms Op. 51 Quartets was equally well-received, and received the 2017 Juno for best chamber music album.

The New Orford is dedicated to promoting Canadian works, both new commissions and neglected repertoire from the previous century. New Orford String Quartet projects have included performances of major Canadian string quartets from the 20th century including works by Glenn Gould, Sir Ernest MacMillan, Jacques Hétu, R. Murray Schafer, and Claude Vivier, as well as commissions of new works from composers such as Francois Dompierre, Gary Kulesha, Airat Ichmouratov and Tim Brady. The Quartet thrives on exploring the rich chamber music repertoire; recent collaborations include those with pianists Marc-André Hamelin and Menahem Pressler.

The Quartet regularly tours in the major cities of North America, including Washington, D.C., Toronto, and Los Angeles; at the same time, the members feel strongly about bringing this music to areas that don't often hear it, and as a result perform frequently in remote rural locations. As part of their leadership positions at the major orchestras in Montreal, Toronto and Detroit, each member of the Quartet regularly has the opportunity to perform as a soloist with his orchestra. The New Orford String Quartet is Artist in Residence at the University Club of Toronto.

Born and raised in Bologna, Italy, **Enrico Elisi** has established himself as one of the most passionate Italian pianists on the concert scene today and has been hailed for his mastery of elegance, refinement, and fantasy (*La Nueva España*).

He regularly performs to acclaim throughout the Americas, Europe and

Asia, and his interpretations reveal "remarkable sensitivity, imagination, and polish" (*Baltimore Sun*).

Elisi has appeared in historical settings such as La Fenice Theatre, Venice; Palazzo Vecchio, Florence; Bibiena Theatre, Mantua; and Pavarotti Opera House, Modena. Recent engagements include the Banff Centre for the Arts, Weill Hall at Carnegie Hall, New York Public Library, New York's Morgan Library, Washington's National Gallery of Art and the Italian Embassy, as well as the Centro Cultural de España in Lima, Peru. He has performed with several orchestras in the US, Italy and Portugal, and as a chamber musician at the Taos and Ravinia Festivals.

Among Enrico Elisi's awards are top prizes in the Premio Venezia (Italy) and the Oporto International Competition (Portugal). A champion of new music, he premiered Paul Chihara's *Two Images* at Weill Hall (subsequently recorded for Albany Records). *Mozart Piano Album* was released in 2011 and another CD dedicated to Bach will be released in 2018. Dr. Elisi is an Associate Professor at the University of Toronto and a Steinway Concert Artist.





Originally from Gatineau, Quebec, violist **Maxime Despax** studied at the Conservatoire de musique de Gatineau, the Conservatoire de musique de Montréal and the University of Toronto, where he studied with Emmanuel Beaudet, Jocelyne Bastien and Teng Li. He completed his Master's degree in Viola Performance at the University of Toronto on full scholarship, studying with Teng Li with whom he is now pursuing a Doctor of Musical Arts. Currently, his career is focused on orchestral and chamber music. Maxime has subbed with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra and is a member of the Orchestre Symphonique de Gatineau. He often collaborates with current composers from Canada, and performed the national premiere of the opera *Luci Mie Traditrici* by Italian composer Salvatore Sciarrino in Toronto. Maxime also has a family string quartet, the Quatuor Despax. They have been invited to perform in several festivals such as Ottawa Chamberfest, and have performed throughout Quebec and Ontario, as well as in France and Italy.

Maxime Despax has attended the Orford Quartet Program, the Domaine Forget, the St. Lawrence String Quartet Seminar at Stanford University, the Banff Centre and the Mozarteum Summer Academy in Salzburg.



An international award winner both as a violinist and composer, **Alice Hong** is the international first prizewinner for the 2nd Keuris Composition Competition and a multiple award recipient of the ASCAP Morton Gould Awards. She has performed as a violinist in solo and chamber recitals across America, Canada, Czech Republic, and China and has attended numerous festivals.

Hong currently plays with ensembles local to Toronto, including as a substitute in the Toronto Symphony Orchestra (TSO), Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony, guest principal second for the Rose Orchestra, and has appeared as a soloist with the University of Toronto Percussion Ensemble. She is a founding member of Project MainStream (www.project-mainstream.com) a collective of musicians aiming to bridge the gap between classical and pop music.

Hong earned a Master of Music degree from Rice University's Shepherd School of Music under the tutelage of Cho-Liang Lin, and a Bachelor's degree and minor in composition from the Cleveland Institute of Music with David Updegraff. She is currently a Doctor of Musical Arts candidate at the University of Toronto studying with TSO concertmaster Jonathan Crow.



A sensitive and musical player, **Heng-Han Hou**'s professional violin career has seen him performing around the world. Hailing from Taiwan, Heng-Han's talent in both violin and piano stems from his early formal music education and a deep passion for music.

A versatile musician, Heng-Han's love for music appears in solo, chamber, and orchestral playing. Heng-Han has played in public master classes for Midori Goto, Noah Bendix-Balgley, the New Orford String Quartet, the Ebene String Quartet, and the American String Quartet among others. He performs regularly with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Canadian Opera Company, Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony Orchestra, and Windsor Symphony Orchestra.

Heng-Han is pursuing his doctorate degree at the University of Toronto and holds teaching assistant positions with Jonathan Crow, the University of Toronto Symphony Orchestra, and the chamber ensemble. Heng-Han's future highlight includes his final doctoral recital in Walter Hall on December 15 at 2:30 pm, collaborating with pianist Philip Chiu.



Allison Rich is currently a Doctor of Musical Arts student at the University of Toronto studying Cello Performance with Joseph Johnson. Prior to moving to Toronto, she was a member of Jackson Symphony Orchestra and an associate member of the Civic Orchestra of Chicago. Allison received her Master of Music degree from the University of Michigan School of Music, Theatre & Dance, studying with Professor Richard Aaron. At the University of Michigan, she performed with the University Symphony Orchestra as principal cellist, the Contemporary Directions Ensemble, and collaborated in many chamber music settings.

She completed her Bachelor of Music degree at the Eastman School of Music at the University of Rochester, studying with Steven Doane, David Ying, and members of the Ying Quartet. Allison is the recipient of the Peter Salaff Prize, awarded by the Eastman School of Music Chamber Music Department as well as the Messinger Ambassadors Fellowship.

Photo credits: NOSQ by Alain Lefort, Maxime Despax by Alice Hong, chamber music students by George Kash



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