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2026

SPSQQC

Saint Paul String Quartet Competition

Year  
21

April 18, 2026

JUNIOR DIVISION

~ Final Rounds ~

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# 2026 SPSQC

## Final Round Jury

### Ying Quartet

Robin Scott, violin

Janet Ying, violin

Phillip Ying, viola

David Ying, 'cello

*The Ying Quartet's participation today is made possible by Artaria SQ.*



## Selection Jury

Mari Sato, Cavani Quartet

Jeffrey Myers, Calidore String Quartet

Charles Gray, Casella String Quartet

Laura Thielke, Artaria Quartet of Boston



### Artistic Director

Ray Shows

Artaria String Quartet

### Master of Ceremonies

Steve Seel

MPR YourClassical Host

### Production Assistants

Nancy Oliveros, Artaria String Quartet

Annalee Wolf, Artaria String Quartet

Rebecca Merblum, Artaria String Quartet

Ching Wen Chen, University of MN

Jasmine Wei Ting Chang, University of MN

### Sundin Hall Director

Tommy Barbarella

*The 2026 Saint Paul String Quartet Competition is grateful to the generous individual and corporate sponsors that have made this event possible.*

*A special Thank You to Tommy Barbarella  
Sundin Music Hall's Music Director.*

## TODAY'S JURY

The **YING QUARTET** occupies a position of unique prominence in the classical music world, combining brilliantly communicative performances with a fearlessly imaginative view of chamber music in today's world. Now in its third decade, the Quartet has established itself as an ensemble of the highest musical qualifications. Their performances regularly take place in many of the world's most important concert halls; at the same time, the Quartet's belief that concert music can also be a meaningful part of everyday life has also drawn the foursome to perform in settings as diverse as the workplace, schools, juvenile prisons, and the White House. In fact, the Ying Quartet's constant quest to explore the creative possibilities of the string quartet has led it to an unusually diverse array of musical projects and interests.

The Ying's ongoing LifeMusic commissioning project, created in response to their commitment to expanding the rich string quartet repertoire, has already achieved an impressive history. Supported by the Institute for American Music, the Ying Quartet commissions both established and emerging composers to create music that reflects contemporary American life. Recent works include Billy Childs' *Awakening*; Lera Auerbach's *Sylvia's Diary*; Lowell Liebermann's *String Quartet No. 3, To the Victims of War*; Sebastian Currier's *Next Atlantis*; and John Novacek's *Three Rags for String Quartet*. In August 2016 the Ying Quartet released a new Schumann/ Beethoven recording on Sono Luminus with the cellist Zuill Bailey, and in 2016-17 the five toured with the Schumann Cello Concerto transcribed for cello and string quartet along with Beethoven's "Kreutzer Sonata," also reimagined for cello quintet. The 2018-19 season features performances with the jazz pianist Billy Childs, a tour of China, performances for the Philadelphia and Phoenix Chamber Music Societies, and performances in the group's role as quartet-in-residence at the Bowdoin International Music Festival.

The Ying Quartet's many other recordings reflect many of the group's wide-ranging musical interests and have generated consistent, enthusiastic acclaim. The group's CD "American Anthem" (Sono Luminus), heralding the music of Randall Thompson, Samuel Barber, and Howard Hanson, was released in 2013 to rave reviews; their 2007 Telarc release of the three Tchaikovsky Quartets and the *Souvenir de Florence* (with James Dunham and Paul Katz) was nominated for a Grammy Award in the Best Chamber Music Performance category.

The Ying Quartet first came to professional prominence in the early 1990s during their years as resident quartet of Jesup, Iowa, a farm town of 2000 people. Playing before audiences of six to six hundred in homes, schools, churches, and banks, the Quartet had its first opportunities to enable music and creative endeavor to become an integral part of community life. The Quartet considers its time in Jesup the foundation of its present musical life and goals.

As quartet-in-residence at the prestigious Eastman School of Music in Rochester, NY, the Ying Quartet teaches in the string department and leads a rigorous, sequentially designed chamber music program. One cornerstone of chamber music activity at Eastman is the noted "Music for All" program, in which all students have the opportunity to perform in community settings beyond the concert hall. The Quartet is the ensemble-in-residence at the Bowdoin International Music Festival, and from 2001-2008, the members of the Ying Quartet were the Blodgett Artists-in-Residence at Harvard University.

*The Ying Quartet came as close to the ideal as possible, delivering chamber music of astonishing, refreshing exaltation and exhilaration.*

— The Los Angeles Times

## SELECTION JURY

Violinist **MARI SATO** has enjoyed a rich and varied career as a chamber musician based in Cleveland. For twenty-four years, she was the second violinist of the award-winning Cavani String Quartet. During her tenure with the Cavani Quartet, Mari gave concerts on major series, including Carnegie Hall, Corcoran Gallery of Art, Festival de L'Épau in France, and the Honolulu Chamber Music Society.



Ms. Sato is honored to have collaborated with many distinguished artists including members of the Cleveland, Juilliard, Emerson, St. Lawrence String Quartets, the Weilerstein Trio and Itzhak Perlman. Music festival appearances and residencies include The Aspen Music Festival, The New World Symphony, Norfolk Chamber Music Festival, Kneisel Hall Chamber Music Festival, Interlochen Center for the Arts, The Perlman Music Program, ChamberFest Cleveland, and Encore Chamber Music.

Formerly on faculty at the Cleveland Institute of Music 1995-2018, Mari Sato and her colleagues coached many outstanding young musicians. Former chamber music students include members of the Jupiter, Daedalus, Aeolus, Miró, Fry Street and Afiara Quartets, as well as members of the Cleveland, St. Paul, Minnesota, Chicago, Detroit, and New York Philharmonic Orchestras. Since 2018, Ms. Sato has been coaching chamber music at the Oberlin Conservatory.

**JEFFREY MYERS**, first violinist of the Calidore String Quartet (CSQ), makes his home in New York City. His chamber music career with the award-winning Calidore String Quartet has established an international reputation for its informed, polished and passionate performances. The quartet won the \$100,000 Grand Prize at the inaugural 2016 M-Prize international chamber music competition, along with grand prizes in the Fischhoff, Coleman, Chesapeake and Yellow Springs competitions, and captured top prizes at the 2012 ARD Munich International String Quartet Competition and Hamburg International Chamber Music Competition. The CSQ is a recipient of a 2018 Avery Fisher Career Grant and a 2017 Lincoln Center Emerging Artist Award. The quartet was the first North American ensemble to win the Borletti-Buitoni Trust Fellowship, was a BBC Radio 3 New Generation Artist and is currently in residence with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center's Bowers Program.



As a soloist, Mr. Myers has performed with the Columbus Symphony Orchestra and the National Repertory Orchestra, as well as the Colburn Orchestra. He has served as guest concertmaster of the Houston Symphony Orchestra and has also served as concertmaster of the National Repertory Orchestra and the Colburn Orchestra. Mr. Myers has collaborated with such artists as Jean-Yves Thibaudet, Marc-André Hamelin and Menahem Pressler, as well as the Ebène and Emerson String Quartets. Festival appearances include the Aspen Music Festival, Banff Centre, BBC Proms, Ravinia and Verbier Festival.

**CHARLES GRAY** earned a B.M. from Wheaton College, an M.M. from the University of Michigan, and he received a chamber music certificate from the Eastman School of Music, where he pursued additional study on viola. His principal study was with Paul Makanowitzky and Sylvia Rosenberg (violin), with Atar Arad (viola), and with the Cleveland Quartet (chamber music).



Gray was the violist of the Casella String Quartet, winner of the 1981 Cleveland Quartet Competition and the Grand Prize at the 1983 Fischhoff Chamber Music Competition. He has performed as a solo recitalist at the Ravinia Festival in Chicago, soloist at the National ACDA and AGO conventions (multiple times) and as a chamber musician at the Aspen Music Festival and the Steamboat Springs Festival in Colorado.

He was a violinist with the Rochester Philharmonic (N.Y.) and the Grand Rapids Symphony (Mich.), concertmaster of the Bloomington Symphony (Minn.), and 20 year regular viola performer with the Minnesota Orchestra and the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra. He is employed as conductor of the 40+ member orchestra at St. Andrew's Lutheran Church, Mahtomedi, Minn. In recent years he has been featured as a violin and viola soloist on many occasions with the St. Olaf Choir, St. Olaf Cantorei, and the St. Olaf Orchestra. He has been honored as "Minnesota Master String Teacher of the Year" by the American String Teachers Association.

In March 2022 he will serve as string judge for the college, young artist and chamber music competition finals at the national MTNA convention in Mpls. He is often called upon to judge music events at MacPhail Music School in Mpls and work with the annual MN All-State Orchestra.

Cellist Dr. **LAURA J. THIELKE** is the Director of Chamber Music at Walnut Hill. Her cello teachers have included Leslie Parnas, Robert Sylvester, Steven Doane, Paul Katz, Gabor Rejto, and Laurence Lesser, and she has worked closely with the Cleveland, Muir, and American Quartets as well as such eminent musicians as Gyorgy Sebok, Gilbert Kalish, Walter Levin and Thomas Brandis. Since 1998, she has served as Assistant Director of the Music Department and Head of Chamber Music at Walnut Hill. As a former member of the Artaria Quartet of Boston, she performed numerous concerts in Europe, Minneapolis, Chicago, Washington D.C., New York, and served as a faculty member at Viterbo College in La Crosse, Wisconsin. Prior to joining the Artaria Quartet, Dr. Thielke was a guest artist at several international music festivals, including the Robert Shaw Choral Institute and the Making Music Together Project under the direction of Sarah Caldwell, including three weeks of concerts at the Moscow State Conservatory. Along with her involvement in chamber music, Dr. Thielke has also had extensive orchestral performing experience, having served as Principal Cello of the New American Chamber Orchestra, the Boston Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Fairfax and Maryland Symphony Orchestras. Dr. Thielke performs as a recitalist in the Boston area and also served for eight summers as Director of String Chamber Music and Cello Faculty at Boston University Tanglewood Institute. In recognition of her work with young artists, in 2002 Chamber Music America awarded her the nation's highest award for chamber music teaching, the Kay Logan Award for Excellence in Chamber Music Education.



Today's emcee **Steve Seel** is the host of **YourClassical's** weekly **SymphonyCast** and the trailblazing music show **Extra Eclectic**. He possesses a broad knowledge of many musical genres, having hosted radio programs ranging from classical to jazz and even avant-garde music at radio stations around the country. Steve began his love affair with public radio at 24 working whatever

shifts he could at his hometown station of WUSF-FM in Tampa, Florida, and from there worked his way to snowy Buffalo, New York, and its renowned classical station WNED-FM, where he hosted mid-days and the weekly experimental-music show Present Tense. In 2005, Steve became one of the founding voices on Minnesota Public Radio's eclectic station, the Current. While there, he hosted afternoons and mornings, and conducted in-depth interviews with pop music luminaries ranging from Brian Eno to David Byrne to Tori Amos.

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**THE SAINT PAUL STRING QUARTET COMPETITION!**

**SPSQC**



## A MESSAGE FROM THE FOUNDER

*“Chamber music is like no other art form. Its repertoire grows more imaginative, relevant, and inclusive by the day, and its performance requires not only exceptional communication, but elevated levels of awareness, empathy, boldness, and vulnerability—the very traits that have the potential to heal our ailing world.” ~ Paul Wianko*

Dear friends of chamber music,

The music you hear today is filled with great promise. From the earliest sounds that stirred the human imagination to the exquisite playing before you now, these remarkable young artists are shaping their hearts and minds with new ideas and an ever-widening sense of possibility. Guided by the wisdom and trust of their mentors, and sustained by the love of parents, teachers, and friends, they play with a genuine devotion to their craft.

The Saint Paul String Quartet Competition brings people together in celebration of beauty within the intimate world of chamber music, shared here and broadcast to audiences beyond. The Final Rounds highlight the most prepared and deeply committed pre-professional string quartets in North America. These six outstanding ensembles will offer us some of the most beautiful music ever composed.

Today’s jury is the renowned **Ying Quartet**. They will evaluate each performance and provide detailed written comments in the following categories:

Ensemble Cohesion & Communication  
Technical Command & Sound Production  
Interpretation, Style & Musical Insight  
Artistic Impact & Stage Presence

The 2026 Junior Division opens with the Haydn Quartet movement Round, followed by a compulsory work by American composer Caroline Shaw (see p. 14), and concludes with selections from the Nationalist/Romantic and Modern eras. Each piece will illuminate the artistry and preparation of these young quartets while presenting a meaningful challenge to our distinguished jury as they determine today’s prizewinners.

*The Saint Paul String Quartet Competition exists to celebrate the highest level of string quartet artistry while inspiring broader connection to chamber music. By enriching the cultural landscape of this art form and championing the voices of underrepresented composers through dedicated competition rounds, SPSQC helps shape a more inclusive and vibrant future for quartet music.*

## DISTINGUISHED SUPPORTERS

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### The Awards

1st Prize - \$1600 Gold Medal Award  
*Sponsored by Michael and Jeanne Antonello*

2nd Prize - \$1200 Silver Medal Award  
*Sponsored by Karen & David Grandstrand*

3rd Prize - \$1000 Bronze Medal Award  
*Sponsored by the James & Perry Leger Family*

Composer Prize - \$1000  
*Artaria String Quartet*

Joseph Haydn Prize - \$1000  
*Sponsored by House of Note*

Audience Prize - \$400



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Young Chamber Musicians congratulates the St. Paul String Quartet Competition on its 21st anniversary!

Since 2008, Young Chamber Musicians has offered advanced chamber music instruction and exciting performance opportunities to string players and pianists at the historic Kohl Mansion in Burlingame, California.

—Susan Bates, Founder & Director



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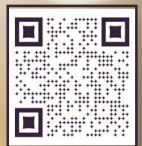
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June 8-12 in Evanston, IL | August 17-18 in Winnetka, IL  
or by appointment

For more information contact:  
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# HAYDN ROUND

11:00am Welcome from Master of Ceremonies

▼ **BLAIR QUARTET** ▼

HAYDN: Quartet in D minor, Op.76, No.2 “Quinten” - I. Allegro

▼ **HUXSOLL QUARTET** ▼

HAYDN: Quartet in G Major, Op.76 No.1 - IV. Allegro ma non troppo

▼ **QUARTET SELENE** ▼

HAYDN: Quartet in G minor, Op.20 No.3 - IV. FINALE. Allegro molto

▼ **AMARE STRING QUARTET** ▼

HAYDN: Quartet in Bb Major, Op.76 No.4 “Sunrise”- I. Allegro con spirito

▼ **TIKAANI QUARTET** ▼

HAYDN: Quartet in Eb Major, Op.71, No.3 - I. Vivace

▼ **ORENDA QUARTET** ▼

HAYDN: Quartet in F Major Op.50, No.5, I. Allegro Moderato

Winner of the Haydn Round will be announced at the Awards Ceremony which follows immediately after the Final Round.

**Caroline Shaw** is a musician who moves among roles, genres, and mediums, trying to imagine a world of sound that has never been heard before but has always existed. She works often in collaboration with others, as producer, composer, violinist, and vocalist. Shaw is the recipient of the Pulitzer Prize in Music, an honorary doctorate from Yale, four Grammys, and a Thomas J. Watson Fellowship. She has written and produced for iconic artists and ensembles across the musical spectrum, including Rosalía, Renée Fleming, Yo-Yo Ma, Tiler Peck, Nas, Kanye West, the LA Phil, the NY Phil, and others. Recent tv/film/stage scoring projects include “Leonardo Da Vinci” (Ken Burns/PBS), “Julie Keeps Quiet (Leonardo Van Dijn)”, “Fleishman is in Trouble” (FX/Hulu), “The Sky Is Everywhere” (Josephine Decker/A24), vocal work with Rosalía (MOTOMAMI), “The Crucible” (Lyndsey Turner/National Theatre), “Partita” (Justin Peck/NYC Ballet), “Moby Dick” (Wu Tsang), and “LIFE” (Gandini Juggling/Merce Cunningham Trust). Current touring projects include shows with Sō Percussion, Ringdown, Attacca Quartet, Roomful of Teeth, Graveyards & Gardens, Gabriel Kahane, and Kamus Quartet. Her favorite color is yellow, and her favorite smell is rosemary.



“ The *Aizuri Quartet*’s name comes from “*aizuri-e*,” a style of Japanese woodblock printing that primarily uses a blue ink. In the 1820s, artists in Japan began to import a particular blue pigment known as “Prussian blue,” which was first synthesized by German paint producers in the early 18th century and later modified by others as an alternative to indigo. The story of *aizuri-e* is one of innovation, migration, transformation, craft, and beauty. *Blueprint*, composed for the incredible *Aizuri Quartet*, takes its title from this beautiful blue woodblock printing tradition as well as from that familiar standard architectural representation of a proposed structure: the blueprint. This piece began its life as a harmonic reduction — a kind of floor plan — of Beethoven’s string quartet Op.18 No.6. As a violinist and violist, I have played this piece many times, in performance and in joyous late-night reading sessions with musician friends. (One such memorable session included *Aizuri*’s marvelous cellist, Karen Onzounian.) Chamber music is ultimately about conversation without words. We talk to each other with our dynamics and articulations, and we try to give voice to the composers whose music has inspired us to gather in the same room and play music. *Blueprint* is also a conversation — with Beethoven, with Haydn (his teacher and the “father” of the string quartet), and with the joys and malinconia of his Op.18 No.6. ”

## COMPOSER ROUND

12:00pm Introduction by Steve Seel

Performances by:

▼ BLAIR QUARTET ▼

▼ HUXSOLL QUARTET ▼

▼ QUARTET SELENE ▼

▼ AMARE STRING QUARTET ▼

▼ TIKAANI QUARTET ▼

▼ ORENDA QUARTET ▼

*Blueprint (2016)*

Composer: Caroline Shaw

Blueprint was commissioned by the Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts for the Aizuri Quartet

Winner of the Composer Round will be announced at the Awards Ceremony



## FINAL ROUND PROGRAM

1:45pm Welcome from Steve Seel, master of ceremonies

1:50pm **BLAIR QUARTET** ▶▶▶▶

MENDELSSOHN: Quartet in F minor, Op.80, No.6 I: Allegro vivace assai  
SHOSTAKOVICH: Quartet No.3 in F major, Op.73, III. Allegro non troppo

◀◀◀◀ **HUXSOLL QUARTET** 2:05pm

BRAHMS: Quartet No.1 in C minor, Op.51 No. 1, IV. Allegro  
PRICE: Quartet No.2 in A minor, II. Andante cantabile

2:20pm **QUARTET SELENE** ▶▶▶▶

WIJERNATNE: I. "A Letter from the After-life"  
GINASTERA: Quartet No.1 I. Allegro violento ed agitato

PAUSE (5 mins)

◀◀◀◀ **AMARE STRING QUARTET** 2:35pm

GRIEG: Quartet No.1 Op.27, IV: Finale  
CARLOS SIMON: Elegy - A Cry from the Grave

2:52pm **TIKAANI QUARTET** ▶▶▶▶

BRAHMS: Quartet No.3 in Bb major, op.67 - III. Agitato (Allegretto non troppo)  
BARTÓK: Quartet No.2, Sz.67 - II. Allegro molto capriccioso

◀◀◀◀ **ORENDA QUARTET** 3:12pm

BEETHOVEN: Quartet in E minor Op.59, No.2 - I. Allegro  
SHOSTAKOVICH: Quartet No.3 in F major Op.73, I. Allegretto

Jury selects Final Round Prizewinners. Audience Prize votes tallied  
All Prizes Presented at Awards Ceremony.



## BLAIR QUARTET



**Zeyuan Alex Zhao, violin (Potomac, MD)**  
**Yixuan Li, violin (Rockville, MD)**  
**Daphne Wen, viola (North Potomac, MD)**  
**Caleb Fan, cello (Rockville, MD)**

The Blair Quartet is comprised of classmates and close friends Yixuan Li, Zeyuan (Alex) Zhao, Daphne Wen, and Caleb Fan. Formed through the Maryland Classical Youth Orchestra (MCYO) Chamber Music Program, the quartet is coached by Claudia Chudacoff. All four members serve in leadership positions within the MCYO Philharmonic and are students in the prestigious Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Magnet Program at Montgomery Blair High School in Silver Spring, Maryland. The ensemble's chemistry is rooted in long-standing friendships that predate the quartet's formation. Alex and Daphne previously performed together in a string quartet, while Caleb and Yixuan were members of a piano trio that competed both locally and nationally. The Blair Quartet has quickly distinguished itself on the national stage, advancing to the Quarterfinals of the Fischoff National Chamber Music Competition, the Semifinals of the Coltman Chamber Music Competition, and the Finals of the Saint Paul String Quartet Competition, all in a single year. Outside of their rigorous musical and academic schedules, the members enjoy bonding over movie nights and playing volleyball together.

### **Competition Repertoire:**

**HAYDN: Quartet in D minor, Op.76, No.2 "Quinten" I. Allegro**  
**MENDELSSOHN: Quartet in F minor, Op.80, No.6 I: Allegro vivace assai**  
**SHOSTAKOVICH: Quartet No.3 in F major, Op.73, III. Allegro non troppo**

**Zeyuan (Alex) Zhao** is an 18-year-old violinist from Maryland. Starting the violin at the age of 5, he now studies with Ying Fu, the Associate Concertmaster of the National Symphony Orchestra. He is an active orchestral player, serving as the Concertmaster of the Maryland All-State Orchestra for 3 years, and as Co-Concertmaster/Concertmaster of various ensembles in the Maryland Classical Youth Orchestras. In 2025, he was also selected for the NAFME All-Eastern Honors Orchestra. As a soloist, he has placed 1st Prize in the 2025 NVMTA String Concert Competition and has performed solos with the All-Star String Intensive and ensembles in the Maryland Classical Youth Orchestras. Devoted to spreading music in the community, he has performed regularly at senior homes and volunteers to teach music. He is currently a senior at the STEM Magnet at Montgomery Blair High School.

**Yixuan Li** is a 16 year old violinist from Rockville, Maryland. He began violin at age 6 and has studied with Lya Stern since 2017. He was the 2026 MTNA Senior Performance Eastern Division Winner and a National Finalist, and has received first prize in the Maryland MTNA Senior Strings Competition, the Jack Weaver Competition for Strings, and the Lontowne Symphony Orchestra Young Artists Competition, along with second prize in the U.S. Army Orchestra Young Artist Competition. He was accepted into the Verbier Festival Junior Orchestra in 2025, where he served as concertmaster for Eugene Onegin, and also participated in NYO2. He has held concertmaster and co-concertmaster positions in the Maryland Classic Youth Orchestras and the Maryland All-State Orchestra. He is also a co-president of the Young Artists Music Society, a student-led organization dedicated to free music lessons and concerts at senior homes.

**Daphne Wen** is a violinist and violist from Maryland and a student from Montgomery Blair High School's Magnet Program. She has won various string competitions such as 1st place in Concert Artists International Competition (CAI) Virtuoso, 1st in Friday Morning Music Club High School Competition for Strings, and 3rd in Feder Memorial String Competition, granting her the opportunity to perform twice in Carnegie Hall in New York City at 7 years old. She attended the Heifetz International Music Institute (Junior Division) for 4 years and participated in the Casalmaggiore International Music Festival in Italy and the Wiener Musikseminar in Vienna, Austria. She currently studies with Rebecca Henry and is in the Pre-Conservatory Violin Program at the Peabody Preparatory from Johns Hopkins. Additionally, she is the co-president of the Young Artists Music Society, a student-led non-profit that performs for senior homes and also regularly teaches special education students with music.

**Caleb Fan** is an 18-year-old cellist from Rockville, Maryland, and a student in the Science, Mathematics, and Computer Science Magnet Program at Montgomery Blair High School. He studies with Mark Evans of the National Symphony Orchestra, having previously trained for seven years with Professor Laurien Laufman, Professor Emeritus at the University of Illinois. A prize-winning competitor, Caleb has earned 1st Prize at the Jack Weaver Memorial Competition and multiple top prizes at the Joseph & Goldie Feder Memorial String Competition. Caleb served as Associate Principal Cellist at the NSO Summer Music Institute and has held the same role with the Maryland All-State Orchestra and as Principal Cellist of the Maryland Classical Youth Orchestra. He is also dedicated to community engagement, performing regularly at hospitals and senior living facilities throughout the greater Washington area.

# HUXSOLL QUARTET



**Daniel Qi**, violin (Wilmington, DE)  
**Eyal Allen**, violin (Philadelphia, PA)  
**Penelope Tang**, viola (Bryn Mawr, PA)  
**Darren Lee**, cello (Newtown, PA)

The Huxsoll Quartet is composed of Violinists Daniel Qi and Eyal Allen, violist Penny Tang, and cellist Darren Lee. The quartet was formed in 2025 at the Center for Gifted Young Musicians at Temple University Prep and is named in honor of the program director, Mark Huxsoll, a mentor who has played a central role in their growth as musicians and people. The quartet is coached by J. Freivogel of the Jasper String Quartet. As an ensemble, the Huxsoll Quartet have performed for members of both the Dover and the Miró quartets and present outreach concerts in their community, including performances at the Quadrangle retirement community, and at Roosevelt Island Concerts.

## Competition Repertoire:

**HAYDN:** Quartet in G major, Op.76 No.1 IV. Allegro ma non troppo  
**BRAHMS:** Quartet No. 1 in C minor, Op. 51 No. 1, IV. Allegro  
**PRICE:** Quartet No. 2 in A minor, II. Andante cantabile

**Daniel Qi** studies violin with Charles Parker at Temple Music Prep's Center for Gifted Young Musicians. He has appeared as a soloist with the Ocean City Pops, Newark Symphony Orchestra, Temple Music Prep Youth Chamber Orchestra, and Wilmington Community Orchestra. In 2026, he was named a YoungArts Award Winner with Distinction and attended National YoungArts Week. He won first place in the 2025 MTNA Senior Strings Competition and was a semifinalist in the Cooper International Violin Competition. An active chamber and orchestral musician, Daniel was a member of Carnegie Hall's NYO2 and has served as concertmaster for honor orchestras. His piano trio twice reached the Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition quarterfinals. He attended Heifetz, Bowdoin, and Tanglewood. Academically, Daniel is a USNCO National Exam qualifier, Math League member, and captain of his school's Mock Trial team. He also enjoys soccer and painting.

**Eyal Allen** is a sixteen-year-old violinist and violist based in Philadelphia, PA. He began studying violin at age seven in a musical family with two professional musician parents. He made his solo debut at eleven with the Rehovot Youth Orchestra and has since returned as a soloist multiple times. This summer, he will attend Yellow Barn Summer Festival and Morningside Music Bridge as a violist. His previous studies include Apple Hill Center for Chamber Music, Point CounterPoint, Keshet Eilon Seminar, and the Philadelphia International Music Festival, where he won first place in the senior division of the Concerto Competition. Eyal has received recognition from the Ministry of Education of Israel and studies with the Jerusalem Music Center's program for gifted young musicians. He is a scholarship recipient of the American-Israel Cultural Foundation and the Springboard Grant from the Bruce Montgomery Foundation, and participates in the Philadelphia Music Alliance for Youth (PMAY). He studies with Kerri Ryan and performs with Temple Music Prep's Youth Chamber Orchestra. Outside music, he plays varsity baseball.

**Penny Tang** is a seventeen year old violist living in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania. Her current teacher is Choong-Jin (CJ) Chang, Principal Violist of the Philadelphia Orchestra. Penny is associate principal viola of the Philadelphia Youth Orchestra and is a member of the Center for Gifted Young Musicians of the Temple Music Preparatory Division (CGYM). In the summer of 2026, Penny will attend the National Youth Orchestra of the United States of America (NYO-USA) and the Young Artists Institute of the Chamber Music Northwest Summer Festival. Previously, Penny has participated in the Meadowmount School of Music, the Luzerne Music Center's Senior Session, and the Saint Paul Chamber Music Institute's summer program. As a soloist, she is a Youngarts 2026 winner in the Classical Music division, the 2026 Senior Strings state winner of the Pennsylvania MTNA competition, and a winner of the Old York Road Symphony's 2025 Young Artists Competition.

**Darren Lee** is currently a senior attending Council Rock High School North. He has been playing the cello for the past eight years and studies under Dr. Hyojin Lee, faculty at The New School, Mannes College of Music Prep. He has participated in numerous orchestras, including the Philadelphia Youth Orchestra, and both the New Jersey and Pennsylvania All-State Orchestras. He has been a member of the Center for Gifted Young Musicians of the Temple Music Preparatory Division for the past year. Darren has earned honors in several state and international competitions. He won First Place in the New York International Young Virtuoso Competition and First Prize for Global Best Beethoven Performance. Additionally, he achieved First Place in the International Young Artists Competition and received both the New York Young Performers International Competition All Aaron Rosand Memorial Prize and 2025 Margaret Knight Scholarship for Music Performance.

## QUARTET SELENE



Lorelei Schoenhard, violin (St Cloud, MN)  
Layla Chakhvashvili, violin (Wayzata, MN)  
Emily Alexander, viola (Minneapolis, MN)  
Sofie Alexander, cello (Minneapolis, MN)

**Quartet Selene**, formed in 2022, is an ensemble of close friends united by a strong musical bond. Their collaboration was shaped by a transformative summer in 2023 at the Stringwood Chamber Music Festival at the Eagle Bluff Environmental Learning Center in Minnesota, as well as their shared experiences in the Greater Twin Cities Youth Symphonies (GTCYS).

During the academic year, the quartet receives intensive coaching from Nancy Oliveros, violinist of the Artaria String Quartet, at the Artaria Chamber Music School in St. Paul, Minnesota. They also work closely with other Artaria members and guest artists during their summers at Stringwood.

In January 2026, Quartet Selene was invited to perform on NPR's *From the Top*, where they presented *Two Pop Songs on Antique Poems* by Syrian-Canadian composer Dinuk Wijeratne. All four members also perform in the premier Symphony Orchestra of GTCYS and will be featured on its 2026 international tour to New Zealand and Australia, including a performance of Michael Abels' *Delights and Dances for String Quartet and Orchestra* at the Sydney Opera House.

Throughout the year, Quartet Selene is committed to community engagement, sharing their music at fundraisers, museums, and nursing homes. Outside of music, the quartet enjoys exploring the outdoors—an enthusiasm inspired by their time at Stringwood—as well as frequenting their favorite all-you-can-eat sushi spots.

### **Competition Repertoire:**

HAYDN: Quartet in G minor, Op.20 No.3 IV. FINALE. Allegro molto  
WIJERNATNE: I. "A Letter from the After-life"  
GINASTERA: Quartet No.1 I. Allegro violento ed agitato

Violinist **Lorelei Schoenhard** is a sophomore at St. John's Preparatory School in Collegeville, Minnesota, and has been a private student of Marion Judish since third grade. She is concertmaster of the Greater Twin Cities Youth Symphony's premier orchestra, touring with the ensemble in Italy, France, and Spain. In the summer of 2024, she was concertmaster of the Boston University Tanglewood Institute's Young Artists Orchestra, and in 2025 she performed as a member of NYO-USA. Lorelei has appeared as a soloist on NPR's *From the Top* and most recently, won the top award at YPSCA's 69th Annual Concerto Competition in Minneapolis performing Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto. She will perform it again with the Minnesota Orchestra next season.

Violinist **Layla Chakhvashvili** is a senior at The Blake School in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and studies with Aaron Janse of the Minnesota Orchestra. She has been a member of the Greater Twin Cities Youth Symphonies' premier orchestra throughout high school and currently serves as co-concertmaster. In the summer of 2025, Layla participated in the Boston University Tanglewood Institute serving as Concertmaster of the Young Artists Orchestra.

Violist **Emily Alexander** is a senior at The Blake School in Minneapolis, Minnesota. She studies viola with Ray Shows of the Artaria String Quartet and serves as principal violist of the Greater Twin Cities Youth Symphonies' premier orchestra. Emily is also an accomplished cellist and studies with Mina Fisher, emerita of the Minnesota Orchestra. Last summer, she toured Scotland as a cellist with Carnegie Hall's NYO2. She also enjoys playing viola da gamba and teaching violin, viola, and cello.

Cellist **Sophia Alexander** is a senior at The Blake School in Minneapolis, Minnesota. and studies with Mina Fisher, emerita of the Minnesota Orchestra. Since 2022, she has been principal cello of the premier orchestra of the Greater Twin Cities Youth Symphony, touring with the ensemble in Italy, France, and Spain. She served as principal cello of NYO-USA in 2025 and NYO2 in 2024. Sophia has also been featured as a soloist on NPR's *From the Top* and the Salon se Lève concert series in Minneapolis.

# AMARE STRING QUARTET



**Samuel Wenger-Stickel, violin (Olivette, MO)**  
**Klaus Jöstlein, violin (University City, MO)**  
**Haowen Liu, viola (St. Louis, MO)**  
**Gergo Szilágyi, cello (Olivette, MO)**

The Amare String Quartet is composed of violinists Klaus Jöstlein, Sam Wenger-Stickel, violist Haowen Liu, and cellist Gergő Szilágyi, who study through the Chamber Academy at the Chamber Music Society of St. Louis. Throughout their time together, the quartet has had the wonderful opportunity to be coached by violinist Hannah Ji and Chris Tantillo of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra. They have also had the opportunity to play in a masterclass with the Arianna String Quartet. In their free time, the Amare quartet loves to play tennis, rehearse together in the St. Louis Symphony Youth Orchestra, explore new compositions by underrepresented composers, and eat at local restaurants located in the St. Louis area. Klaus, Sam, Haowen, and Gergo are grateful and excited to share their music with audiences.

## Competition Repertoire:

**HAYDN: Quartet in B-flat Major Op.76 No.4 "Sunrise" I. Allegro con spirito**  
**MENDELSSOHN: Quartet in F minor Op.80 I. Allegro vivace assai**  
**BARTOK: String Quartet No.4 Sz.91 V. Allegro molto**

A native of Omaha, Nebraska, **Klaus Jöstlein** has been playing violin since age four. Early studies were with Edmund Sprunger, and he currently takes from Winifred Crock. He has participated in the Green Mountain Chamber Music Festival, Arianna Chamber Music Festival, Apple Hill Music Camp, Interlochen NMC, as well as the Bayberry Advanced String Quartet camp. He has performed solos several times on Powell Hall stage as part of the "Picture the Music" program, and has given recitals in Germany, Boulder, Nebraska and Illinois. Jöstlein was also one of the winners of the 2025 University City Symphony Orchestra Concerto Competition and has been a member of the Saint Louis Symphony Youth Orchestra for 5 years. Equally at home in the jazz and fiddle genres, he has performed on the Dark Room STL summer series as well as a live stream at the Focal Point, not to mention on many of the 2020 front lawn series at this home. He plays his great uncle's violin, which he generously inherited after a trip to Germany.

**Samuel Wenger-Stickel** began playing the violin at age 8 and studies with Joo Kim of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra. Since 2021, Sam has participated in the CMS Preparatory program, and is part of the Radar Young Artist Chamber Music Academy through the Chamber Music Society of St. Louis for the 2025/2026 season. Sam has won many honors in concerto competitions around the St. Louis area, including performances with the STL civic orchestra, the orchestra at UMSL, and the University City Orchestra. He has also been selected for Missouri All State Orchestra all throughout his time in high school. In the summer of 2025, Sam participated in the Credo St. Louis Summer Festival, and then attended Center Stage Strings and studied with Danielle Belen, Fabiola Kim, Ryan Meehan, and Simon James. Sam would like to thank those who have helped him on his musical journey, including his teachers Angie Smart and Joo Kim, school orchestra conductor Carrie Roberts, and mentors Vera Parkin and the Arianna String Quartet.

**Haowen Liu** is a junior at Clayton High School. He began playing violin at age 11, studying with Angie Smart of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, and took up viola in June 2025 with Joanna Mendoza of the Arianna String Quartet. Having participated in the 2024, 2025, and 2026 Missouri All-State Orchestras, Liu served as Principal Violist this past year. Additionally, he won the 2025 Missouri Music Teachers Association Upper Strings division. Currently in his second season with the St. Louis Symphony Youth Orchestra, he is also part of the Radar Young Artist Chamber Music Academy through the Chamber Music Society of St. Louis. In past summers, Liu attended the Arianna Chamber Music Festival and Credo String Intensive in Chicago. He is a member of his school's Symphonic Orchestra and Tri-M Music Honor Society. Liu would like to thank his teachers and mentors Angie Smart, Joanna Mendoza, Hannah Ji, and the Arianna String Quartet for their guidance and support.

**Gergő Szilágyi** is 16 years old and has been playing cello since age 5. He currently is a sophomore at Ladue Horton Watkins High School. Aside from participating in his school's Chamber Orchestra, he is part of various musical groups like the St. Louis Symphony Youth Orchestra, Young People's Symphonic Orchestra of the CMS in Webster Groves and the UMSL Cello Choir. He studies with Professor Kurt Baldwin who is professor of cello at UMSL and the cellist of the Arianna String Quartet. He has several years of chamber music, having performed in various duets, string trios, cello quartets, and string quartets. Some of the programs/camps he has participated in include Credo St. Louis, International Cello Institute 2025, The Preparatory Program at CMS, and many others. Outside of music, Gergo enjoys the outdoors, tennis, biking, rock climbing, spending time with friends, participating in and leading his school's Recycling Club, and composing/arranging various pieces.

# TIKAANI QUARTET



**Sebastian Manning, violin (Quincy, IL)**  
**Romeo Vashishth, violin (Evanston, IL)**  
**Neena Agrawal, viola (Chicago, IL)**  
**Katarina Kenney, (Madison, WI)**

The Tikaani Quartet is comprised of violinists Sebastian Manning and Romeo Vashishth, violist Neena Agrawal, and cellist Katarina Kenney, and is coached by Sang Mee Lee. All four students are Merit Scholarship Fellows at the Music Institute of Chicago's Academy, a training center for advanced pre-college musicians. The name Tikaani means "wolf" in the Inuit language and is a symbol of strength, courage, loyalty, and teamwork: all qualities they hope to embody while collaborating as an ensemble. They were the Grand Prize winners in the 2026 Barnett Chamber Music Competition and are finalists in the St. Paul String Quartet Competition.

## Competition Repertoire:

**HAYDN: Quartet in Eb Major, Op.71, No.3 - I. Vivace**  
**BRAHMS: Quartet No.3 in Bb major, op.67 - III. Agitato (Allegretto non troppo)**  
**BARTÓK: Quartet No.2, Sz.67 - II. Allegro molto capriccioso**

**Sebastian Manning**, 17, studies with Almita Vamos. He has performed in a variety of countries, such as Romania, Hungary, Serbia, Belgium, Germany, and the United States, and had the privilege of taking masterclasses with Christoph Wyneken, Barnabas Kelemen, Boris Brovtsyn, Rachel Barton Pine, Ida Kavafian, Martin Beaver, Robert Chen, and the Pacifica Quartet. He studied with Bernhard Forck at the Eufonia Baroque Academy and has been a scholarship recipient at the SoNoRo Interferente Festival three times, most recently in Montepulciano, Italy. At SoNoRo Musikland Festival, he had the opportunity to perform alongside great musicians such as Diana Ketler, Alexandra Tîrsu, Răzvan Popovici, Frans Helmerson, Alissa Margulis, Justus Grimm, Tommaso Lonquich, and others. He is very keen on chamber music. With the Hemingway Quartet, he won the Grand Prize at the Barnett Chamber Music Competition and participated in the 2025 Fischhoff National Chamber Competition.

**Romeo Vashishth**, 19, a Scholarship Fellow at the Music Institute of Chicago Academy, studies violin with Almita Vamos, previously attending Manhattan School of Music Pre-College, studying with Lucie Robert. Romeo won first prize at the Montecito, George Bizet, and Gabriel Fauré International Competitions, and placed third in the Fox Valley Orchestra Concerto Competition. As a chamber musician, he won both string division and grand prizes at the 2024 and 2025 A.N. & Pearl G. Barnett Competition, and was a quarterfinalist in the 52nd Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition. He has been coached by members of the Emerson, Vermeer, and Pacifica Quartets. Festivals attended include Bowdoin, Aspen, Montecito, and Sounding Point. He has participated in masterclasses with Martin Beaver, Shmuel Ashkenasi, and Catherine Cho. Also a conductor, Romeo founded and led the ESYO Chamber Orchestra, presenting several world premieres and important concerts. His conducting mentors include Etienne Abelin and Leonard Slatkin.

**Neena Agrawal**, 16, studies with Sang Mee Lee and Teng Li. She is a fellow of the Chicago Musical Pathways Initiative, a scholarship program for musicians from underrepresented backgrounds. Neena made her solo debut in 2025 with the Symphony of Oak Park & River Forest and recently soloed with the Kishwaukee Symphony Orchestra. She won the Arthur D. Montzka Concerto Competition, honorable mention in the O'Malley (Walgreens) Competition, was a finalist in the 2024 American Viola Society Competition, and served as principal viola of the 2024 National Pathways Equity Arc Festival Orchestra. During the summer, Neena has attended Music@Menlo, Center Stage Strings, Ascent Chamber Music Festival, Oberlin Viola Workshop, and the Chicago Chamber Music Festival. She has participated in masterclasses with Antoine Tamestit, Atar Arad, Tatjana Masurenko, Matthew Lipman, Masumi Per Rostad, Peter Slowik, Caroline Coade, Paul Laraia, and Eric Nowlin. An avid chamber musician, she was featured on WFMT's Introductions, performed on the Koret Young Performers Series, Fulcrum Point New Music Festival, and alongside the Orion Ensemble. She won the Bronze medal at the 2025 St. Paul String Quartet Competition with the Porphyryon Quartet.

**Katarina Kenney**, 17, studies with Hans Jørgen Jensen. She has appeared as a soloist with several orchestras, namely the Milwaukee Symphony, Madison Symphony, Middleton Community, Wisconsin Chamber, and Wisconsin Youth Symphony. She has been featured on PBS Wisconsin, Wisconsin Public Radio, WPR's Midday Show, and Chicago's WFMT Introductions, and has played in masterclasses for Christine Lee, Blaise Déjardin, Peter Stumpf, Sterling Elliott, Mark Kosower, Richard Aaron, Hannah Roberts, Astrid Schween, and Clive Greensmith. Katarina has enjoyed her summers at festivals such as the Yellow Barn Young Artists Program, Domaine Forget de Charlevoix International Music and Dance Academy, and Center Stage Strings. An accomplished chamber musician, her quartets have won several competitions, such as the silver medal and BIPOC performance award with the Pondrom Quartet, and the gold medal, BIPOC performance award, and audience prize with the Elysian Quartet at the 2023 and 2024 Saint Paul String Quartet Competitions respectively. The Elysian Quartet was also a quarterfinalist in the 2024 Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition.

## ORENDA QUARTET



Euisun Hong, violin (Pleasanton, CA)  
Kayla Lee, violin (San Jose, CA)  
Hyesun Hong, viola (Pleasanton, CA)  
Fiona Huang, cello (Saratoga, CA)

Formed in the fall of 2025, the Orenda Quartet is composed of violinists Euisun Hong and Kayla Lee, violist Hyesun Hong, and cellist Fiona Huang. The quartet is coached by Susan Bates and Zakarias Grafilo at Young Chamber Musicians in Burlingame, California. They have appeared in masterclasses with the Balourdet Quartet and Daniel Ching of the Miró Quartet. The name of the quartet, Orenda, means a mystical force that empowers people to impact the world. To the quartet, it reflects how they create their music to always tell a meaningful story.

### Competition Repertoire:

HAYDN: Quartet in F Major Op.50, No.5, I. Allegro Moderato  
BEETHOVEN: Quartet in E minor Op.59, No.2 - I. Allegro  
SHOSTAKOVICH: Quartet No.3 in F major Op.73, I. Allegretto

**Euisun Hong**, 17, currently studies violin with Wenyi Shih at the SFCM Pre-College and serves as the co-concertmaster of the San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra. A winner of National YoungArts, Euisun has received top prizes in the KAMSA Competition, the US International Music Competition and MTNA state competition. In past summers, he has attended the Encore Music Academy, the NYO2 as concertmaster for the World Orchestra Week Festival, and the Yellow Barn Young Artists Program. In 2023, Euisun joined the Young Chamber Musicians program as the violinist of the Aves Piano Trio. With his trio, he won the gold medal and the Horowitz Trio prize in the junior division of the Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition and the first and grand prize in the junior division of the Coltman Chamber Music Competition. Euisun has also appeared on National Public Radio's From the Top show with his trio.

Violinist **Kayla Lee**, 18, is a senior and fourth-year Honors Fellow at Valley Christian High School, currently studying under Ms. Zhao Wei at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. Some of her musical accomplishments include winning first place in the USOMC, KAMSA, Silicon Valley Music Competition, and being a winner of the 2024, 2025, 2026 YoungArts National Arts Competition. Kayla has soloed with the Palo Alto Philharmonic, KAMSA Youth Orchestra, Temple Hill Symphony, and the CYS Associate Orchestra. She also participated in noteworthy programs, including tours with NYO2 2023 to the Dominican Republic, NYO-USA 2024 to South America and NYO-USA 2025 as concertmaster on their Asia tour with Ray Chen, Gianandrea Noseda, and Clara-Jumi Kang. Additionally, she has attended the Encore Chamber Music Institute and the Bowdoin International Music Festival in past summers as well. Kayla is currently CYS Senior Orchestra's co-concertmaster. This is Kayla's third year in YCM.

**Hyesun Hong**, 15, is a sophomore at Amador Valley High School. She began violin at the age of 5 and is currently in the Pre-College Division of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music under Wenyi Shih after previous study with Davis Law. She was a prizewinner in the Korean-American Music Supporters' Association, the United States International Music Competition, and the Music Teachers National Association State Senior Division. Hyesun joined the San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra in 2023, and she is currently a member of the first violin section. She has been a part of the Young Chamber Musicians Program as a violist since the fall of 2025. This past summer, Hyesun attended the Encore Chamber Music Institute Summer Academy. She will be attending the Encore Chamber Music Institute Summer Academy again this summer and joining the NYO2 program on their tour to the Dominican Republic.

**Fiona Huang**, 18, studies with Jonathan Koh at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music Pre-College. She was a 2024 and 2026 National YoungArts winner as well as a semifinalist at the 2025 Johansen International Competition. She received first prize in competitions including Music Teachers National Association Competition State, Burlingame Music Club, and the Nova Vista Symphony Young Artist Competition. Fiona has been a part of Young Chamber Musicians since 2022. She has participated in festivals including Cello Akademie Rutesheim, Chamber Music Northwest's Young Artist Institute, Music@Menlo, Meadowmount School of Music, and Encore Summer Academy. Fiona has previously appeared twice on NPR's From The Top and soloed with the Nova Vista Symphony, Palo Alto Philharmonic, the Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra, Temple Hill Symphony, and Holy Names University Orchestra.

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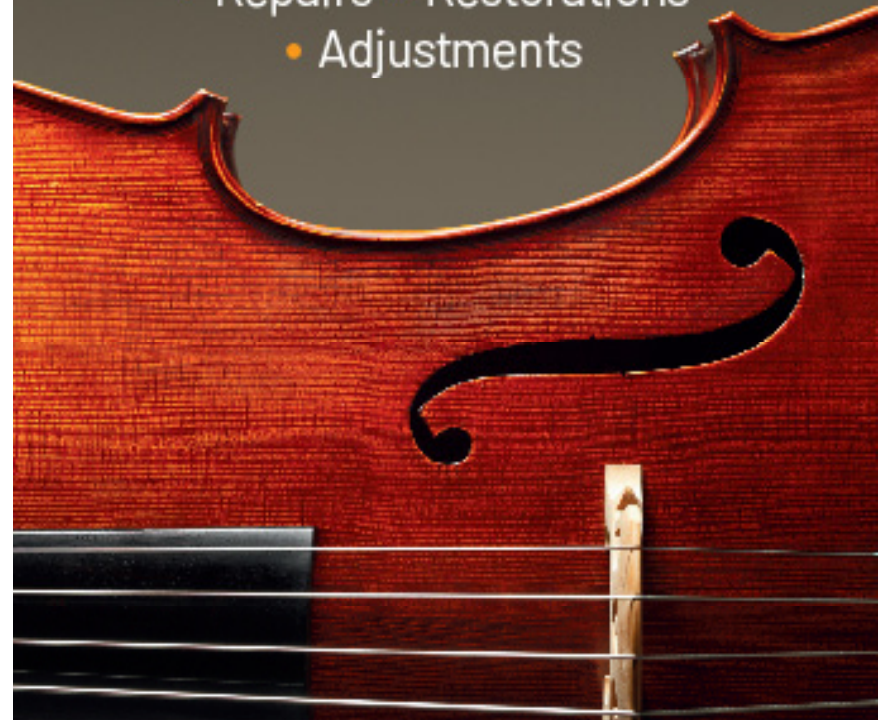
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