

WINNERS ALL!

SAINT PAUL, MN — April 13, 2026

Four exceptional, highly trained, and artistically gifted pre-professional string quartets gathered in Saint Paul at the acoustically renowned Sundin Music Hall for two rounds of compelling performances. Representing four of the nation's most prestigious music schools, these ensembles demonstrated the remarkable depth of emerging talent in the United States, as well as the strength of chamber music training and the dedication of a new generation of thoughtful, expressive young artists.

The opening Composer Round featured *Pisachi*, an evocative work by American composer Jerod Impichchaachaaha' Tate, a citizen of the Chickasaw Nation of Oklahoma. The quartet's seamless blend of rhythmic vitality and lyrical melodies provided each ensemble with a rich platform for interpretation and artistic expression. The Karuna Quartet of The Juilliard School delivered a standout, prizewinning performance, while the Velaris String Quartet of Stony Brook University earned high marks and a well-deserved honorable mention from the jury.

The Recital Round—requiring each ensemble to present a curated 30-minute program from their submitted repertoire—showcased a series of masterful and nuanced performances. Second Prize was jointly awarded to the Prometheus Quartet of the University of Delaware, performing Beethoven's Op. 18, No. 6 and Bartók's String Quartet No. 3, and the Soha Quartet of the University of Texas at Austin, performing Beethoven's Op. 18, No. 1 and Ginastera's String Quartet No. 2. First Prize was awarded to the Karuna Quartet for their pristine interpretations of selections from Haydn's Op. 33, No. 3 and Bartók's String Quartet No. 1.

Emcee Steve Staruch of Minnesota Public Radio invited both in-person and online audiences to participate by voting for their favorite ensemble, recognizing the performances that resonated most deeply. The Soha Quartet of Austin, Texas, earned the Audience Choice Award with strong support from 1,174 voters.

The competition continues next Saturday, April 18, when six additional ensembles will take the stage at Sundin Music Hall beginning at 11:00 a.m. Admission remains free, offering audiences the opportunity to experience performances of extraordinary quality—music that is, truly, priceless.