

Jasper String Quartet

J Freivogel, violin
Sae Niwa, violin
Sam Quintal, viola
Rachel Henderson Freivogel, cello

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Quartet Biography:

The Jasper String Quartet has been hailed as “sonically delightful and expressively compelling” (*The Strad*) and as having “played with sparkling vitality and great verve... They are polished, engaged, and in tune with one another.” (*Classical Voice of North Carolina*) This unity comes from a quartet belief in the timeless and lifelong pursuit of music’s depth and meaning. They share a commitment to exploring each work to its fullest and to discovering new musical connections through each performance.

The Jasper Quartet is thrilled to join Oberlin Conservatory as Quartet-in-Residence starting fall 2010, where they perform and coach chamber ensembles throughout the year. The Jaspers were the 2009-10 *Ernst C. Stiefel String Quartet-in-Residence* at the Caramoor Center for Music and Arts, joining an elite group of previous Stiefel Quartets including the Miro, Pacifica, and Jupiter Quartets. In 2010-11, Caramoor invited them back for an unprecedented second year as the *Stiefel Quartet-in-Residence*. They will also continue their residency with Chamber Classics in Naples, FL, performing in 6 concerts this season.

After winning the Grand Prize and the Audience Prize in the 2008 Plowman Chamber Music Competition, the Jaspers went on to win the Grand Prize at the 2008 Coleman Competition, First Prize at Chamber Music Yellow Springs 2008, and the Silver Medal at the 2008 and 2009 Fischhoff Chamber Music Competitions. They were the first ensemble to win the Yale School of Music’s *Horatio Parker Memorial Prize* (2009), an award established in 1945 and selected by the faculty for “best fulfilling... lofty musical ideals”. In 2010 they joined the roster of Astral Artists after winning their national auditions.

Originally formed at Oberlin Conservatory, the Jaspers began pursuing a professional career when they became Rice University’s graduate quartet-in-residence in 2006 studying with James Dunham, Norman Fischer, and Kenneth Goldsmith. The quartet continued their studies at Yale University, studying with the Tokyo String Quartet and has performed across the United States and in Canada, Norway, England, Italy, and Japan.

The Jasper Quartet is dedicated to performing pieces emotionally significant to its members ranging from Haydn and Beethoven through Ligeti, Webern, and Ades. Last season they began a series of programs called *Understanding... through music!*, which they will continue in coming seasons. These programs explore a country, time, or event through its music by connecting repertoire to historical or social happenings. The first programs explored the music of the Eastern European nations of Hungary and the Czech Republic. The second focused on Innovators in Music, paralleling Beethoven and Webern’s important musical innovations. Indeed, critics and audiences commend the Jasper Quartet’s “programming savvy” (clevelandclassical.com).

Highlights of the 2010-11 season include the quartet’s Philadelphia and Oberlin Artist Recital Series debuts, returns to concert series from New York to Florida and New Mexico, and their first performances in Korea. Annie Gosfield and Conrad Tao are both writing pieces for the Jaspers, which they will perform throughout the season. Their 2010 summer included residencies at Juneau Jazz and

Classics, Great Lakes Chamber Music Festival, and Chamber Music Northwest, in addition to performances in New Mexico, at the Stone in New York City, and at the Caramoor Center for the Arts.

The Jasper Quartet enjoys educational and outreach work of all types. In the *Melba and Orville Roleffson Residency* at the Banff Centre they embarked on "guerilla chamber music," performing concerts in unusual settings around Alberta. The quartet has brought well over 100 quartet programs into local schools throughout the US and in Japan, having worked with Caramoor, the Oberlin-Smithsonian Fellowship and many concert series. They will continue this during the 2010-11 season, especially working with Caramoor and with Astral Artists' acclaimed outreach initiatives.

The Jasper String Quartet is named after Jasper National Park in Alberta, Canada. Its members live in New Haven, CT and originally come from St. Louis, MO (J), Tokyo, Japan (Sae), Fairbanks, AK (Sam) and Ann Arbor, MI (Rachel). Rachel and J are married.

For more information, please visit www.jasperquartet.com or facebook.com/jasperstringquartet.

Short Group Bio:

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Individual Bios:

J Freivogel, first violinist of the Jasper String Quartet, grew up as the youngest brother/second violinist of his family's quartet. He attended Oberlin College and Conservatory for Bachelor's degrees in Violin Performance and Politics and, during his time there, won the Kauffman Chamber Music prize three times, the Presser Music Award, the Hurlbutt prize for most outstanding violinist, and the concerto competition. He received his Master's in String Quartet Performance from Rice University's Shepherd School of Music and is currently pursuing an Artist's Diploma at the Yale School of Music as graduate quartet-in-residence with the Jasper Quartet (www.jasperquartet.com). His principal teachers include Marilyn McDonald, Sylvia Rosenberg, and Cho-Liang Lin for violin, and James Dunham, Norman Fischer, and the Tokyo String Quartet for chamber music. He is married to cellist Rachel Henderson Freivogel and they live in New Haven, CT.

Sae Niwa, violin, was born in Ibaragi, Japan and began playing violin at age three. She attended the prestigious Toho Gakuen School of Music in Japan from the age of fifteen, where she completed her studies with Koichiro Harada, a founding member of the Tokyo String Quartet. In 2001, Sae came to the United States to study with Donald Weilerstein at the Cleveland Institute of Music. As a full scholarship student, she continued her studies with Mr. Weilerstein at the New England Conservatory, where she received undergraduate and graduate diplomas. She won third prize in the 2006 Swedish Duo International Competition with pianist So Oyama. At Rice University Sae studied with Cho-Liang Lin.

Sam Quintal, violist of the Jasper String Quartet, was born and raised in Fairbanks Alaska. He began playing the violin at age six and viola at age 11. As a member of the Jasper Quartet he has won many awards including the Grand Prize at both the 2008 Plowman Chamber Music Competition and the 2008 Coleman Chamber Music Competition. He has performed extensively in North America, from Zankel Hall and Merkin Hall in New York, to Harris Hall in Aspen and performances at the Banff Center in Canada. He studied violin with Marilyn McDonald at Oberlin, viola with James Dunham at Rice, and chamber music with the Tokyo String Quartet at Yale.

Rachel Henderson Freivogel, cellist, is a second year artist diploma candidate at Yale School of Music. She began her studies with her mother in her hometown of Ann Arbor, MI at the age of four. Rachel completed her undergraduate studies at Oberlin Conservatory of Music, where she also received a Master's Degree in Historical Performance. As the founding cellist of the Jasper String Quartet she has won several awards, including the Grand Prize at the Plowman, Yellow Springs and Coleman Chamber Music Competitions in addition to receiving a Master's Degree in String Quartet from Rice University's Shepherd School of Music. Her principal teachers include Norman Fischer, Clive Greensmith and Catharina Meints. She is married to violinist J Freivogel.