

St Lawrence STRING QUARTET

Biography

Geoff Nuttall, violin

Owen Dalby, violin

Lesley Robertson, viola

Christopher Costanza, cello

“A sound that has just about everything one wants from a quartet, most notably precision, warmth and an electricity that conveys the excitement of playing whatever is on their stands at the moment.”

– *The New York Times*

“Modern,” “dramatic,” “superb,” “wickedly attentive,” “with a hint of rock 'n roll energy” are just a few ways critics describe the musical phenomenon that is the St. Lawrence String Quartet (SLSQ). The Quartet is renowned for the intensity of its performances, its breadth of repertoire, and its commitment to concert experiences that are at once intellectually exciting and emotionally alive.

Established in Toronto in 1989, SLSQ quickly earned acclaim at top international chamber music competitions and was soon playing hundreds of concerts per year worldwide. It established an ongoing residency at Spoleto Festival USA, made prize-winning recordings for EMI of music by Schumann, Tchaikovsky, and Golijov, earning two Grammy nominations and a host of other prizes before being appointed ensemble-in-residence at Stanford University in 1998.

At Stanford, SLSQ is at the forefront of intellectual life on campus. It directs the music department's chamber music program, and frequently collaborates with other departments including the Schools of Law, Medicine, Business and Education. The Quartet frequently performs at Stanford Live, hosts an annual chamber music seminar attracting musicians from all over the world, and runs the Emerging String Quartet Program through which they mentor the next generation of young chamber musicians.

The Quartet is especially dedicated to the music of Haydn, recording his groundbreaking set of six Op. 20 quartets for a free, universal release online as well as for purchase on compact disc and high quality vinyl. According to *The New Yorker*, "...no other North American quartet plays the music of Haydn with more intelligence, expressivity, and force..."

SLSQ is thrilled to announce a new creation and a unique collaborative venture for the 2021-22 season: an octet for strings by the renowned composer Osvaldo Golijov. The new work offers presenters an opportunity to foster an unusual collaboration and connection between the St. Lawrence and four locally based “solo” string players (two violins, viola, cello), who may in fact be soloists, orchestral section leaders, or exceptionally talented conservatory or university students. In Golijov’s own words, the work will “explore the dimensions opened by combining an organism with its own breathing and metabolism, like a string quartet, (especially one that is “mature” as SLSQ) together with four individual players that come to orbit, interact, and disrupt this organism.”

In recent years, the St. Lawrence has collaborated with Michael Tilson Thomas and the SF Symphony, Gustavo Dudamel and the LA Philharmonic and Marin Alsop and the Baltimore Symphony in John Adams's *Absolute Jest* for string quartet and orchestra. Fiercely committed to collaboration with living composers, SLSQ's fruitful partnership with Adams, Golijov, Jonathan Berger, and many others has yielded some of the finest additions to contemporary quartet literature.

Geoff Nuttall (violin) and Lesley Robertson (viola) met as students while studying music in their native Canada and in 1989 founded the St. Lawrence String Quartet. Christopher Costanza (cello) joined the ensemble in 2003 after performing for many years with the Chicago String Quartet. Owen Dalby (violin) is a founding member of Decoda, the Affiliate Ensemble of Carnegie Hall. He joined the SLSQ in 2015.

2021-22 season