

Cleveland Chamber Music Society: Juilliard returns with new cellist

by Daniel Hathaway



The four-time Grammy Award-winning Juilliard String Quartet will revisit the Cleveland Chamber Music Society series at Plymouth Church in Shaker Heights on Tuesday, December 6 at 7:30 pm for a program of quartets by Haydn, Bartók, and Beethoven. The concert, presented in conjunction with the Cleveland Institute of Music's Winter Chamber Music Festival, introduces the Juilliard's new cellist, Astrid Schween.

When you're searching for an adjective to characterize the Juilliard String Quartet, "venerable" certainly fits an ensemble that

marks its 70th anniversary this year. But rather than just basking in its rich history, the Juilliard has continuously and incrementally renewed itself over those decades. Formed in 1946 at the Juilliard School of Music in New York by its then president William Schuman and violinist Robert Mann, the original roster included second violinist Robert Koff, violist Raphael Hillyer, and cellist Arthur Winograd. The latest personnel change brings the total number of individuals who have played with the Quartet to sixteen.

In 2015, when cellist Joel Krosnick announced his plans to retire after 47 years with the Quartet, he reflected on the complicated, interlocking relationships he had enjoyed. In a press release from the Juilliard School, Krosnick said, "At the end of my last season I will have had memorable collegueships with Earl Carlyss (12 years), Joel Smirnoff (23 years), Robert Mann (23 years), Samuel Rhodes (39 years), Ronald Copes (19 years), Joseph Lin (5 years), and Roger Tapping (3 years)."

Before the Quartet's Cleveland appearances in 2012 and 2014, *ClevelandClassical.com* interviewed the most recent additions to the roster. Joseph Lin, who took over as first

violinist in 2011, spoke about his undergraduate experiences at Harvard and his Fulbright to Taiwan (read the interview [here](#)). Violist Roger Tapping, who joined the group in 2013, talked about the Quartet's recent tour of Spain and let us in on some of the details of planning repertoire for a season (read that conversation [here](#)).

Cellist Astrid Schween, the first woman to play in the Quartet, comes to the group with a perfect Juilliard pedigree, having passed through the School's prep department and earned her bachelor's and master's degrees there. But beyond that, how do you get to join the Juilliard String Quartet? In a brief YouTube [video](#), Astrid Schween describes the audition process and the moment her new colleagues "popped the question."

Previously a member of the Lark Quartet, Schween has admired the Juilliard String Quartet for years. In a press release from the School, she said, "As a young cellist growing up in New York City, I attended dozens of JSQ performances. I loved the ensemble for its daring, gritty, and always passionate renderings of the standard and contemporary repertoire. In fact, much of the established contemporary string quartet repertoire was commissioned by the JSQ. I was always impressed by the delicate balance achieved by the quartet as the members' individual personalities could be enjoyed while the ensemble shone beautifully as a polished entity."

On December 6 at Plymouth Church, the Juilliard will demonstrate those ensemble qualities in Joseph Haydn's *Quartet in f*, Op. 20, No. 5, Béla Bartók's *Quartet No. 1*, and Ludwig van Beethoven's *Quartet in B-flat*, Op. 130 with the "Groß Fuge" finale. Fans of the Quartet will also have the opportunity to observe Joseph Lin, Ronald Copes, Roger Tapping, and Astrid Schween in action in simultaneous master classes at CIM on Monday evening, December 5 at 7:00 pm. (Plymouth tickets may be purchased [online](#). The master classes are free.)

In addition to keeping itself fresh by injections of new players, the "ever-evolving" Juilliard String Quartet is also embracing new technologies to expose new audiences to the art of the string quartet. Juilliard Digital has recently released an app for iPhone, iPad, and iPod Touch that offers an interactive experience with Schubert's famous "Death and the Maiden" Quartet. (View a trailer [here](#).)

Published on ClevelandClassical.com November 29, 2016.

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