

ARIANNA STRING QUARTET

JOHN McGROSSO *Violin*

Hailed by the Boston Globe as “first class, with a robust sound and technique that seems to come from the center of the person” John McGrosso has been the first violinist of the Arianna String Quartet since 1998. He has been featured as a soloist with the Chicago Symphony and the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, and has performed in recital to critical acclaim throughout the United States. During seven years as a member of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra’s first violin section, Mr. McGrosso performed frequently in the orchestra’s “Chamber Music St. Louis,” and “Discovery,” series, and originated the popular “On the Stage” series of unique audience engagement evenings. He has taught on the faculties of Illinois Wesleyan University, the University of Missouri-Columbia, and Eastern Michigan University, and is currently an Associate Professor of Violin at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, where the Arianna Quartet is tenured and has been in residence since 2000. As a member of the Arianna Quartet, he has collaborated with artists such as James Campbell, Gilbert Kalish, Bernard Greenhouse, Richard Stoltzman, and members of the Tokyo, Vermeer, and Juilliard Quartets, and been on the summer faculties of the Britt Institute, Madeline Island, and Music at Port Milford. Mr. McGrosso received his bachelors and masters degrees from Juilliard, and holds a Performer’s Certificate from Northern Illinois University. He also attended the Aspen Music Festival, the Steans Young Artist Program at Ravinia, and the Quartet Programme in Aldeburgh, England. His violin teachers have included Dorothy Delay, Shmuel Ashkenasi, Joyce Robbins, Joel Smirnoff, and Gerald Beal, and he has studied chamber music with members of the Juilliard, Tokyo, LaSalle, and Vermeer Quartets.

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JULIA SAKHAROVA *Violin*

Julia Sakharova, violinist of the Arianna String Quartet, is an internationally established concert artist, known for her performances as soloist, orchestra performer, and chamber musician. She has been described by critics as projecting “incredible temperament, very fine sensitivity, and remarkable colors” and hailed for her “technically thrilling” and “powerful musical personality.” Before joining the Arianna String Quartet she served as Assistant Concertmaster with the Alabama Symphony Orchestra, was a member of the Albany Symphony in New York, and was a founding member of the acclaimed Erato String Quartet.

At the age of eight, Ms. Sakharova made her solo orchestral debut with the Moldova Philharmonic Orchestra. She has since appeared on numerous stages including Alice Tully Hall, Steinway Hall, Carnegie Hall, and the Library of Congress. She has performed in numerous festivals, recitals, tours, and competitions across her native Russia, Western and Southern Europe, Japan, South America, and the United States.

In 1999, after graduating from Moscow’s prestigious Central Special Music School under the renowned Tchaikovsky Conservatory, Ms. Sakharova moved to the U.S. to continue her education at Oberlin College, studying with Taras Gabora, Almita Vamos and Milan Vitek. A year later she made her West Coast solo debut at the Getty Center with composer and conductor John Williams and the Oberlin Orchestra. In 2006 she earned a master’s degree from the Juilliard School studying with Donald Weilerstein. While at Juilliard, she made her New York City orchestral debut under the baton of Maestro Mark Stringer and the Juilliard Orchestra, as well as her chamber music debut at New York’s Alice Tully Hall. Subsequently, she received a certificate for orchestral performance from the Manhattan School of Music studying with Glenn Dicterow and Lisa Kim of the New York Philharmonic.

In addition to the Arianna String Quartet’s ongoing recording project with Centaur of the entire Beethoven Cycle, Ms. Sakharova was featured on Rachmaninoff’s Elegiac Piano Trios (Tavros Records) and on the recent 2014 release of Sean Hickey’s Cursive – Piano and Chamber Works (Delos). Mr. Hickey dedicated Ampersand, a work for violin and piano, to Ms. Sakharova, which she debuted at a 2006 Steinway Hall recital. A variety of other performances have also been featured in radio broadcasts on WQXR’s “Young Artists Showcase,” KMZT’s “Sundays Live”, Cleveland’s WCLV, and on St. Louis’ KWMU. Ms. Sakharova’s film score credits include Mimzy, The Perfect Stranger, and The Brave One.

Her competition credits include first prize at the International Competition for the Music of Eastern & Central Europe, Top Prize at the Olga Koussevitzky Competition for Strings, a top prize at the Jeunesses Musicales Montreal International Competition, and the first prize of the 2001 Coleman Chamber Ensemble Competition.

Ms. Sakharova has performed at festivals including the Music Academy of the West, Festival International de Colmar, the Verbier Festival & Academy, Keshet Eilon Violin Mastercourse, Kneisel Hall Chamber Music Festival, and the Bowdoin International Music Festival.

Currently, Ms. Sakharova serves on the violin faculty at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. As a dedicated educator, she has conducted master classes at the University of Iowa School of Music, Alabama School of Fine Arts, and Birmingham Southwestern College. She has also taught and appeared on stage at the Green Mountain Chamber Music Festival, Music Mountain Chamber Series, Madeline Island Music Camp and the Femusc Festival in Brazil. Her residencies include the Peabody Conservatory, Oberlin College, Northern Illinois University, and Northwestern University. She is the recipient of the 2017 Artist Teacher Award from the American String Teachers Association.

Ms. Sakharova plays an 1819 Raffaele and Antonio Gagliano.

ARIANNA STRING QUARTET

JOANNA MENDOZA *Viola*

Noted for her “lush, sonorous and assertive tone” (NY Stringer Magazine), and “eloquent phrasing” (New York Concert Review), violist Joanna Mendoza has performed throughout North America, South America, Europe and South Africa and has given master classes in Beijing, China. Summer festival appearances include Interlochen Arts Camp, Madeline Island Music Camp, Killington Music Festival, Mammoth Lakes Chamber Music Festival, and Bellingham Festival of Music.

Joanna Mendoza is the violist of the Arianna String Quartet and Associate Professor of Viola at the University of Missouri - St. Louis. Their national and international performances have been praised for their “emotional commitment and fluent virtuosity,” (Pretoria News) and “tonal warmth, fastidious balance...expressive vitality” (Chicago Tribune). The Arianna Quartet can be heard on National Public Radio’s “Performance Today,” and “Live from Music Mountain” which broadcasts to 125 stations in the U.S. and to 35 countries. Current projects include a long-term, multi-disc recording contract with Centaur Records and a concert tour in South Africa in August 2013.

Prior to joining the Arianna Quartet, Ms. Mendoza performed with the Harrington String Quartet for 10 years. During that time, they premiered “String Circle,” a viola quintet by composer/violist Kenji Bunch, commissioned and written for Ms. Mendoza. The Harrington Quartet was featured in a PBS television documentary, “A Sound Collaboration-The Harrington String Quartet,” and recorded the complete string quartets of Daniel McCarthy on the Albany Record label.

Ms. Mendoza earned her degrees from the University of Wisconsin-Madison where she studied with members of the Pro Arte Quartet and at the Juilliard School where she studied with William Lincer and the Juilliard Quartet. She plays a viola made by Christophe Landon in 1991.

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KURT BALDWIN *Cello*

Kurt Baldwin is Associate Professor of Music at the University of Missouri, St. Louis, where the Arianna String Quartet has been in residence since 2000. As a founding member of the Arianna String Quartet in 1992, Mr. Baldwin has been awarded the Grand Prizes at the Fischhoff Competition, Coleman Competition, and Carmel Competition, and was a Laureate at the 1999 Bordeaux International String Quartet Competition. Mr. Baldwin has concertized throughout the United States, Canada, Mexico, Italy, France and Japan, has been heard in live radio broadcasts in over 30 states and on NPR's "Performance Today", and has recorded for the Albany, Centaur and Urtext classical labels. He has collaborated with members of the Tokyo, Cleveland, Juilliard, and Vermeer quartets, as well as Richard Stoltzman, Bernard Greenhouse, Gilbert Kalish and James Campbell. He studied with Janina Ehrlich at Augustana College, received his bachelor of music degree from the San Francisco Conservatory with Irene Sharp, and earned a master of music degree from the New England Conservatory, where he was a student of Bernard Greenhouse. Mr. Baldwin also holds a Performer's Certificate from Northern Illinois University, where he studied with Marc Johnson and the Vermeer Quartet.