

## ***New Orford String Quartet***

***Jonathan Crow, violin***

***Andrew Wan, violin***

***Eric Nowlin, viola***

***Brian Manker, cello***

Forty-five years ago a new Canadian string quartet was formed at the Jeunesses-Musicales du Canada summer camp at Parc National du Mont-Orford (today the Orford Arts Centre). The Orford String Quartet gave its first public concert on August 11, 1965. Through its many recordings and tours both at home and abroad, the Orford String Quartet became one of Canada's best-known and most illustrious musical ensembles. After 26 years and more than 2000 concerts on six continents, the Quartet disbanded, giving its last concert on July 28, 1991. In July 2009 the New Orford String Quartet arose from the fame and tradition of its glorious predecessor, giving its first concert for a sold-out audience at the Orford Arts Centre. In the short time since its creation the New Orford Quartet has seen astonishing success, giving annual concerts at the Orford Arts Centre for national CBC broadcast and receiving unanimous critical acclaim, including two Opus Awards for *Concert of the Year*. Reviews of the New Orford String Quartet debut concert in the *Montreal Gazette* applauded a concert performance that was “*sweet, balanced and technically unassailable less than a week after their members met for the first time... Lustily applauded in the Orford Arts Centre, the concert was true to the Orford name in its beauty and refinement. Indeed, there was no trace of roughness anywhere*”. *Le Devoir* described the musical result as “*stupefying*”. Recent performances in Montreal and Quebec were met with immediate invitations for return engagements.

Hailed for their “*ravishingly beautiful tone*” as well as their “*extraordinary technical skills and musicianship*” the members of the New Orford String Quartet are all principal players in the Montreal and Toronto Symphony Orchestras. In 2009, these like-minded musicians came together with a plan to revolutionize the concept of string quartet playing in Canada, bringing together four stars of the classical music field for a limited touring schedule on a project-by-project basis inspired by the success of modern chamber orchestras such as the Chamber Orchestra of Europe and Mahler Chamber Orchestra. Rather than committing to a year-round schedule, the members of the quartet meet for residencies in various centres for short periods of time, providing a fresh perspective on interpretations of standard string quartet repertoire. The New Orford String Quartet is also dedicated to promoting Canadian works, both new commissions and neglected repertoire from the previous century. Each New Orford String Quartet project has included performances of a major Canadian string quartet from the 20<sup>th</sup> century or a premiere of a newly composed work, and programs have included repertoire from a period that spans over 225 years, from Haydn and Beethoven to Sir Ernest MacMillan and Denis Gougeon.

In 2011 the New Orford String Quartet released its debut album of the final quartets of Schubert and Beethoven on Bridge Records to international acclaim. Hailed as one of the top CDs of 2011 by *La Presse* and *CBC In Concert* and nominated for a JUNO Award in 2012, critics have described the recording as a “*performance of true greatness and compelling intensity... stunning!*” (*Audio Video Club of Atlanta*), “*flawless... a match made in heaven!*” (*Classical Music Sentinel*), “*a performance of rare intensity.*” (*Audiophile Audition*) and “*nothing short of electrifying... listen and weep.*” (*The Toronto Star*).

For more information please visit [www.neworford.com](http://www.neworford.com) or [www.facebook.com/neworford](http://www.facebook.com/neworford).

## **Jonathan Crow, violin**

Upon graduation from McGill University at the age of nineteen, Jonathan Crow joined the Montreal Symphony Orchestra as associate principal second violin, and won the associate concertmaster chair five months later. He was appointed concertmaster in 2002 — becoming the youngest concertmaster to lead a major North American orchestra — a position he held until 2006. Mr. Crow has been featured as a soloist with most major Canadian orchestras including the Montreal, Kingston, London, National Arts Centre, Victoria and Vancouver Symphony Orchestras, under the baton of such conductors as Dutoit, Menuhin, Nagano, Bernardi and Martins. He is heard frequently on Chaîne Culturelle of Radio-Canada, CBC Radio Two, and NPR, along with Radio France, Deutsche Welle, Hessischer Rundfunk and the RAI in Europe. Jonathan is currently Concertmaster of the Toronto Symphony and Associate Professor of Violin at the Schulich School of Music of McGill University where he has been teaching since 2005.

## **Andrew Wan, violin**

Named concertmaster of the Montreal Symphony Orchestra in 2008, Andrew Wan is equally at home as a soloist and chamber musician. He has appeared with the orchestras of Montreal, Toronto, Newfoundland, Juilliard, Aspen, and Edmonton under conductors such as Nagano, Casadesu, Vengerov, Oundjian, DePreist and Stern, and has concertized in venues such as Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, and Salle Gaveau with the Juilliard Quartet, Gil Shaham, James Ehnes, and Cho-Liang Lin. He frequently serves as guest concertmaster for several North American orchestras and has appeared as artist and faculty at the Seattle Chamber, Agassiz, Aspen and Orford Music Festivals. Mr. Wan received his Bachelor of Music, Master of Music and Artist Diploma degrees from the Juilliard School under the tutelage of Masao Kawasaki and Ron Copes. He is currently on faculty at the Schulich School of Music of McGill University.

## **Eric Nowlin, viola**

Violist Eric Nowlin has performed extensively throughout the United States as well as abroad. Mr. Nowlin won second prize in the 2006 Walter W. Naumburg Competition, as well as first prize in the 2003 Irving M. Klein International String Competition and the 2001 Juilliard Viola Concerto Competition. His festival appearances include the Marlboro Music Festival and Ravinia's Steans Institute, and he has toured with both Musicians from Marlboro and Musicians from Steans Institute. Mr. Nowlin currently serves as Associate Principal Violist with the Toronto Symphony. He received his Bachelor's and Master's Degrees from The Juilliard School as a student of Samuel Rhodes.

## **Brian Manker, cello**

Principal Cellist of the Montreal Symphony Orchestra since 1999, Brian Manker enjoys a diverse and varied musical career as a performer and teacher. A Grand Prize winner as a member of the Harrington Quartet at the Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition, Mr. Manker also received a special commendation from Sir Yehudi Menuhin at the Portsmouth International String Quartet Competition. Formerly the co-director of Festival Alexandria (Ontario), he can be heard on his 2010 recording of the complete Bach Cello Suites on STORKCLASSICS, as well as numerous recordings of chamber music and of course with the Montreal Symphony Orchestra. He is currently on the faculty at the Schulich School of Music at McGill University. In 2007, Mr. Manker launched *The Beethoven String Quartet Project*, which aims to perform all the quartets of Beethoven in their proper context, the private salon.