

# JOHANNES STRING QUARTET

Soovin Kim, violin  
Choong-Jin Chang, viola

Jessica Lee, violin  
Peter Stumpf, cello

“The Johannes String Quartet, comprised of four impressively gifted instrumentalists in their own right, have come together to form one of the great chamber music groups of our time. **They play with technical polish, with deep musical understanding, and with uncommon inspiration. The Johannes is all I could ever dream of in a string quartet.**”

--Arnold Steinhardt, *Guarneri String Quartet*

## PRESS QUOTES

“**Brilliant ensemble** with local ties always schedules fascinating repertoire, and this recital is no exception”.  
-- *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, January 2010

“The Johannes is all about transparency—no showboating, just the music... **the concert caught fire with Béla Bartók’s “Quartet No. 4,”... the Johannes String Quartet probed its guts with precision and rhythmic ferocity**”.  
--*The Santa Fe Reporter*, September 2009

“The Johannes String Quartet gave the colorful work its New York premiere on Wednesday evening at Alice Tully Hall. [Esa-Pekka Salonen's] “Homunculus,” commissioned by the Johannes ensemble, is a dense and richly scored high-octane work, full of energetically slashing figures, arpeggios and solo melodies that unfold over tremolo accompaniment. After the frantic climax, a descending glissando leads to a viola solo and a slow, subdued conclusion. **The Johannes musicians — Soovin Kim and Jessica Lee, violinists; Choong-Jin Chang, violist; and Peter Stumpf, cellist — gave the piece an impassioned performance**”.  
--*The New York Times*, March 2009

“Homunculus,” by Finnish composer-conductor Esa-Pekka Salonen was performed next by the Johannes Quartet. Opening with crisp dissonances and incisive rhythms, the work demanded **a high level of virtuosity**. The high-energy performers played with **great passion and intensity**, giving shape and direction to the musical line. It was also clear why the Guarneri members chose their younger colleagues to share their tour. **Each of the members employed impressive technique and musicality. As with the best chamber ensembles, the whole was greater than the sum of its parts**”. --*Kansas City Star*, March 2009

"For at least part of its current farewell tour, the Guarneri is being accompanied by **the Johannes Quartet, a young and - to judge from Thursday's performance - splendidly dynamic ensemble that needs to come back again soon** as a headliner. In the potent performance of the Mendelssohn Octet that occupied the second half of the program, a listener could witness the mantle of chamber-music greatness being passed along."  
-- *San Francisco Chronicle*

"...**flawless**..a pretty terrific new string quartet has been born and a long life is anticipated"

-- *Los Angeles Times*

"Accurate intonation, vigorous interaction and careful regard for the details in the score... **the passion and attack that characterize the best of quartet playing.**"

-- *The Philadelphia Inquirer*

"In their intense yet highly articulate Wednesday night concert at the [Kennedy Center] Terrace Theater, **the quartet brought out the entirety of the music's brilliant colors and textures.**"

--*The Washington Post*

"... Mozart's "Dissonant" Quartet, K. 465, and the Debussy Quartet, displayed the four players' **marvelous tonal palettes, resourceful dynamics, imperturbable balances and musical single-mindedness.**"

-- *The Los Angeles Times*

"**All are formidable musicians and handle the music fearlessly.** Given their relative youth as a group, they are merely excellent – not yet magnificent." "...perfect blend of technical skill, carefully crafted dynamics and the sense of architecture the compose made a major element of the piece [Beethoven Op. 59/3]."

-- *Times Union, Schenectady, NY*

"The playing was crisp and light and perfectly meshed ensemble-wise."

--*The Sunday Gazette, Schenectady, NY*

"The quartet gave as much color and vitality to Mozart's so-called "Dissonant" Quartet as it had the very different music of Maurice Ravel and Johannes Brahms on Friday... what had made the Johannes Quartet so arresting in Brahms and Ravel on Friday was its free, fluid way of playing, unfettered by the metronome. Turning to Mozart's Classicism on Saturday, the group dispatched the "Dissonant" Quartet more tautly. But it still filled the music with color and atmosphere... the players made it gleam, and **their agility and crispness ensured that exuberance reigned.**"

-- *Charlotte Observer*

"The Johannes Quartet put on **an impressive display**, illuminating the colors of Ravel's lone string quartet and capturing the fire of Brahms' first."

-- *Creative Loafing Charlotte*

"The Johannes Quartet, which includes players from both the Chicago Symphony and the Philadelphia Orchestra, brought a mature tone and manner to its programme in the same hall [Carnegie's Weill Recital Hall] (2 November). Where the Fry Street's cellist was rather reticent tonally, the Johannes' **Peter Stumpf had a warm, full-bodied sound which was a rock of support to his colleagues.** Again Haydn was the opener. Op. 77 no. 1 was pleasingly performed...Mendelssohn's Quartet in A minor, was the highlight of the programme due to a probingly thoughtful reading."

--*The Strad*

"**One of the finest chamber music concerts in recent local experience...** The highly polished performance revealed amazing maturity.... this is definitely a group to watch as it starts to make recordings and the music world becomes more aware of it."

-- *The Virginian-Pilot*

"Needless to say, [the Johannes] Quartet's players are all extremely good...The players know exactly when to lead, when to support; **their ensemble is excellent, their rapport close, creating a sense of mutual caring and respect.**"

-- *Andante.com*

“Music festival dishes up **succulent Schubert**... On Sunday, the tonal curtain went up with the short *Quartettsatz*, played by the Johannes Quartet... **They were exuberant, focused and did not yield an inch either to the music or each other**. It was a wonderfully solid experience, which is as it should be considering the members’ respective credentials.”

*--The New Mexican*

“But what brought the performance to **the highest level of quartet playing** was the submission of the individual to the collective. Every detail was agreed upon. **Attacks were dead-on**, like the ones in the opening movement of No. 1 [of Beethoven’s Op. 18], the lengths of notes exactly calculated. Dynamics were shaded for drama. Intonation was almost never anything but beautifully centered.”

*--The Philadelphia Inquirer*