

Balourdet Quartet

Angela Bae, violin | Justin DeFilippis, violin | Benjamin Zannoni, viola | Russell Houston, cello

2023-24 Biography

The celebrated Balourdet Quartet (pronounced bal-orr-DAY) produces both emotionally intense and intimate moments on international stages. Its unique closeness and willingness to take creative risks earned it the 2024 Avery Fisher Career Grant, as well as Chamber Music America's 2024 Cleveland Quartet Award. With more than 70 concerts per season, recent highlights include the Balourdet's debuts at Carnegie and Wigmore Halls, and new string quartets by composers Karim Al-Zand and Paul Novak through grants from Chamber Music America (2021) and the Barlow Foundation (2023). They are currently the Graduate Quartet in Residence at the prestigious Jacobs School of Music at Indiana University and are recent graduates of the New England Conservatory's Professional String Quartet Program.

For the 2023-24 season, the Balourdet has a full year of concerts, residencies, and exciting projects scheduled. They will return to the La Jolla Music Society, Montgomery Chamber Music, Nevada Chamber Music Festival, and Schneider Concert Series and will make debuts in Atlanta, Memphis, Houston, and San Antonio. Collaborations include pianists Marc-André Hamelin, Simone Dinnerstein, Stewart Goodyear, and violist Jordan Bak. During this season, they also begin their position as String Quartet in Residence with the Chamber Orchestra of the Triangle in North Carolina.

The Balourdet journey began in 2018 in the mountains of New Mexico at the Taos School of Music, where violinists Justin DeFilippis, Angela Bae, and cellist Russell Houston first bonded as friends over long evenings of chamber music, luxurious Peppermint Schnapps and extravagant meals created by chef extraordinaire Antoine Balourdet, a renaissance man with an exceptional love of life and music. It was the friendships, a shared passion for music and food, and gratitude for the role the festival played in the formation of the quartet, that inspired the members to name the ensemble in Chef Balourdet's honor.

Soon thereafter, in the heat of a waning Texas summer, Justin, Angela, and Russell joined with violist Benjamin Zannoni at Rice University, and the Balourdet Quartet was formed. Inspired by their love for the repertoire and the excitement of having found each other, the four friends found themselves playing quartets late into the night for fun. After having been together for only one year at Rice University, and a summer at the Aspen Music Festival, they took second prize at the Nielsen International String Quartet Competition, and were selected as the only quartet admitted to Boston's historic New England Conservatory Professional String Quartet Program under the tutelage of Cleveland Quartet cellist Paul Katz.

In 2021, the Quartet won the Grand Prize at New York's Concert Artists Guild Competition, which included joint management by Concert Artists Guild in the U.S., and Young Classical Artist's Trust (YCAT) in the UK and Europe. In addition, the Balourdet has been prizewinners in Canada's Banff International String Quartet Competition, the International Premio Paolo Borciani Competition in Italy, Gold Medal winners at the Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition, and Gold Medal and Audience Prizewinners at the Yellow Springs Competition.

March 2024 - Please do not edit without permission