

community events, educational initiatives, and formal concerts. 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, Paul Novak, and Nicky Sohn through grants from Chamber Music America (2021) and the Barlow Foundation (2023).

They are graduates of the New England Conservatory's Professional String Quartet Program and Graduate Quartet in Residence at the Jacobs School of Music at Indiana University. The quartet takes its name from Antoine Balourdet, chef extraordinaire and beloved member of the Taos of School of Music.

Chenchun Ma is an active pianist, chamber musician, and emerging educator. As a soloist, she has performed in major venues including Auer Hall, the Van Cliburn Concert Hall, Paul Hall, the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, Harris Hall, and many others across the U.S. and China. A passionate advocate for contemporary music, she regularly performs with the Jacobs Composition Academy. As a chamber musician, she has appeared at Juilliard ChamberFest, Morse

Hall, The Kosciuszko Foundation House, and the Community Church in Aspen. She was a 2025 fellow at the Soundboard Institute at Honeywell Arts Academy and previously attended the Aspen Music Festival and School, and the Mozarteum Salzburg Summer Academy. Ms. Ma teaches in the Young Pianist Program and college secondary piano at Indiana University. She has presented at the MTNA National Conferences and served as an evaluator for Indiana's AIM Festival. She also taught ear training at The Juilliard School and The Tianjin Juilliard School Pre-College Division. Committed to community engagement, she has performed in the MTNA @ IU series and as a Gluck Community Service Fellow, giving over 30 interactive performances in healthcare settings. Originally from Shanghai, she holds degrees from Juilliard and is pursuing her doctorate at Indiana University.

Kairos

Chamber Music of Kyle Werner



CRC 4179

The Balourdet Quartet

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

Chenchun Ma, piano

String Quartet No. 1	(18:18)
1 I Night	3:43
2 II Morning	4:27
3 III Afternoon	4:41
4 IV Evening	5:21
Piano Trio	(17:14)
5 I Andante	3:01
6 II Adagio	7:12
7 III Animato	6:55
8 String Quartet No. 2 "In Memory"	20:13

Total Time: 55:49

Recorded December 17-19, 2024 at the Georgina Joshi Recording Studio at Indiana University Jacobs School of Music, Bloomington, Indiana. Produced and engineered by Konrad Strauss. Cover photo by Kylee Pastore Asirvatham. Cover design by Kelly Werner. All compositions on this album are published by Kyle Werner Music. www.kylewerner.com



Kairos

Chamber music of Kyle Werner
The Balourdet Quartet
Chenchun Ma, piano



I have chosen the title *Kairos* for my debut album of compositions as this richly meaningful Greek word conveys a sense of a significant moment or season of time. While the word *Chronos* refers to quantitative, measurable time, *Kairos* refers to a deeper, qualitative view of time. This music is the fruit of a season in which I turned over a new page as a composer, digging deeper into the forms and vocabulary of the historic classical music tradition, and delving into some of the most vital themes of human existence – time, birth, life, death, and love.

String Quartet No. 1 was composed in 2017 with the support of an Artist Grant from the Center for Faith & Work and was premiered at Redeemer Presbyterian Church by the Redeemer Quartet. The composition is based on the theme of the daily rhythms of life; my initial inspiration came from a talk entitled “The Four Portions of a Day” given by Covenant Seminary professor Zach Eswine at a L’Abri Fellowship conference. Other influences include the book of Psalms, Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s *Life Together*, the Examen prayer, the crowd-sourced documentary film *Life in a Day*, and the book *Daily Rituals* (an anthology of brief vignettes about the daily routines of various creative people).

In exploring the imagery of night, morning, afternoon, and evening in the book of Psalms, Eswine

notes that while each of these times of day can contain a myriad of different life experiences, they often generally correspond to themes of solitude (night), grace (morning), service (afternoon), and hospitality (evening). Rather than representing any particular day, the four movements of this quartet explore these archetypal themes associated with each portion of a day.

Piano Trio represents a significant turning point in my journey as a composer, a work in which I feel that I more fully found my voice. It was composed in 2015 soon after the completion of my formal training, during a time of much uncertainty, difficulty, and introspection. The work was written at the request of my friend and colleague Patricia Davis and received its premiere in 2016 on a faculty concert of the Geneva Conservatory, where I now serve as director. I began the work after seeing a performance of Christopher Wheelton’s *After the Rain* pas de deux, set to the music of Arvo Pärt’s *Spiegel im Spiegel*, at the New York City Ballet soon after I had experienced some significant artistic and personal difficulties. At this crossroads I found myself creating music with a more overt lyricism and more conscious embrace of classical formal structures. The calm introspection of the Andante gives way to the deep yearning and searching of the central Adagio, followed by a journey outward and upward in the closing Animato.

String Quartet No. 2 “In Memory” was commissioned by Rod McFaull and premiered in 2018 at University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music in a performance by members of the CCM Chamber Orchestra. Rod desired a new composition in memory of his son Jordan Guzzino McFaull, who passed away in 2015 at the age of 26. While growing up, Jordan studied viola with Dorotea Vismara at University of Cincinnati-CCM Preparatory, while attending Beechwood Schools in Ft. Mitchell, KY, where he excelled in academics and sports. He then graduated from Tulane University and Loyola University New Orleans College of Law, where he was Editor-in-Chief of the Maritime Law Journal. After graduation he went on to work for a maritime law firm in New Orleans.

As we discussed the creation of this quartet, Rod shared many memories of his son and spoke very personally about his own process of grief, remembrance, and celebration of Jordan’s life. In particular, Rod often spoke of Jordan’s great capacity for “I-Thou” relationships – a term referring to the book *I and Thou* by the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber. This book describes the ways in which the self relates to the world via impersonal “I-It” relationships and personal “I-Thou” relationships. While the “I-It” is the relation of a subject to an object, the “I-Thou” is the relation of a subject to another subject, making

the relationship living, mutual, and transformative. Buber asserts that all such relationships are ultimately related to the eternal relationship between humanity and God.

Rod desired that this piece would embody the multifaceted experience of Jordan’s life: the light and dark, the joys and struggles, love and conflicts. The cello (representing Jordan) is the protagonist of this piece, and the form is driven by the cello’s interactions with the other instruments both as individuals and as a group. These interactions weave together to create a meditation on birth, life, loss, remembrance, and hope.

Acknowledgements

I thank the triune God – Father, Son, and Spirit – in whom we live, move, and have our being. I thank my lovely wife, Laura, and my family for all of their love and encouragement over the years it took to bring this album to fruition. I also thank Rod McFaull, the commissioner of String Quartet No. 2 “In Memory,” for his formative encouragement and support of my creative work in general, and this album in particular.

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Steve & Becky Childers, Elizabeth Dykstra, Martin Dykstra, Justin & Kristiana Ellett, Jono & Frances Eshleman, Brett & Tina Gaudin, Tracy Henry, Ted & Christine Jeon, Kevin & Kathryn Katch, Leslie McClure, Rod McFaull, Andrew J Melton III, Katherine Okin, Benjamin & Cara Palmer, William & Rebecca Ricketts, Joseph Selvidio, Daniel Sepp & Natalie Cheah, Robin Shoemaker, Carl Stocking, The John E. & Margaret J. Strawbridge Trust, Julia Wattacheril, Daniel & Sue Weeden, and Gail Werner.

Soli Deo Gloria
Kyle Werner

Kyle Werner is a composer based in New York City who creates works that embrace the classical music tradition with a sense of renewal. Drawing on inspirations such as natural landscapes, bird-song, art, and theology, his music seeks to bridge the transcendent and the deeply personal.

He frequently collaborates with neoclassical ballet choreographer and former New York City Ballet member Silas Farley, creating works that have been featured by The Houston Ballet, The Washington Ballet, Wolf Trap, MarqueeTV, Guggenheim Works & Process Digital Commissions, and Southern Methodist University. Werner’s compositions have also been performed by the Chicago Chamber Musicians, Grand Rapids Symphony, and members of Eighth

Blackbird and featured at venues including the Colburn School, University of Michigan, University of Colorado-Boulder, and the Midwest Composers’ Symposium.

He studied at Manhattan School of Music and University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music and attended the American Conservatory in Fontainebleau, France. A passionate music educator, Werner currently serves as the Director of the Geneva Conservatory at the Geneva School of Manhattan and as a member of the faculty at Manhattan School of Music Precollege. When he’s not composing, Werner enjoys cooking, birding, hiking, sailing, and exploring parks and gardens. He lives with his wife and muse, Laura, in Northern Manhattan.

The Balourdet Quartet is acclaimed for their vibrant energy and masterful blend of technical precision and emotional depth that brings a fresh perspective to both beloved classics and modern compositions. As curators of classical music, they bring deeply human ideas to life in the world we all share—making the profound feel personal and the unfamiliar feel welcoming.

It has been named the first ever Quartet-in-Residence at the Seattle Chamber Music Society where the group is embedded in King County, WA with a multitude of engagements including