



Breaking the Sound Barrier

SALES INFO NOVEMBER 2025



Ludwig van Beethoven:

String Quartet No. 16 in F Major, Op. 135

György Ligeti:

String Quartet No. 2

David S. Lefkowitz:

Green Mountains, Now Black



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The members of this extraordinary young string quartet, Kyoka Misawa and Rintaro Kikuno on violins, Itsuki Yamamoto on viola, and cellist

Ye Un Park play Classical, Romantic, Contemporary and Renaissance music equally well. The album begins with Beethoven's last published work, String Quartet No. 16 written in 1826, his final statement in his groundbreaking series. Beethoven wrote this piece at the height of his Romantic powers, but the quartet looks back with irony. Opus 135 premiered in 1828, performed by Ignaz Schuppanzigh and his famous ensemble, a year after Beethoven died.

Next, Quartet Integra tackles Ligeti's 1968 ground-breaking Sonata No. 2. Kyoka, Rintaro, Itsuki and Ye Un find beauty and repose in this seat-belts-required 20-minute work full of extended techniques and mid-20th-Century sound world while communicating humor and transcendent energy. Kyoka said "When people hear the name Ligeti, many tend to associate it with contemporary music and assume it will be difficult to listen to. But in reality, that's not the case. Especially the String Quartet No. 2, which we're performing this time — it's wild and destructive, yet it holds a kind of breathtaking beauty. It feels almost like watching a movie." Mike Wechsberg, an audience member at our special live concert recording session commented heartily how "Ligeti is not the sort of music I normally like, but THIS was magnificent! Bravo Quartet Integra!"





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We ended the concert with *Green Mountains, Now Black*, a new piece by David S. Lefkowitz. The work quotes Monteverdi's earliest extant opera *Orfeo* and additional passages from *The Coronation of Poppea*, including its magical and ever-so recognizable love duet between Poppea and the emperor Nero. Instead of merely transposing my favorite arias, choral passages and this famous duet for string quartet, David wrote a work that explores the very nature of what it means to be a string quartet. And he experiments with the genre, pushes boundaries, and incorporates his own despair witnessing the burning of much of Los Angeles in the spring of 2025. David and his wife Laurie could see flames and smoke not too far away from their home as he composed this work. Nero himself famously allowed a good chunk of downtown Rome to burn, exercising (and bragging about) his dubious leadership in the process. David layers Octavia's farewell to her beloved city with the giddy love duet between Octavia's husband, the emperor, and his mistress Poppea, to tell the story of David's own distress while writing the piece. *Green Mountains, Now Black* not only refer to Monteverdi himself (Green Mountain) but the fire which turned so many of our spring green mountains to char in Los Angeles. Despite David's gloom and worry during our fires, his iridescent string writing shows itself proudly and his many glorious and lyrical passages outnumber the darker ones.

The Quartet has been lauded as the most exciting ensemble to emerge from Japan (and Ye Un from Korea) since the famous Tokyo String Quartet formed in 1969 at Juilliard. I love a certain symmetry here: two of the non-Japanese born musicians playing as members of the Tokyo String Quartet were Yarlung Special Advisor Martin Beaver, who became principal violin in 2002, and Clive Greensmith, who joined Tokyo as cellist in 1999. Both Martin and Clive performed with the Tokyo Quartet until the ensemble gave their final concerts in 2013, and now Martin and Clive co-direct Chamber Music at Colburn School and have mentored the four members of Quartet Integra. Before their Colburn residency, Quartet Integra won a four-year fellowship with Suntory Hall's Chamber Music Academy where they were coached by Tokyo Quartet members Koichiro Harada, Kikuei Ikeda and Kazuhide Isomura. This is generational integrity and communication worthy of Kyoka, Rintaro, Itsuki and Ye Un.

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