



Photo by Sarah Skinner available in high resolution at www.escherquartet.com/photos

**Escher String Quartet premieres
Andrew Norman's First String Quartet: *Escher***

Thursday, March 28: Tuesday Musical – Akron, OH

Wednesday April 10: Wigmore Hall – London, UK

**Thursday, April 25: Chamber Music Society of Palm Beach
West Palm Beach, FL**

**Tuesday, May 7: Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center
New York, NY**

**Saturday, August 3: Aspen Music Festival & School
Aspen, CO**

**Escher String Quartet: www.escherquartet.com
Complete Concert Details Included in the Press Release Below.**

**“a level of individual technical precision and a collective musical purpose that is endlessly compelling
... Sheer brilliance” – *The Strad***

New York, NY – The **Escher String Quartet** (Adam Barnett-Hart, violin; Danbi Um, violin; Pierre Lapointe, viola; Brook Speltz, cello) announces the premiere performances of Guggenheim Fellowship and Rome Prize-winning composer **Andrew Norman's** first string quartet, written for the ensemble and titled *Escher*. The new work is co-commissioned by the presenters of its premiere performances: **Tuesday Musical** (March 28; Akron, OH), **Wigmore Hall** (April 10; London, England), **Chamber Music Society of Palm Beach** (April 25; West Palm Beach), **Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center** (May 7; New York, NY), and **Aspen Music Festival & School** (August 3; Aspen, CO).

Norman's new string quartet is inspired by the work of the Dutch graphic artist M. C. Escher, after whom the Escher String Quartet is also named. The new piece is particularly influenced by Escher's Metamorphosis series. Norman writes, “These long, horizontal etchings are virtuosic displays of the artist's ability to transform one thing into another. Through repetition and gradual alteration, Escher transforms an abstract grid into a school of fish into a flock of birds into cityscape into a chessboard and back into a grid. I have tried to something similar with sound and gesture in this piece.”

Of the new work, Adam Barnett-Hart says, “We are honored to premiere Andrew Norman's very first string quartet. We have admired his composition for years and are thrilled to collaborate with him on such a significant work. When we sat down with Andrew last year to talk about different ideas for the piece, we were surprised and delighted when he told us that he planned on drawing from one of Escher's most substantial works — *Metamorphoses 2*. The ideas behind Escher's artistry have greatly influenced our musical ideas, and we feel truly special that Andrew's quartet was not only composed specifically for us, but pays homage to our approach to playing as a group.”

The **Escher String Quartet** similarly took its name from the visual artist, inspired by Escher's method of interplay between individual components working together to form a whole. The quartet has received acclaim for its expressive, nuanced performances that combine unusual textural clarity with a rich, blended sound. A former BBC New Generation Artist, the quartet has performed at the BBC Proms at Cadogan Hall and is a regular guest at Wigmore Hall. In its home town of New York, the ensemble serves as Season Artists of The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. The quartet is one of the very few chamber ensembles to be awarded the prestigious Avery Fisher Career Grant.

The 2018-2019 season finds the Escher touring the U.S. extensively, performing in numerous cities and venues including New York's Alice Tully Hall, Washington D.C.'s Kennedy Center, the Segerstrom Center for the Arts in Costa Mesa, Chicago's Harris Hall, West Palm Beach, Baltimore and Pasadena, among others. Internationally, the quartet returns for a season long residency at London's Wigmore Hall, where it will present three self-curated programs highlighting American and American-influenced compositions.

Andrew Norman (b. 1979) is a composer of orchestral, chamber, and vocal music. Recently praised as “the leading American composer of his generation” by *The Los Angeles Times* and the “master of a uniquely dazzling and mercurial style” by *The New Yorker*, Norman is fast becoming one of the most sought-after voices in American classical music. His work draws on an eclectic mix of sounds and performance practices and is deeply influenced by his training as a pianist and violist as well as his lifelong love of architecture. Norman is increasingly interested in story-telling in music, and specifically in the ways non-linear, narrative-scrambling techniques from movies and video games might intersect with traditional symphonic forms. His distinctive voice has been cited in *The New York Times* for its “daring juxtapositions and dazzling colors,” in *The Boston Globe* for its “staggering imagination.” He was recently named *Musical America’s* 2017 Composer of the Year, and is the recipient of the Jacob Druckman Prize, the ASCAP Nissim and Leo Kaplan Prizes, the Rome Prize, the Berlin Prize, a Guggenheim Fellowship, and the Grawemeyer Award.

Concert Schedule:

Thursday, March 28, 2019 at 7:30pm: Tuesday Musical

EJ Thomas Performing Arts Hall | 198 Hill Street | Akron, OH

Program: Mozart’s String Quartet in F major, K. 590; Norman’s *Escher*; Beethoven’s Quartet in C-sharp minor Op. 131

Tickets: www.tuesdaymusical.org

Wednesday April 10, 2019 at 7:30pm: Wigmore Hall

36 Wigmore Street | London, England

Program: Ives’ String Quartet No. 2, Norman’s *Escher*, Copland’s Two Pieces for String Quartet, Barber’s String Quartet Op. 11

Tickets: www.wigmore-hall.org.uk

Thursday, April 25, 2019 at 7pm: Chamber Music Society of Palm Beach

Norton Museum of Art | 1450 S Dixie Hwy | West Palm Beach, FL

Program: Barber’s String Quartet Op. 11, Norman’s *Escher*, Dvorak’s “American” String Quartet

Tickets: www.cmspb.org

Tuesday, May 7, 2019 at 7:30pm: Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center

Alice Tully Hall | Lincoln Center | New York, NY

Program: Mozart’s String Quartet in F major, K. 590; Norman’s *Escher*; Beethoven’s Quartet in C-sharp minor Op. 131

Tickets: www.chambermusicsociety.org

Saturday, August 3, 2019 at 8pm: Aspen Music Festival & School

Harris Concert Hall | 960 North 3rd Street | Aspen, CO

Program: Mozart’s String Quartet in F major, K. 590; Norman’s *Escher*; Schubert’s String Quartet in G major, D 887

Tickets: www.aspenmusicfestival.com

More about the Escher String Quartet: Within months of its inception in 2005, the Escher Quartet came to the attention of key musical figures worldwide. Championed by the Emerson Quartet, the Escher Quartet was invited by both Pinchas Zukerman and Itzhak Perlman to be Quartet in Residence at each artist’s summer festival: the Young Artists Programme at Canada’s National Arts Centre; and the Perlman Chamber Music Programme on Shelter Island, NY. The quartet has since collaborated with artists including David Finckel, Leon Fleischer, Wu Han, Lynn Harrell, Cho Liang Lin, Joshua Bell, Paul Watkins and David Shifrin, as well as jazz saxophonist Joshua Redman, vocalist Kurt Elling, legendary Latin artist Paquito D’Rivera and Grammy award-winning guitarist Jason Vieaux.

The Escher Quartet has made a distinctive impression throughout Europe, performing at venues such as Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Berlin Konzerthaus, London’s Kings Place, Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Slovenian Philharmonic Hall, Auditorium du Louvre and Les Grand Interprètes series in Geneva. With a strong collaborative approach, the group has appeared at festivals such as Heidelberg Spring Festival, Incontri in Terra di Siena Festival, Dublin’s Great Music in Irish Houses, Risør Chamber Music Festival in Norway, Hong Kong International Chamber Music Festival and Perth International Arts Festival in Australia. The current season sees another extensive European tour, including debuts at Musik und Kunstfreunde Heidelberg, de Singel Antwerp, Budapest’s kamara.hu festival and Bath Mozarfest. Currently String Quartet in Residence at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas and Tuesday Musical in Akron, Ohio, the quartet fervently supports the education of young musicians and has given masterclasses at institutions such as the Royal Academy of Music in London and Campos do Jordão Music Festival in Brazil.

In autumn 2016, the quartet released the third and final volume of the complete Mendelssohn Quartets on the BIS label. The set has been received with the highest critical acclaim; Volume II was listed in the Top 10 CDs of 2016 by *The Guardian* and hailed for its “sheer finesse” by *Gramophone*, while Volume III was nominated for a *BBC Music Magazine* Award. The quartet has also

recorded the complete Zemlinsky String Quartets in two volumes, released on the Naxos label in 2013 and 2014, to accolades including five stars in *The Guardian* with “Classical CD of the Year” and a nomination for a *BBC Music Magazine* Award.

More about Andrew Norman: Andrew Norman’s symphonic works have been performed by leading ensembles worldwide, including the Berlin, Los Angeles and New York Philharmonics, the Philadelphia and Minnesota Orchestras, the London, BBC, Saint Louis, Seattle, San Francisco, and Melbourne Symphonies, the Orpheus, Saint Paul, and Los Angeles Chamber Orchestras, the Tonhalle Orchester, the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, the Orchestre National de France, the Ensemble Intercontemporain, and many others. Norman’s music has been championed by some of the classical music’s eminent conductors, including John Adams, Marin Alsop, Gustavo Dudamel, Simon Rattle, and David Robertson.

In recent seasons, Norman’s chamber music has been featured at the Bang on a Can Marathon, the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, the Wordless Music Series, the CONTACT! series, the Ojai Festival, the MATA Festival, the Tanglewood Festival of Contemporary Music, the Green Umbrella series, the Monday Evening Concerts, and the Aspen Music Festival. In May of 2010, the Berlin Philharmonic’s Scharoun Ensemble presented a portrait concert of Andrew’s music entitled “Melting Architecture.” He has served as Composer in Residence with the Boston Modern Orchestra Project, Opera Philadelphia, the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, and the Utah Symphony. His 30-minute string trio *The Companion Guide to Rome* was named a finalist for the 2012 Pulitzer Prize in Music, and his large-scale orchestral work *Play* was named one of NPR’s top 50 albums of 2015, nominated for a 2016 Grammy in the Best Contemporary Classical Composition category.

Norman recently finished two piano concertos, *Suspend*, for Emanuel Ax, and *Split*, for Jeffrey Kahane, as well as a percussion concerto, *Switch*, for Colin Currie. Upcoming projects include collaborations with Jeremy Denk, Jennifer Koh, Johannes Moser, yMusic, Leila Josefowicz, and the San Francisco Symphony. Andrew Norman’s music is published by Schott Music.

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