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### Escher String Quartet and Jason Vieaux

The Escher String Quartet is comprised of four exceptionally talented musicians: Adam Barnett-Hart, Pierre Lapointe, Brook Speltz, and Aaron Boyd. The Escher Quartet came to fruition while the members were in school studying at Manhattan School of Music. Their string quartet features two violins, viola, and cello. The four instrumentalists have since frequented the Lincoln Center, Wigmore Hall, and Cadogan Hall; while abroad they made debuts in concert halls such as the Slovenian Philharmonic Hall, Amsterdam Concertgebouw, and Auditorium du Louvre. The players are known for their diverse musical appeal which is attributable to the various collaborations with artists contrasting stylistically. Their current trajectory includes expansive world-wide touring with Grammy-Award winning guitarist, Jason Vieaux. Vieaux, known for his Grammy-winning album *Play*, is regarded as an elite classical guitarist with an immense musical range and versatile approaches to classical guitar. Akin to the Escher Quartet, Jason Vieaux has performed at the Lincoln Center as a member of the Chamber Music Society, as well as Caramoor Festival and Music@Menlo. The touring consort performed a vast assortment of selections at the Brooks Center for the Performing Arts at Clemson University.

The first and most notable piece of the quartet's repertoire was Franz Joseph Haydn's Quartet in B-flat Major, Op.76, No.4, "Sunrise". This particular composition features four differing movements which are recognizable and easily understood by the audience. Beginning with a bright and airy sound conveyed through a consistent yet soft chord progression, the violin

solo is salient to the commencement of the first movement, and can be attributed to the transferal of a dawning sun. Further throughout the piece, the string players showcase the ever changing yet developmental movements Haydn composed. The minor section of “Sunrise” invokes a more daunting feel, and aids the overall development of the composition. This composition provided the quartet with leeway to highlight each instrument, as it was composed with sections of emphasis on the cello and viola, which is predominately uncommon for sonatas.

The collaborative effort of the quartet and Vieaux was prominent throughout the performance of their repertory. By means of the division of selections for this performance, the Escher quartet, conjunct with Vieaux, provided audience members with an overall allure of the classical style as the primary volitions of their arsenal. Succeeding the classical appeal, the latter choices of genre further accentuated the stylistic breaches employing guitar features and dance music. Two opuses were arranged and performed by Vieaux in addition to the more extensive compositions executed by all five string instrumentalists.

To conclude the concert, the musicians performed four pieces derived from *100 Greatest Dance Hits for Guitar and String Quartet* by composer Aaron Jay Kernis. Three of the four were succinctly up-beat; the additional canticle was a leisurely ballad. This selection was a well thought out and a perfect inclusion to their program as the finale. The decision to convey the funk dance genre through string instruments highlighted not only the stark differences between the diverse genres of music, but the desired communal sound of five distinctive string instruments in an unexpected way.