



Emerson String Quartet – A Biographical Timeline

1976- Quartet is formed at the Juilliard School, taking its name from the great American poet and philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson. Original members: Eugene Drucker, Philip Setzer, violins; Guillermo Figueroa, viola; Eric Wilson, cello. Quartet is signed by Melvin Kaplan, Inc.

1977- Guillermo Figueroa leaves the Quartet, and the first recording with New World Records with Masao Kawasaki as violist is released. Lawrence Dutton joins as violist and the Quartet begins touring. The Quartet has its first summer residency at the Vermont Mozart Festival

1978- Quartet makes first appearance at Carnegie Hall, the first recording with Lawrence Dutton, wins the Naumburg Award for Chamber Music, makes first appearance on WQXR with host Robert Sherman, first appearance at Caramoor Festival, plays first concerts at the Smithsonian Institution and Metropolitan Museum of Art.

1979- First appearance at Lincoln Center and Kennedy Center. David Finckel replaces Eric Wilson as cellist and the Quartet embarks upon the first full concert series at the Smithsonian Institution.

1980- Quartet plays its first Beethoven cycle at the Vermont Mozart Festival and begins association with the Hartt School in Hartford, Connecticut

1981- First-ever performance of Bartók's Six Quartets in one-evening "Bartók Marathon" at Lincoln Center to honor the centenary of that composer's birth. First appearances at Spoleto, Tanglewood, and Ottawa Festivals

1982- Documentary "Making Music" filmed about the Quartet; first concerts as members of The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center.

1983- First Mostly Mozart Festival appearance. WETA television program "In Residence" is filmed at Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian Institution. First European tour, through 10 countries, and first appearances with Aspen and Mostly Mozart Festivals.

1984- London debut at the Wigmore Hall.

1985- First appearance at the Ravinia Festival and first tour of Japan.

1986- Release of *Eight Romantic Quartets* for Book-of-the-Month Club Records

1987- Quartet signs exclusive contract with Deutsche Grammophon, makes first taping for Minnesota Public Radio, first appearances at the Salzburg and Lucerne Festivals, first tour of Australia, and plays in Hawaii on the way back from Japan.

1988- First recording released with DG: Schubert's *Death and the Maiden* and Beethoven's *Serioso* Quartets. Carnegie Hall debut recital of Bartók's Complete Quartets

1989- Bartók Cycle wins Gramophone Awards for "Best Chamber Music Recording" and "Record of the Year". Quartet makes first appearance on Lincoln Center's Great Performers Series and signs exclusive management contract with IMG.

1990- First GRAMMY Awards for both "Best Chamber Music Performance" and "Best Classical Album" for Bartók Cycle. This was the first chamber music recording to win "Best Classical Album" in the history of the Grammys. Recording release of Prokofiev's Quartets and the Sonata for Two Violins.

1991- Release of the Mozart Flute Quartets with Carol Wincenc, first appearance at London's Royal Festival Hall for observances of the 200th anniversary of Mozart's death.

1992- CD release of *American Originals* (quartets by Ives and Barber) and Schubert C major String Quintet (with Mstislav Rostropovich)

1993- New York Times Magazine runs a full-length feature of the Quartet, written by Charles Michener

1994- *American Originals* wins GRAMMY Award for "Best Chamber Music Performance"; recording of Dvorak piano quartet and piano quintet with Menahem Pressler receives GRAMMY nomination. Recordings of *Mozart's Six Quartets* (dedicated to Haydn) and *American Contemporaries* and Barber's *Dover Beach* with Thomas Hampson are released

1995- Release of Schumann Piano Quartet and Quintet, Bartok "Marathon" at Avery Fisher Hall, and Honorary Doctorate degrees are received from Middlebury College, Vermont

1996- Release of Webern's complete works for string quartet recording; first performances in Israel

1997- Beginning of two-season series at Alice Tully Hall focusing on Beethoven and the Twentieth Century; release of complete Beethoven quartets. Quartet participates for the first time in the Isaac Stern Chamber Music Workshop at Carnegie Hall

1998- 7-CD set of Beethoven Quartets wins GRAMMY Award for "Best Chamber Music Performance" and National Public Radio Award

1999- Mozart and Brahms Clarinet Quintets recording with David Shifrin is released; first performance of "Strings and Strings" collaboration with physicist Brian Greene

2000- *Time* magazine names Emerson Quartet "America's Greatest Quartet". Musical America names Quartet "Ensemble of the Year". The first complete Shostakovich cycle is recorded and

then performed at Lincoln Center and at the Wigmore Hall; the Lincoln Center series is named eight years later by *New York Magazine* as one of the cultural events that best defined the city since the magazine's inception. The world premiere of "The Noise of Time" collaboration with London-based theater company Complicité presented by Lincoln Center's "New Visions" series, later repeated in Los Angeles, Berlin, Vienna, Paris, and Moscow.

2001- First Hong Kong and Singapore performances. Shostakovich Quartets wins two GRAMMY Awards for "Best Chamber Music Performance" and "Best Classical Album," and the Gramophone Award for "Best Chamber Music Recording". Isaac Stern's 80th birthday celebration performances at Boston Symphony Hall and Washington's Kennedy Center. Quartet's 25th anniversary season celebration begins. "Haydn Project" album released. Eleven performances of "The Noise of Time" at the Barbican Centre in London.

2002- 25th anniversary season performances throughout the spring, at Lincoln Center and European tour. Emerson is named Quartet-in-Residence at Stony Brook University.

2003- "The Emerson Encores" and "Bach's *The Art of the Fugue*" recordings are released.

2004- Quartet becomes first ensemble ever to win the Avery Fisher Prize from Lincoln Center. Haydn's *Seven Last Words of Christ* CD is released.

2006- GRAMMY Award for "Best Chamber Music Performance" for Mendelssohn: The Complete String Quartets. Complete Shostakovich cycle in New York. Honorary Doctorate is received from College of Wooster.

2007- 30th anniversary season is celebrated with nine-concert *Perspectives* series "Beethoven in Context" at Carnegie Hall and is covered in its entirety by the New York Times with outstanding reviews. *Intimate Voices* wins GRAMMY Award for "Best Chamber Music Performance". Disney's Oscar-nominated animated short film *The Little Match Girl* features the Quartet's rendition of the third movement of Borodin's *String Quartet No. 2*. Twenty-year relationship with Deutsche Grammophon is celebrated by the release of Brahms's three quartets and piano quintet with Leon Fleisher.

2008- Quartet celebrates 28th sold-out season at the Smithsonian Institution. Release of world-premiere recording of Bach's four and five-part fugues from *Well-Tempered Clavier* arranged for strings. The Quartet receives the Distinguished Artist Award from the International Society for the Performing Arts (ISPA).

2009- *Intimate Letters* receives 9th GRAMMY Award for "Best Chamber Music Performance". Quartet makes first tour of South America. Honorary Doctorate degrees are received from Bard College.

2010- Quartet is inducted into the Classical Music Hall of Fame. *Old World-New World* recording of Dvorak's most beloved quartets plus *Cypresses* and the *American Quintet* is released in a three-disc set.

2011- Quartet signs exclusive recording contract with Sony Classical, and the album *Mozart: The Prussian Quartets* is released on the label. Honorary Doctorate degrees are received from University of Hartford (Hartt College of Music).

2012- Quartet makes first tour of China and announces departure of cellist David Finckel and selection of new cellist Paul Watkins; this is the first member change in 34 years.

2013- Final recording with cellist David Finckel, *Journeys*, is released, featuring Tchaikovsky's "Souvenir de Florence" and Schoenberg's "Verklärte Nacht." On May 11th at the Smithsonian Institution, cellist Paul Watkins joins the ensemble for Schubert's Cello Quintet and becomes the new cellist of the Emerson String Quartet.