

TURTLE ISLAND QUARTET

David Balakrishnan, Violin, Baritone Violin
Mark Summer, Cello
Mads Tolling, Violin
Jeremy Kittel, Viola

“It must have been like this when Beethoven was taking Vienna by storm – the exhilaration of seeing the future of classical music unfold before your eyes and ears.” —*St. Louis Post-Dispatch* “

Its name derived from creation mythology found in Native American Folklore, the **Turtle Island Quartet**, since its inception in 1985, has been a singular force in the creation of bold, new trends in chamber music for strings. Winner of the 2006 and 2008 GRAMMY®-Awards for Best Classical Crossover category, **Turtle Island** fuses the classical quartet esthetic with contemporary American musical styles, and by devising a performance practice that honors both, the state of the art has inevitably been redefined. Cellist nonpareil Yo-Yo Ma has proclaimed **TIQ** to be “a unified voice that truly breaks new ground – authentic and passionate – a reflection of some of the most creative music-making today.”

The Quartet’s birth was the result of violinist David Balakrishnan’s brainstorming explorations and compositional vision while writing his master’s thesis at Antioch University West. The journey has taken **Turtle Island** through forays into folk, bluegrass, swing, be-bop, funk, R&B, new age, rock, hip-hop, as well as music of Latin America and India ...a repertoire consisting of hundreds of ingenious arrangements and originals. It has included over a dozen recordings on labels such as Windham Hill, Chandos, Koch and Telarc, soundtracks for major motion pictures, TV and radio credits such as the *Today Show*, *All Things Considered*, *Prairie Home Companion*, and *Morning Edition*. They have been in feature articles in People and Newsweek magazines, and collaborations with famed artists such as clarinetist Paquito D’Rivera, vibraphonist Stefon Harris, guitar legends Leo Kottke and the Assad Brothers, The Manhattan Transfer, pianists Billy Taylor, Kenny Barron, Cyrus Chestnut and Ramsey Lewis, the Ying Quartet and the Parsons and Luna Negra Dance Companies.

Another unique element of **Turtle Island** is their revival of venerable improvisational and compositional chamber traditions that have not been explored by string players for nearly 200 years. At the time of Haydn’s apocryphal creation of the string quartet form, musicians were more akin to today’s saxophonists and keyboard masters of the jazz and pop world, i.e., improvisers, composers, and arrangers. Each **Turtle Island** member is accomplished in these areas of expertise as well as having extensive conservatory training. Original members Balakrishnan and Mark Summer, arguably the finest cross genre cellist of the modern age, are joined by the elite of the current crop of young alternative string players, Danish jazz violin phenom Mads Tolling and violist Jeremy Kittel, who holds the title of US National Scottish fiddle champion.

As **Turtle Island** members continue to refine their skills through the development of repertory by some of today’s cutting edge composers, through performances and recordings with major symphonic ensembles, and through a determined educational commitment, the **Turtle Island Quartet** stakes its claim as the quintessential American string quartet of the 21st century.



{ 196 West Ashland Street ■ Suite 201 ■ Doylestown, PA 18901 ■ p.267-880-3750 ■ f.267-880-3757 ■ www.baylinartists.com }