

American **Ensemble**

Watch the Dalí Quartet perform works by Paquito D’Rivera and Astor Piazzolla at www.chamber-music.org/extras

How to spend a summer vacation? For the **Dalí Quartet**, the answer hasn’t changed much in fourteen years. This industrious ensemble, who work as hard offstage with students as they do performing onstage, have maintained an unerring focus on their influential International Music Festival (DQMF) for all that time. Founded by two current members of the quartet, violinist Carlos Rubio and violist Adriana Linares, both from Venezuela, Dalí runs DQMF in North Wales, PA, outside of Philadelphia, under the auspices of the Arts & Community Network.

It’s about music, and it’s not about music. Bringing in students from all over the Americas, and across the globe, the players range from intermediate to pre-professional levels. The DQMF offers them a chance to play—a lot—but also puts participants through college prep, instrument making, body awareness, and improv workshops.

“We enrich the whole person,” Rubio says. “Not only do we focus on performing at the highest level, we incorporate cross-cultural programming, and give our students a global outlook on classical music.”

What started as “a few string students,” as Rubio remembers, now enrolls about

80, and keeps them occupied all day long.

“It is intensive,” he says. “They have ten days to prepare a quartet for performance, and rehearse orchestral repertoire at the same time. But we host wellness seminars, career workshops, folk music, and dance demonstrations. We try to challenge our students, but give them as much autonomy as possible.”

Dalí—which alongside Rubio and Linares includes first violinist Domenic Salerno and cellist Jesús Morales—brings the diverse repertoire they perform to their educational ideas. The group’s upcoming album release includes quintets with clarinetist Ricardo Morales (Philadelphia Orchestra principal) of music by Weber and Paquito D’Rivera. The list of Dalí’s Latin American repertoire (Piazzolla, Ginastera, Sonia Morales, Guido López Gavilan, Abelardito Valdes) is just as long as their “standard” repertoire.

A busy fall performance schedule includes multiple concerts with Van Cliburn Competition gold-medal pianist Olga Kern, playing Schumann, Shostakovich, and Brahms quintets. Their collaboration with Morales (who is Jesús Morales’ brother) continues onstage this fall as well.

The group balances residencies at Lehigh University and at West Chester University, and continues as resident ensemble for Michael Stern’s IRIS Orchestra in Germantown, Tennessee.

That breadth of professional involvement filters down to their teaching. At the summer festival, a student’s day might be filled with coachings in Brazilian percussion, Japanese flute, Puerto Rican plena, body rhythm, and career awareness. Evenings will almost always include a chamber performance. The festival begins with a faculty recital, and concludes with an all-divisions orchestral presentation by the students.

“Learning Western repertoire while exploring different cultures is at the heart of the festival,” Rubio says. “We believe there is something to learn from every piece of music.”

“Approaching new experiences with humility and an open mind helps all of us grow,” he continues. “It helps us connect on a human level. At the festival we work hard, we nurture, promote camaraderie, and celebrate together.”

■ www.daliquartet.com

By Keith Powers

Dalí Quartet

Broad Horizons

32 Fall 2018

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