

A QSF JOURNEY

QUARTET SAN FRANCISCO





The QSF journey into the future of chamber music
is nearing the end of its second decade, and
the group's passion for playing the musical styles
that bring them joy still inspires them.

As musicians they stand on the shoulders of
their sixteenth-century predecessors,
who introduced their instruments to the western world.

The early masters of string writing
—Corelli, Vivaldi, Mozart, and Paganini—
drew from the ethos of their time to
create vibrant reflections of their culture.

Fast forward three hundred years ...
Quartet San Francisco's eclecticism embraces the spirit of our time,
and we invite you to join in
their journey into the chamber music of the 21st century.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

1. **Tango Eight** (Cohen)

Based on rhythmic patterns of Argentine tango and originally written as a violin etude, *Tango Eight* explores the rhythmic patterns, affectations, and articulations unique to the Argentine tango style. Bold rhythmic strokes and articulated strict metronomic rhythms give this piece an unmistakable tango voice.

2. **Fiesta!** (Lipsky)

German-Canadian composer and violinist Helmut Lipsky of Montreal is very active on the national and international scene as a proponent of crossover-style composition and performance practice. “Each time we play *Fiesta!* we have that feeling of anticipating a roller coaster ride—we know it’s going to be exciting,” according to Jeremy Cohen, a colleague of Lipsky’s since their days together at Brooklyn College in the studio of Itzhak Perlman. “Lipsky’s eclectic style and contemporary writing are a perfect match for QSF’s sandbox.”

3. Tango Carnevale (Cohen)

“This piece is an adaptation of the second movement of *Concerto Carnevale for String Quartet and Orchestra*, a piece I wrote to showcase QSF as a single unit in front of an orchestra— something like a four-person soloist,” explains Cohen. “Its melodies and slow-dancing tango rhythms were inspired by sublime evenings spent in the neighborhoods of Buenos Aires in 2004.”

4. Francini (Cohen)

The rich history of tango offers us many larger than life characters and stories. Jeremy Cohen wrote this as a dedication to the great tango violinist and band leader Enrique Mario Francini (1916-1978), who served as its inspiration. Francini was famous in his time as the premier tango violin soloist and can be heard on numerous recordings. He was also a member of the Buenos Aires Philharmonic at the Teatro Colón. Francini died on stage while leading his band in a performance of the sentimental tango, *Nostalgias*.

5. Rhapsody in Bluegrass (Gershwin-Rouse, arr. Cohen)

is a mashup of two iconic works from very different genres—*Rhapsody in Blue* (classical jazz) and *Orange Blossom Special* (bluegrass). Cohen explains, “As a player actively engaged in several different styles, there can be unexpected occupational hazards. Certain pieces can pop into my head, sometimes two works, side by side, regardless of the fact that they have little or nothing in common.” This combining of pieces from seemingly unconnected genres defines the basic crossover nature of Quartet San Francisco’s repertoire. This style of music speaks a “hybridized” modern language, which embraces both the old and the new within the same composition.

6. La Heroína (Cohen)

The San Jose (California) Chamber Orchestra commissioned this work in honor of its conductor, Barbara Day Turner, who has championed many artistic and musical causes throughout her career. Maestra Turner inspires cooperation, collaboration and serves as a role model for young artists and musicians. This composition celebrates Maestra Turner and all female champions who model determination, loyalty, and advocacy worldwide.

7. How Sweet the Sound (Cohen)

The title refers to the second lyrical line in the hymn *Amazing Grace*: “Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me!” This Americana anthem with hymn-like qualities has folk music and gospel roots, and suggests an earlier, simpler time.

8. Federico II (Sollima)

Giovanni Sollima (b. 1962) is an acclaimed Italian cellist and composer whose works are gaining international acclaim. Rich with rhythmic intensity and intriguing stylistic twists, QSF gravitates toward this exciting voice in today’s music. *Federico II* is a movement of a larger composition, *Viaggio in Italia*. “We hear entirely contemporary music with strong medieval roots,” says Cohen. “We love the drama, the passion, the energy, and the drive of this piece.”

9. Al Colón (Cohen)

“Al Colón!” is the cry of a pleased audience in Buenos Aires. It refers to the city’s main opera house, Teatro Colón, a venue emblematic of superb musical performances. When concertgoers elsewhere in Buenos Aires like what they hear, they shout “Al Colón!” as a way of saying, “This performance is so wonderful that it should be presented at the Colón Theater!” QSF experienced this some years ago in Buenos Aires after playing a concert at Cafe Tortoni; they were momentarily flummoxed by the mutterings they heard coming from the audience. “Happily our host explained to us that it was a very high compliment!” recalls Jeremy Cohen.

10. Jasmine Flower/Beautiful Scenery of Wuxi (Traditional Chinese folk songs, arr. Cohen)

“Each time QSF travels to China,” Cohen explains, “I choose familiar Chinese songs the audiences might appreciate hearing through our entirely Western musical window. These two famous folk songs brought smiles to our audience members’ faces, and some even decided to sing along during a few of our concerts. Music has the power to reach across cultures and bring audiences and performers together in a deeply meaningful way.”

11. Toroi Bandi
(Mongolian folk song, arr. Cohen)

QSF bursts out in song in this legendary Robin Hood story of a hero-scoundrel who steals from the rich and gives to the poor. A timeless story in any culture, this version comes from Mongolia.

From the lyrics:

“Hierarchy, strict rules
I won’t obey this tradition.
Why kneel down like a slave?
I’d rather be an outlaw.
Though no one lives long
giving and donating
I will live freely, as I wish
on this vast planet.”

12. Jambo (Traditional African folk song, arr. Cohen) is the Swahili word for “hello.” Speaking about what drives QSF’s spirited lilt in performing this piece, Cohen explains, “African music styles require us to be responsible for maintaining groove in our playing. We provide the rhythmic element without a drummer or a rhythm section. It takes an entire community to play in steady time. Not one, but *all* must lead, keeping their ears open to others while playing. The genre of chamber music is no exception. This concept of carrying the rhythm through each instrument in the group is critical to our style.”

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Quartet San Francisco's last four CDs (2013, 2009, 2007, and 2006) have gathered three Grammy® nominations for Best Classical Crossover; three for Best Engineered, Classical (Leslie Ann Jones and Judy Kirchner); and two for Best Instrumental Composition (Gordon Goodwin and Vince Mendoza). In 2004 the group won the Argentine Consulate's International Tango Competition in New York City.

Founded in 2001 by violinist and composer Jeremy Cohen, QSF expresses itself in its agility and standout virtuosic playing. These crossover specialists excel in multiple styles — from jazz to tango, pop to funk, blues to bluegrass, gypsy swing to big band and beyond.

Since its concert debut in 2001, Quartet San Francisco has offered its groundbreaking literature to local, national and international audiences in performing arts centers, tango and concert halls, jazz festivals, museums, and classrooms across the US, Italy, China, South Korea, and Japan.

JEREMY COHEN, violin

Jeremy Cohen is from a family of five musicians in Oakland, California. Classically-trained and a student of Itzhak Perlman and Anne Crowden, Cohen's eclectic style reflects his respect for a wide range of violinists from Perlman and Fritz Kreisler to Joe Venuti and Eddie South. He has performed as soloist with numerous orchestras including the Virginia Symphony, the California Symphony and the Reno Philharmonic. His recording credits include motion picture and television soundtracks including *The Dukes of Hazzard* and *The Dollmaker*, and as concertmaster on recordings with Linda Ronstadt, Ray Charles, Aaron Neville, Howard Keel and Cleo Laine. He appeared on Carlos Santana's Grammy®-winning CD *Supernatural* and the original *Star Wars* compilation CD with John Williams. On the stage he was the solo violinist in *Forever Tango* and *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*. He has toured and recorded with the Grammy® Award- winning Turtle Island Quartet. Cohen's orchestral arrangements have been featured by numerous orchestras, including the San Francisco Symphony, and the San Jose and San Francisco Chamber Orchestras. As an educator, he has served on the faculties of the Henry Mancini Institute (Los Angeles), The Jazz School (Berkeley, CA) and the Stanford Jazz Workshop. Founder of Quartet San Francisco in 2001, Cohen composes and arranges much of their multi-genre material and aspires to widen the repertoire available to modern string players.





JOSEPH CHRISTIANSON, violin

A graduate of San Francisco Conservatory of Music, Joseph has performed in venues throughout the United States and across the globe, including a 2012 production of *La Boheme* at the Muscat Royal Opera House in Muscat, Oman, under Lorin Maazel's baton. Joseph has toured and taught chamber music workshops with Quartet San Francisco. As a member of Lazuli String Quartet, he has performed in concert series at Noe Valley Chamber Music and San Francisco Conservatory of Music, and worked with members of the Kronos Quartet, Takacs Quartet, and Danish Quartet. Originally from San Luis Obispo, California, Joseph has played with conductors including Lorin Maazel, Kent Nagano, and Scott Yoo. In 2017 he performed with violinists Andrew Wan and Stefan Hersh in a video of Peter Norman's virtuoso ensemble piece *Gran Turismo*, produced and published by the Colorado College Summer Music Festival. Joseph has been awarded fellowships at Colorado College Summer Music Festival, Castleton Festival, Mendocino Music Festival, and the Rubin Institute of Music Criticism. During his studies at Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University and San Francisco Conservatory of Music, his mentors have included Nina Bodnar, Herbert Greenberg, Axel Strauss, and Bettina Mussumeli.

CHAD KALTINGER, viola

Chad Kaltinger is an active freelancer in the San Francisco Bay Area and maintains a busy schedule as orchestral violist, chamber musician, soloist, and recording artist. Principal violist for Opera San Jose and the Santa Cruz Symphony, he is a frequent guest principal at the San Jose Chamber Orchestra. Chad has performed in many festivals around the U.S. including Music in the Mountains, Arizona Musicfest, South by Southwest, the Monterey Jazz Festival, and the Mendocino Music Festival. He is an active proponent of new music and performs regularly with the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music, the University of California-Santa Cruz New Music Works Ensemble, and the Worn Chamber Ensemble. He was the soloist in the 2012 U.S. premiere of Noam Sheriff's *Canarian Vespers*, for solo viola and strings, with the Cadenza Chamber Orchestra in Santa Cruz, California. Chad hails from Chicago where he began his studies at age 9. He studied at the Music Institute of Chicago in Wilmette, IL with Peter Slowik, and at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign with Emanuel Vardi. As a fellowship student at the Aspen Music Festival he studied with Heidi Castleman and Victoria Chiang. Chad was the winner of the 1994 E. Nakamichi Viola Concerto Competition at the Aspen Music Festival.





ANDRÉS VERA, cello

A native of Puerto Rico, Andrés Vera brings a rich mix of cultural influences to his playing. Surrounded by the sounds of salsa, reggae, Latin jazz, Mozart, Beethoven and Brahms, Andrés grew up with an affinity for music and its variety, color, and ethnic diversity. He was invited to join the cello section of the Miami Symphony Orchestra at the age of 17. Andrés holds a B.A. degree from the University of Miami and an M.M. degree and post-graduate Professional Studies Diploma from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. He studied with Ross Harbaugh, Jean-Michel Fonteneau and Jennifer Culp. Andrés is a founding member of the Cello Street Quartet, with whom he traveled in 2014 to Russia, Kosovo and Hungary for the U.S. State Department. Vera is a skilled collaborator and performer of Classical and Baroque cello repertoire. He currently performs as a soloist, orchestra member, and chamber musician, and has been seen in countless cabaret venues throughout the Bay Area. He serves on the faculty at Sacred Heart Preparatory High School in San Francisco. He is also an instructor for the YMCA of San Francisco's After School Program, fostering the next generation of young cellists.

Recorded May 14-16, 2018
at Skywalker Sound, Nicasio, California

Violin: Jeremy Cohen

Violin: Joseph Christianson

Viola: Chad Kaltinger

Cello: Andrés Vera

Producers: Victor Ledin and Marina A. Ledin

Executive Producer: Marcia Gordon Martin

Recording Engineer: Keith O. Johnson

Recorded by: Sean Royce Martin

Music Supervisor: Andrea Liguori

Session Assistance: JoAnn Nunes

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Art Director: JoAnn Nunes

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Divided Street, 1961, oil on canvas.

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Liner Notes: Jeremy Cohen

Jeremy Cohen endorses D'Addario strings



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Q U A R T E T S A N F R A N C I S C O

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| 1 | Tango Eight (Cohen) | 2:21 |
| 2 | Fiesta! (Lipsky) | 4:05 |
| 3 | Tango Carnevale (Cohen) | 5:07 |
| 4 | Francini (Cohen) | 3:45 |
| 5 | Rhapsody in Bluegrass (Gershwin-Rouse, arr. Cohen) | 5:19 |
| 6 | La Heroína (Cohen) | 5:30 |
| 7 | How Sweet the Sound (Cohen) | 3:24 |
| 8 | Federico II (Sollima) | 9:45 |
| 9 | Al Colón (Cohen) | 5:15 |
| 10 | Jasmine Flower/Beautiful Scenery of Wuxi
(Traditional Chinese folk songs, arr. Cohen) | 4:23 |
| 11 | Toroi Bandi (Mongolian folk song, arr. Cohen) | 4:01 |
| 12 | Jambo (Traditional African folk song, arr. Cohen) | 3:38 |