

MOMENTA QUARTET

Emilie-Anne Gendron, violin

Alex Shiozaki, violin

Stephanie Griffin, viola

Michael Haas, cello

Biography

Momenta: the plural of momentum – four individuals in motion towards a common goal. This is the idea behind the Momenta Quartet, whose eclectic vision encompasses contemporary music of all aesthetic backgrounds alongside great music from the recent and distant past. The New York City-based quartet has premiered over 200 works, collaborated with over 250 living composers and was praised by *The New York Times* for its “diligence, curiosity and excellence.” In the words of *The New Yorker*’s Alex Ross, “few American players assume Haydn’s idiom with such ease.”

The quartet came into being in November 2004, when composer Matthew Greenbaum invited violist Stephanie Griffin to perform Mario Davidovsky’s String Trio for events celebrating Judaism and Culture at New York’s Symphony Space and Temple University in Philadelphia. A residency through the composition department at Temple University ensued, and the rehearsals and performances were so satisfying that the players decided to form a quartet. Through this residency, Momenta gave two annual concerts highlighting the talents of Temple University student composers alongside 20th-century masterworks and works from the classical canon, repeating the programs at the Brooklyn Society for Ethical Culture. From the outset, Momenta treated all music equally, devoting as much time, care and commitment to the student works as to the imposing musical monuments.

Word of Momenta’s passionate advocacy for emerging composers spread quickly. Composers started inviting Momenta for similar concerts and residencies at other academic institutions. Today, Momenta’s educational-performing circuit includes Binghamton, Brown, Columbia, Cornell, Harvard, Hawaii Pacific, Michigan State, New York, Temple, Tufts, Washington and Yeshiva Universities; Bard, Barnard, Bates, Haverford, Hunter, Ithaca, Lehman and Williams Colleges; and Boston, Cincinnati, Eastman and Mannes conservatories. Momenta has received two Koussevitzky Foundation commission grants, for Malaysian composer Kee Yong Chong in 2009 and for Bolivian composer Agustín Fernández in 2011; a Barlow Foundation commission for Claude Baker in 2016; a Jerome Foundation grant to commission Eric Nathan in 2013; and a Chamber Music America commission for Alvin Singleton, whose resulting work, “Hallelujah Anyhow” (2019), is featured prominently in Momenta’s repertoire. Deeply committed to the musical avant-garde of the developing world, Momenta has premiered and championed the works of Tony Prabowo (Indonesia), Cergio Prudencio (Bolivia) and Hana Ajiashvili (Georgia); has collaborated with numerous gamelan ensembles; and in 2018, was brought by the U.S. Department of State and U.S. Embassy La Paz to

Cochabamba, Bolivia for new-music concerts and a teaching-performing residency at the Instituto Laredo.

Momenta has appeared at such prestigious venues as the Library of Congress, National Gallery of Art, the Smithsonian's Freer Gallery, Rubin Museum, Miller Theatre at Columbia University, the Princeton Institute for Advanced Study, Chamber Music Cincinnati, and the Louisville and Philadelphia Chamber Music Societies. Festival credits include the renowned Cervantino Festival in Mexico; MATA; Music from Japan; Ostrava Days in the Czech Republic; Red Note New Music; the Smithsonian's "Performing Indonesia"; the Yellow Barn Artist Residency; and since 2015, the quartet's own annual member-curated Momenta Festival in New York City, featuring world premieres and samplings from Momenta's unique personal repertoire.

In the 2021-22 season, Momenta is in residence at Binghamton University, having just concluded as Artists-in-Residence at Bates College. Other highlights include masterclasses and concerts at Haverford and Williams Colleges; outreach as a resident ensemble with the Memphis-based IRIS Orchestra; appearances on the Princeton Symphony Chamber Series and the Music From Japan festival; and "Concourse Counterpoint," a community series at the South Bronx's historic Andrew Freedman Home, curated by Momenta violist Stephanie Griffin. The next in-person installment of the Momenta Festival resumes in NYC in June 2022. The quartet also continues its collaboration with Mexican actor/director Fernando Villa Proal on "The Lost String Quartet," a theatrical string quartet for children with an original score by Stephanie Griffin.

Momenta has recorded for the Albany, Bridge, Centaur, Furious Artisans, Innova, Navona, New Focus, New World and PARMA labels; and has been broadcast on WQXR, Q2 Music, Austria's Oe1 and Vermont Public Radio. The quartet's debut album, "Similar Motion," featuring visionary works by Debussy, Philip Glass and Arthur Kampela, is available on Albany Records. Upcoming recording adventures include a project to perform and record all thirteen string quartets by Mexican microtonal maverick Julián Carrillo (1875-1965) and an American album featuring diverse works by Elizabeth Brown, Jason Hwang, Shawn Jaeger, Yusef Lateef, and Roberto Sierra. In 2022, New World Records will release Momenta's album "Hallelujah Anyhow," the premiere recording of Alvin Singleton's complete string quartets.

Member Biographies

Lauded by *The New York Times* as "brilliant" and by *Strad Magazine* for her "marvellous and lyrical playing," violinist **Emilie-Anne Gendron** enjoys an active career based in New York. A deeply committed chamber musician, Ms. Gendron has appeared with A Far Cry, Argento Ensemble, Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia, Ensemble Échappé, Gamut Bach Ensemble, Orpheus, Talea Ensemble, Sejong Soloists, and with the touring Musicians from Marlboro. Her extensively varied international appearances have included recitals in Sweden and at the

Louvre in Paris; festivals in Russia, Finland, and Jordan; and recently, major venues in China, South Korea, Argentina, Chile, and Colombia. She was trained at the Juilliard School where her teachers were Won Bin Yim, Dorothy DeLay, David Chan, and Hyo Kang. She holds a B.A. in Classics from Columbia, and a Master of Music degree and the coveted Artist Diploma from Juilliard.

Praised by *The New York Times* as “spellbinding,” violinist **Alex Shiozaki** is emerging as a strong advocate for the music of today. At home with music new and old, he has appeared as a soloist with orchestras including the Sendai Philharmonic, AXIOM Ensemble, and the Juilliard Orchestra. Other highlights include summer residencies at the Tanglewood Music Center as a New Fromm Player and a Japan tour with the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra. A member of the Momenta Quartet since 2016, he also regularly performs with Le Train Bleu, ACME, and Argento Ensemble. As part of the Shiozaki Duo with his wife and pianist Nana Shi, Alex has given recitals in New York, Boston, Washington D.C., and California. Holding a B.A. from Harvard College and an M.M. and D.M.A. from the Juilliard School, he counts among his teachers Ronald Copes and Joseph Lin of the Juilliard String Quartet, Lynn Chang, and Robin Sharp.

Stephanie Griffin is an innovative composer and violist with an eclectic musical vision. Born in Canada and based in New York City, her musical adventures have taken her to Indonesia, Singapore, Japan, Hong Kong, England, Ireland, Germany, Belgium, Mexico and Mongolia. Stephanie founded the Momenta Quartet in 2004; and is a member of the Argento Chamber Ensemble and Continuum; principal violist of the Princeton Symphony; and viola faculty at Brooklyn and Hunter Colleges. She received prestigious composition fellowships from the Jerome Foundation (2017) and the New York Foundation for the Arts (2016), and was a 2014 fellow at Music Omi. She holds a Doctor of Musical Arts degree from The Juilliard School where she studied with Samuel Rhodes, and has recorded for Tzadik, Innova, Naxos, Aeon, New World and Albany records.

Michael Haas is an accomplished and exciting young cellist, performing in New York City and around the world. In a recent performance his playing was noted as "refined and attractive" by *The New York Times*. Leading a varied musical life, Michael is equally at home performing chamber music and orchestral repertoire both old and new. He has recently appeared performing at Symphony Space, the New York Live Arts Theater, Le Poisson Rouge, as well as for Tertulia, a new series bringing chamber music to intimate settings around New York City. In addition to his work with Momenta, Michael has been a member of the New Haven Symphony since 2008. He regularly performs with the Princeton Symphony and in New York with the Orchestra of St. Luke's. Michael holds degrees from the Curtis Institute of Music and the Juilliard School studying with David Soyer, Peter Wiley, Joel Krosnick, and Darrett Adkins. Also an active teacher, he received Suzuki teaching certification from New York's School for Strings and has taught at the CUNY Bronx Community College.

For more information, including audio and video:

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