

VIOLIN VIOLA CELLO BASS FIDDLE
STRINGS

Spin of the Week

Ravel, String Quartet in F; Adès, Arcadiana, Op. 12; Mozart, Quartet in F Major, K. 590
(calderquartet.com) by the Calder Quartet

By Greg Cahill

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There is an almost delirious display of rich coloration and complex textures that unify these three works, spanning 220 years of string literature. Yet the Calder Quartet—Benjamin Jacobson and Andrew Bulbrook, violins; Jonathan Moerschel, viola; and Eric Byers, cello—bring a sense of purpose to this adventurous program that underscores the group’s stature as quartet-in-residence at the Colburn School in Los Angeles. The Ravel, with its formal structure and Debussy-like impressionism, sets the tone for the program, evoking a quaint charm that belies the composer’s unconventional use of modal scale patterns and other effects. The closing work, Mozart’s final quartet, is elegant, but bold, and delivering ample opportunity for the voicings to compete for favor. The middle work is most likely the least familiar and is itself a good reason for lovers of contemporary music to invest in this disc. The seven miniatures, composed by Thomas Adès (1971), are rife with harmonic and melodic surprises, including two movements inspired by Mozart’s “Kingdom of Night.” Adès works in a wide range of moods and string techniques that the Calders navigate with ease. On May 27th, the Calders performed at Disney Hall, right across the street from the Colburn School, where they presented Adès’ *Arcadiana* and worked with the composer himself.