



For Immediate Release

**YOUNG CHAMBER MUSICIANS & MUSIC AT KOHL MANSION ANNOUNCE
ORENDA QUARTET
WINS GOLD MEDAL, AUDIENCE, & BEST HAYDN PRIZE (JR DIVISION)
AT 2026 ST. PAUL STRING QUARTET COMPETITION;
FIRST GOLD MEDAL WIN IN ST. PAUL FOR YOUNG CHAMBER MUSICIANS**



Euisun Hong, violin, Kayla Lee, violin, Fiona Huang, cello, Hyesun Hong, viola with St. Paul String Quartet Competition Judges

www.youngchambermusicians.org and www.musicatkohl.org

Burlingame, Calif. (May 12, 2026) — **Young Chamber Musicians (YCM)** and **Music at Kohl Mansion (MAKM)** today announced the highly talented Bay Area **Orenda Quartet** has won the **2026 Junior Division Gold Medal**, in addition to the **Audience** and **Haydn** prizes at the recent 21st annual **St. Paul String Quartet Competition** held April 18, and hosted by the renowned **Artaria String Quartet**.

In a related announcement, the Orenda Quartet was named one of ten semifinalist ensembles selected to compete in the Junior Division of the prestigious 2026 **Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition**, that just occurred May 8–10.

For the St. Paul String Quartet Competition, six string quartet ensembles were chosen in March as finalists from 23 nationwide applications. On April 18, the finalist string quartets gathered at Sundin Music Hall, Hamline University in St. Paul, Minnesota for one marathon competition day. Three intensive rounds were held: a “Haydn round,” the “Composer Spotlight round” and a “Final round”

featuring the six finalist quartets performing in each round with prizes awarded in each category in addition to bronze, silver and gold medals.

The **Orenda Quartet** captured three of the four prizes. The \$400 Audience Prize attracting 3,110 votes and \$1,000 for the best performance of a work by Joseph Haydn, as well as \$1,600 for the highly coveted Junior Division Gold Medal.

At the St. Paul competition, the Orenda Quartet performed movements from Joseph Haydn, Quartet in F Major Op. 50, No. 5; Ludwig van Beethoven, Quartet in E minor Op. 59, No. 2; the Dmitri Shostakovich Quartet No. 3 in F Major Op. 73; and Caroline Shaw's Blueprint for String Quartet (2016).

The Quartet takes its name from the Iroquois word "orenda," a mystical force that empowers people to impact the world. For the quartet, it reflects how they create their music - to always tell a meaningful story. The quartet features siblings' violinist **Euisun Hong**, age 17 and violist **Hyesun Hong**, age 15 who live in Pleasanton; violinist **Kayla Lee**, 18 who lives in San Jose; and cellist **Fiona Huang**, 18 from Saratoga. The Quartet received coaching from YCM Founder & Director violist **Susan Bates** and Alexander String Quartet violinist **Zakarias Grafilo** with assistance from cellist **Christopher Costanza**, and violinists **Owen Dalby** and **Jory Fankuchen**. The Orenda Quartet received additional coaching in a public masterclass with MAKM mainstage artists, the **Balourdet Quartet**, in January 2026.

YCM Artistic and Executive Director **Susan Bates**, said "On behalf of everyone at YCM, I congratulate the Orenda Quartet for their big win and stunning performances at the St Paul String Quartet Competition! The members of the Orenda Quartet are incredibly talented young musicians who dedicated themselves to chamber music and each other this season with one goal - to bring to life the music of Haydn, Beethoven, Shostakovich and Shaw in a way that tells a vivid musical story. I commend them for their hard work and successful performances at both the St. Paul and Fischhoff competitions."

ABOUT YOUNG CHAMBER MUSICIANS

Founded in 2008, Young Chamber Musicians offers advanced chamber music instruction and exciting performance opportunities to string players and pianists ages 14-19. The program immerses its students in the chamber music repertoire to develop technical skill, encourage musical imagination, and experience the art of working with others. Through its collaboration with Music at Kohl Mansion, Mercy High School and Goodwater Capital in Burlingame, the program fosters "learning through listening and performing" with a series of free public master classes, student performances and a unique weekly curriculum led by founder and director, violist Susan Bates, and a faculty of the Bay Area's best chamber music performing artists. www.youngchambermusicians.org

ABOUT MUSIC AT KOHL MANSION

Inspired by the belief that the arts strengthen communities, Music at Kohl Mansion presents an annual season of international chamber music in the historic Kohl Mansion and music education programs in schools, community centers and libraries on the San Francisco Peninsula. Outreach programs provide access to interactive musical experiences for diverse populations of all ages. Located on the Mercy High School campus in Burlingame, California, Kohl Mansion is a jewel-like setting for fine music. Listed in the National Register of Historic Places, this 1914 landmark features a gracious setting in the Elizabethan style Great Hall for intimate music on a grand scale. Hailed as an "acoustical gem" and one

of the Bay Area's "leading presenters of chamber music," Music at Kohl Mansion recently concluded its 43rd international chamber music season. www.musicatkohl.org

About St. Paul String Quartet Competition

Established in 2006 by Ray Shows founding member of the Artaria String Quartet as a platform for exceptional young chamber musicians, the St Paul String Quartet Competition has since achieved international recognition for its role in identifying and supporting the finest pre-college, collegiate and pre-professional string quartet players in the United States and beyond.

The competition is open to aspiring non-professional string quartets whose members are 30 years of age or younger. Ensembles compete in two distinct divisions: High School and Collegiate (pre-professional). Submitted recordings are individually evaluated and ranked by a distinguished panel of chamber music professionals from across the country. The highest-scoring quartets are invited to St. Paul, Minnesota, to perform in the Final Rounds, which are adjudicated by esteemed professional string quartets affiliated with the Schubert Club's Music in the Park Series and the MacPhail Center for Music. The 2026 finalist quartets in the junior division hailed from Silver Springs, MD, Philadelphia, PA, St. Paul, MN, St. Louis, MO and Chicago, IL. www.spsqc.org



Orenda Quartet performing at the St. Paul String Quartet Competition
(L to R): Kayla Lee, Euisun Hong, Fiona Huang, Hyesun Hong

COMING UP NEXT FOR YOUNG CHAMBER MUSICIANS

Two free concerts are scheduled featuring various Young Chamber Musicians in varied repertoire:
***Finale Concert I, Tuesday, May 26, 2026 at 7 p.m.**, Kohl Mansion, 2750 Adeline Drive, Burlingame
***Finale Concert II, Thursday, May 28, 2026 at 7 p.m.**, Community School of Music & Arts, 230 San Antonio Circle, Mountain View

The public is encouraged to register in advance: www.youngchambermusicians.org/events

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