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Distinguished cellist Katie Schlaikjer joins Penderecki String Quartet at Laurier

WATERLOO – Wilfrid Laurier University’s Faculty of Music welcomes Katie Schlaikjer as the new cellist for the Penderecki String Quartet. Schlaikjer will join fellow members Jeremy Bell, Jerzy Kaplanek, and Christine Vljak as the Quartet celebrates its 26th season with a series of performances and appearances in the Americas, Europe, and Asia.

“It is such an honour for me to be joining the Penderecki String Quartet,” said Schlaikjer. “I have been deeply impressed with the players’ integrity, skill and intelligence. Playing quartets has been a passion of mine since my teenage years and in many ways I believe my life has led me directly to this position.”

Schlaikjer has travelled the globe since 2009 as a member of the Avalon Quartet and Colorado Quartet. She has been recognized for her talents with top prizes from the Concert Artist Guild, the Melbourne International Chamber Music Competition and the Banff International String Quartet Competition.

“We are overjoyed to welcome Katie into our quartet,” said Kaplanek. “She has had amazing training from some of the best music schools in the world and comes to Laurier with expertise as a teacher and musician. We are looking forward to continuing to share our passion of quartet playing and teaching at Laurier and abroad with her.”

In addition to performing, Schlaikjer lends her talents to aspiring performers. She has taught chamber music and cello in a variety of venues, including the University of Delaware and the New England Conservatory’s Extension Division. She has also maintained a private teaching studio for seven years in Stony Brook, NY and participated in residencies at Ravinia’s Steans Institute and Aspen’s Center for Advanced Quartet Studies, studying with the Vermeer and Emerson String Quartets.

Schlaikjer received her doctoral and master’s degrees from Stony Brook University and her bachelor’s degree from the New England Conservatory.

“A string quartet is all about balance, give and take, action and reaction, on many different levels, not just musically, but personally too,” said Glen Carruthers, dean of the Faculty of Music. “I am confident that, in Katie Schlaikjer, we’ve found the ideal cellist for the PSQ. Her playing is brilliant, her chamber music skills are outstanding and she is a giving and generous person. She will be a tremendous asset, not just to the Quartet and to the Faculty of Music, but to Laurier and the wider community.”

The Penderecki String Quartet has been Laurier’s Quartet in Residence since 1991 and has premiered more than 100 new works. The Quartet will perform a tribute to composer R. Murray Schafer at a free public event March 28 at noon in the Maureen Forester Recital Hall on Laurier’s Waterloo campus. For additional tour details, visit <http://ps4.ca>