

Eric Wong

Described as possessing a “tone like toasted caramel” and “amazing” (*Musical Toronto*), Eric Wong is the new violist of the Blair String Quartet and Assistant Professor of Viola at the Vanderbilt University Blair School of Music. He has appeared on the world’s most iconic stages including Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Severance Music Center, Kings Place, Koerner Hall, Roy Thomson Hall, the Banff Centre, and as a featured guest artist at the Aspen Ideas Festival. Venue highlights from recent seasons have been the Seosomun Shrine History Museum, Musikhuset København, the Rozsa Centre, Koerner Recital Hall, and Merkin Hall.

Wong is a frequent guest clinician and lecturer in festivals and institutions of higher learning around the globe that have included Yale University, the Robert McDuffie Center for Strings, American University, Montclair State University, the Royal Academy of Music of Århus, Middlesex University, Tongyeong International Music Festival, and the University of Toronto. During the summer season, he is on faculty artist rosters for Encore Chamber Music Institute’s Summer Academy, Pacific Crest Music Festival, Harpa International Music Academy, and Music at Port Milford and is a frequent guest artist at the Geneva Music Festival, Caroga Lake Music Festival, and Summer Music Vancouver. In 2017 Wong was among the first artist-clinicians and educators selected by D’Addario’s for the company’s innovative “Strings 101” program.

A lifelong quartet devotee, Wong has been a member of the Afiara and Cavani String Quartets and a founding member of the Linden String Quartet, winner of the 2010 Concert Artists Guild Victor Elmaleh Competition, Grand Prize and Gold Medal at the Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition, Coleman-Barstow Prize at the Coleman National Chamber Ensemble Competition, ProQuartet Prize at the 9th Borciani International String Quartet Competition, and recipient of a 2011 A.N. and Pearl G. Barnett Fellowship.

As a member of the Afiara Quartet, ensemble-in-residence at the Royal Conservatory of Music (RCM) in Toronto, Wong had equal footing in both the worlds of Mozart and Beethoven and those of hip-hop and experimental multimedia. The Afiara album “Spin Cycle”, a collaboration with four Canadian composers and DJ Skratch Bastid, garnered a JUNO award nomination and was named one of *Forbes Magazine’s* ‘Best Classical Recordings of 2015’ and the CBC’s ‘Best Classical Albums of 2015’. *The Guardian* declared Afiara's contribution to the internationally-lauded “Nufonia Must

Fall Live”, a multimedia theater adaptation of DJ Kid Koala’s graphic novel *Nufonia Must Fall*, both “emotionally stirring” and “lighthearted and humorous”. Afiara was also the ensemble-in-residence of McMaster University’s Department of Neuroscience and studies by McMaster neuroscientists and the Quartet have been featured on the Discovery Channel and in other national publications. With Afiara, Wong was a member of the Health Arts Society of Ontario whose mission was to bring live performances to audiences in chronic care residencies with limited budgets to provide quality-of-life programs.

During the Cavani Quartet’s residency at the Cleveland Institute of Music (CIM) and alongside legendary Cleveland Quartet violinist Peter Salaff, Wong helped to curate one of the world’s leading chamber music programs of the era. The Cavani was also ensemble-in-residence at the Music Settlement and of Encore Chamber Music’s String Quartet Intensive with the mission of creating, strengthening, and uniting Cleveland communities with chamber music and teamwork as catalysts. In 2021, the Cavani completed a reimagined Beethoven Cycle called “Beyond Beethoven” that partnered Beethoven’s sixteen with nine other string quartet works, including two Cavani commissions, by living composers from underrepresented backgrounds. The project culminated in a performance at Severance Music Center bringing together more than 80 Cleveland public school music students to join their teachers and the Cavani in a large ensemble version of Beethoven’s String Quartet in C Major, Op. 59, No. 3 and the world premiere of a string quartet concerto by Josh Henderson.

Wong’s chamber music collaborators have included the Verona, Rolston, and Tokyo Quartets, Julie Albers, Jinjoo Cho, Clive Greensmith, Mathieu Herzog, Jaime Laredo, Geoff Nuttall, Itzhak Perlman, David Shifrin, Donald Weilerstein, and pianist and former US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, among others. He previously served as principal violist of CityMusic Cleveland, Assistant Concertmaster of the Akron Symphony Orchestra, and Associate Concertmaster of the Canton Symphony Orchestra. He received both Bachelor and Master of Music degrees from CIM, studying violin with Paul Kantor and viola with Kirsten Docter and Lynne Ramsey. Other transformative coaches and mentors have included Peter Salaff and the Cavani and Tokyo Quartets.

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