

46th SEASON



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE/ONLINE POSTING:**

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**SAN FRANCISCO PERFORMANCES PRESENTS**

**2025 Saturday Morning Series**

**Esmé Quartet**

**Dr Robert Greenberg**



**September 27**

**October 18**

**November 15**

**December 13**

**10am | Herbst Theatre**

**SAN FRANCISCO, CA** – September 4, 2025 – San Francisco Performances (SFP) presents the 2025-26 Saturday Morning performance and lecture series featuring the sensational **Esmé Quartet**, marking their debut in this series, and **Dr. Robert Greenberg**, who is celebrating his 25th anniversary as our Music Historian-in-Residence this season. Together, the Esmé and Greenberg bring chamber music alive in a unique concert/lecture format and will explore the works of Franz Schubert.

The series opens on September 27, and continues on October 18, November 15, and December 13.

**Tickets for each concert are \$80/\$70/\$60 and can be purchased at [sfperformances.org](https://sfperformances.org) or by calling 415.392.2545. Full series packages are available for \$300/\$260/\$220. Single tickets can also be purchased at the door as available, including 50% off student rush tickets and 20% off senior rush tickets.**

“We’re looking forward to the start of this extra special Saturday Morning series this season, as we welcome the Esmé Quartet as our new Ensemble-in-Residence, and celebrate the 25th anniversary of Bob Greenberg’s role as our Music Historian-in-Residence. It’s both a new era, and the continuation of what has become a beloved tradition, and we look forward to welcoming some new audience members, as well as celebrating with many loyal patrons and chamber music lovers.” — Melanie Smith, SFP President

## **ABOUT ESMÉ QUARTET**

Praised for their warm sound and commanding stage presence, the **Esmé Quartet** has quickly established itself as one of the most captivating chamber ensembles of its generation. Formed in 2016 in Cologne, Germany, by four Korean musicians and lifelong friends, the quartet is driven by a deep artistic connection and a shared passion for music and the arts.

The ensemble garnered international acclaim after winning First Prize and four special awards at the 2018 Wigmore Hall International String Quartet Competition in London. That same year, they were named HSBC Laureates of the Académie du Festival d’Aix. Additional honors include top prizes at the Trondheim International Chamber Music Competition, the Possehl Musikpreis Lübeck, and the inaugural Hans Gál Prize by the Academy of Sciences and Literature Mainz and Villa Musica Germany.

The Esmé Quartet has performed at major venues and festivals across Europe, North America, and Asia, including the Lucerne Festival, Wigmore Hall, Opéra de Lille, L’Auditori Barcelona, Hong Kong Arts Festival, and the Aix-en-Provence Festival. They were the first Artists-in-Residence at Lotte Concert Hall in Seoul for the 2020–2021 season and have appeared in residencies at the McGill International String Quartet Academy, Classic Esterházy, and the Heidelberg String Quartet Festival.

In recent seasons, the quartet made acclaimed debut tours of North America, Japan, and Australia. Highlights include performances of John Adams’ *Absolute Jest* with the Hong Kong Philharmonic, Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra (with John Adams conducting), and Gyeonggi Philharmonic. Their collaborations also include a multimedia project, *The book of water* by Michel van der Aa with British actor Samuel West at the Hong Kong Arts Festival and a North American tour with Van Cliburn Gold Medalist Yekwon Sunwoo.

The quartet’s discography on Alpha Classics includes *To Be Loved* (2020), named one of the best classical albums of the year by WQXR as well as five stars review by Diapason, *Yessori: Sound from the Past* (2023), and a 2024 Apple Music Classical Sessions EP of Mendelssohn’s Op. 13. A third album celebrating their 10th anniversary will be released in 2026.

Belgian-American violist Dimitri Murrath joined the ensemble in 2023, succeeding founding member Jiwon Kim.

From the 2025–26 season, the Esmé Quartet will be based in San Francisco as ensemble-in-residence

with San Francisco Performances. Concurrently, the quartet members will serve as visiting artists and faculty at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. The season also features the quartet's highly anticipated New York debut at The Frick Collection, continued tours across North America and Europe, and will culminate in a special 10th anniversary celebration concert at the Seoul Arts Center in June 2026.

The quartet has worked closely with esteemed mentors including Günter Pichler, Oliver Wille, Eberhard Feltz, Christoph Poppen, Jonathan Brown, and Heime Müller.

Their name, Esmé, derives from the Old French word for "beloved."

Wonhee Bae, violin

Yuna Ha, violin

Dimitri Murrath, viola

Yeeun Heo, cello

### **ABOUT DR. ROBERT GREENBERG**

**Dr. Robert Greenberg** has performed, taught, and lectured extensively across North America and Europe. He received a BA in music, magna cum laude, from Princeton University and received a Ph.D. in music composition, With Distinction, from the University of California, Berkeley.


Greenberg has composed over fifty works for a wide variety of instrumental and vocal ensembles. Recent performances of his works have taken place in New York, San Francisco, Chicago, Los Angeles, England, Ireland, Greece, Italy and The Netherlands, where his *Child's Play for String Quartet* was performed at the Concertgebouw of Amsterdam.

Greenberg has received numerous honors, including being designated an official "Steinway Artist," three Nicola de Lorenzo Composition Prizes and three Meet-The-Composer Grants. Notable commissions have been received from the Koussevitzky Foundation in the Library of Congress, the Alexander String Quartet, the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, San Francisco Performances, and the XTET ensemble.

Greenberg is currently music historian-in-residence with San Francisco Performances, where he has lectured and performed since 1994. He has served on the faculties of the University of California at Berkeley, California State University East Bay, and the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, where he chaired the Department of Music History and Literature from 1989–2001 and served as the Director of the Adult Extension Division from 1991–1996. Greenberg has lectured for some of the most prestigious musical and arts organizations in the United States, including the San Francisco Symphony, the Chautauqua Institute, the Ravinia Festival, Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, the Van Cliburn Foundation, the Nasher Sculpture Center, the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, the Hartford Symphony Orchestra, Villa Montalvo, Music @ Menlo, and the University of British Columbia. In addition, Greenberg is a sought after lecturer for businesses and business schools. For fifteen years he was the resident composer and music historian to National Public Radio's *Weekend All Things Considered* and *Weekend Edition, Sunday*, with Liane Hansen.

Greenberg has recorded a robust series of hundreds of lectures about classical music and composers for

the Teaching Company/Great Courses Program. The courses are available on both CD and DVD formats and in book form.

**Watch:**  Mendelssohn String Quartet No.6 Op.80 (Version 2023) Esmé Quartet

**The series will be as follows:**

**Saturday, September 27, 2025 | 10am**

**PROGRAM: SCHUBERT:** String Quartet No. 14 in D Minor, D. 531 "Death and the Maiden"

**Saturday, October 18, 2025 | 10am**

**PROGRAM: SCHUBERT:** Quartettsatz; String Quartet No. 13 in A Minor, D. 804 "Rosamunde"

**Saturday, November 15, 2025 | 10am**

**PROGRAM: SCHUBERT:** String Quartet No. 15 in G Major, D. 887

**Saturday, December 13, 2025 | 10am**

**PROGRAM: SCHUBERT:** String Quintet in C Major, D. 956 "Cello Quintet" with **Paul Wiancko, cello**

### **ABOUT SAN FRANCISCO PERFORMANCES**

San Francisco Performances has been a leader in the Bay Area cultural scene since our founding in 1979. With a strong curatorial vision and adventurous programming, we are the city's premier presenter of intimate concerts and solo performances.

We have introduced hundreds of established and emerging classical music, jazz, and dance artists to audiences, including Yo-Yo Ma, the Juilliard String Quartet, Philip Glass, Wendy Whelan, and the Paul Taylor Dance Company. We also champion a new generation, committed to building a contemporary and equitable repertoire. Performers like the Catalyst Quartet, violinist Jennifer Koh, tenor Lawrence Brownlee, and pianist/composer Vijay Iyer are moving their art into the present and future, making it accessible to younger audiences while converting many traditionalists to new possibilities. They represent the path forward.

Quality, intimacy, and connection are the hallmarks of San Francisco Performances. We nurture unique relationships with today's best artists to create an accessible, warm, and engaging arts experience.

**For high-resolution images, contact Terry Conway at [terry@sfperformances.org](mailto:terry@sfperformances.org)**

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