



Sirius Quartet *Paths Become Lines* Naxos (2016)

Mark Sullivan | August 23, 2016

Sirius String Quartet is a string quartet with a difference, even if they have dropped the word "String" from their name. The group motto is "blending the precision of classical music and the energy of 'comprovisation,'" which gives a good idea of what their music sounds like. Violinists Fung Chern Hwei and Gregor Huebner (there is no First and Second Violin division) and violist Ronald Lawrence play standing up, a striking departure from staid Classical music convention—cellist Jeremy Harman's instrument dictates that he must play seated.



This program was entirely composed by group members Harman, Huebner and Hwei. Its genre mix of odd meters, dissonance, romantic harmonies, jazz, Afro-Cuban rhythms and abstract free improvisation gives the players ample opportunity to display both precision and reckless abandon. It's not unusual for there to be extreme shifts in a single piece. "Spidey Falls!" contains highly rhythmic playing, abstract glissandi, tutti chords, and a hot fiddle solo in its six-minute playing time. A group with its own voice, somewhere between the jazz focus of the Turtle Island Quartet and the New Music focus of the Kronos Quartet.