

Balourdet String Quartet Group and Individual Bios:

Balourdet String Quartet:

Angela Bae, Violin
Justin DeFilippis, Violin
Benjamin Zannoni, Viola
Russell Houston, Cello

The Balourdet String Quartet, based in Boston, Massachusetts, is currently in residence at the New England Conservatory's Professional String Quartet Program. The quartet received the Grand Prize at the 2021 Concert Artists Guild Victor Elmaleh Competition as well as the top prize awarded in the 2021 Premio Paolo Borciani in Reggio Emilia, Italy. The group also received the Gold Medal in the 2020 Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition, the Gold Medal and Audience Award at the 2021 Chamber Music Yellow Springs Competition, and the Second Prize in the 2019 Carl Nielsen International Chamber Music Competition.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Balourdet appeared in numerous virtual performances for institutions such as the Schneider Concert Series, the New England Conservatory's First Mondays Series, Music For Food, and Massachusetts Peace Action. The group also curated and performed an educational program for over 500 children in schools across the Michiana region, as well as gave masterclasses through the Fischhoff Chamber Music Academy. They have also conducted workshops and masterclasses for NEC's Preparatory Division, Upper Valley Chamber Music Center, and string students in the Dallas area.

Highlights of the 2021-2022 season include Accademia Musicale Chigiana, La Jolla Summerfest, an in-person return to the Schneider Concert Series, and a recital in NEC's Jordan Hall.

The Balourdet has shared the stage with renowned artists including Cho-Liang Lin, as well as members of the Dover Quartet. It has studied and performed at festivals including the Amelia Island Chamber Music Festival, Aspen Music Festival, Robert Mann String Quartet Institute, and Accademia Musicale Chigiana. The Balourdet String Quartet works primarily with Paul Katz at the New England Conservatory, as well as members of the Cleveland and Borromeo Quartets. The quartet was formed in 2018 at Rice University in Houston, Texas under the tutelage of James Dunham, Norman Fischer, and Cho-Liang Lin.

The Balourdet String Quartet gets its name from Antoine Balourdet, chef extraordinaire at the Hotel St. Bernard and beloved member of the Taos School of Music community.

Individual Bios:

Angela Bae:

Born in Seoul, Korea, Angela Bae began her musical aspirations at the age of three. She studied with Phillip Levy in Los Angeles, California and graduated in 2020 with her Bachelor's degree with Paul Kantor at Rice University's Shepherd School of Music .

Angela has won awards in Korea and the United States including the The Korea Times Competition, Alexander and Buono International Competition, Music Center Spotlight, and Mika Hasler Competition. She has appeared as soloist in venues such as Weill Hall, Disney Hall, and Sydney Town Hall. When she was 16, she became the youngest Concertmaster of the American Youth Symphony in LA.

As a chamber musician, she performed and worked with artists including James Dunham, Norman Fischer, Kenneth Goldsmith, and Gil Shaham. In 2018, she attended the Taos School of Music, working with pianists Robert McDonald and Thomas Sauer, as well as the Borromeo, Miro, and Brentano Quartets. From the friendship and musical companionship built during Taos, she became a founding member of the Balourdet String Quartet.

She is current pursuing her Master's degree with Donald Weilerstein at the New England Conservatory of Music Professional String Quartet Program.

Justin DeFilippis

Justin DeFilippis is a founding violinist of the Balourdet String Quartet, currently in residence in the Professional String Quartet Program at the New England Conservatory. Previously, he completed his Master's Degree at Rice University's Shepherd School of Music under the tutelage of Cho-Liang Lin, and Bachelor's at New England Conservatory working with Donald Weilerstein. He currently studies with Nicholas Kitchen of the Borromeo String Quartet. He completed a minor in music theory along with his performance degree from NEC. In high school, he attended the Juilliard School Pre-College Division, studying with Elizabeth Chang and graduating with the Commencement Award. An avid chamber musician, he has coached and played with members of the Brentano, Pacifica, Miro, Shanghai, Cleveland, Dover, and Ying Quartets as well as the Peabody Trio, and has participated in numerous solo and chamber masterclasses with such artists as Leonidas Kavakos, Augustin Hadelich, Ida Kavafian, and members of the Emerson and Juilliard Quartets. He was a two-time participant of the Taos School of Music, and has also attended the New York String Orchestra Seminar, the Yellow Barn Young Artist Program, the Aspen Center for Advanced Quartet Studies, and received the Kaplan Fellowship at the Bowdoin International Music Festival. He also was a National Finalist of the MTNA Competition Junior Division. Recently, he has also performed alongside Cho-Liang Lin and Jon Kimura Parker, members of Silkroad, and served as concertmaster of the Shepherd School Symphony on a number of occasions.

Benjamin Zannoni

Benjamin Zannoni is the founding violist of the Balourdet String Quartet, currently in residence in the Professional String Quartet Program at the New England Conservatory, where he studies with Martha Katz. He has received degrees from the Manhattan School of Music's Pinchas Zukerman Performance Program and Orchestral Performance Program, as well as the Juilliard School and Rice University's Shepherd School of Music. In the past, Ben has studied under Karen Dreyfus, Pinchas Zukerman, Patinka Kopec, Heidi Castleman, Robert Vernon, and James Dunham and has played in masterclasses for Koichiro Harada, Kazuhide Isomura, Roberto Diaz, Lawrence Dutton, Richard O'Neil, Richie Hawley, and Jutta Puchhammer-Sédillot. He has attended festivals such as the Young Artists Program at the National Arts Center in Ottawa Canada, Music Academy of the West, Sejong International Music Festival, and the Heifetz International Music Institute.

Russell Houston

Russell Houston is the founding cellist of the Balourdet String Quartet, currently in residence at the Professional String Quartet Program at the New England Conservatory.

Russell is the recipient of top prizes at the Lynn Harrell Concerto Competition, Lennox International Young Artist Competition, Mondavi National Young Artists Competition, Sorantin International Competition, and the Samuel and Elinore Thaviu Competition. He has also performed as a soloist with the Dallas Symphony Orchestra and Plano Symphony Orchestra.

His festival appearances include the Aspen Music Festival, Kneisel Hall, New York String Orchestra, Sarasota Music Festival, Piatigorsky International Cello Festival, Pyongchang Music Festival, and Taos School of Music. Houston has had the privilege of sharing the stage with renowned artists such as Denis Bouriakov, Cho-Liang Lin, Brinton Smith, and members of the Cleveland and Dover Quartets.

Russell is currently pursuing a Graduate Diploma under the tutelage of Paul Katz at the New England Conservatory. Houston holds degrees from the Colburn Conservatory, Northwestern University, and Rice University. His primary teachers include Clive Greensmith, Hans Jensen, and Brinton Smith.