

Renowned chamber ensemble 'rolling along'

BY LINDA ANN CHAMIN
STAFF WRITER

There's a lot to be said for experience. After 39 years of performing around the world with the Guarneri String Quartet, Michael Tree sounds comfortable in his role as violinist. But don't be fooled. His calm demeanor hides a passion for the music. It's one of the reasons he continues to tour three to six months a year. The other is the bond he shares with violinists Arnold Steinhardt and John Dalley, and cellist Peter Wiley who joined the quartet after David Swayer retired.

When asked if he thought they would ever remain together with a quick "no, not a chance."

"The likelihood of a quartet staying together that long is practically unheard of," said Tree in a Feb. 7 interview from his New York City home. The quartet returned from a two-and-a-half week tour of Europe the night before. They're per-

CONCERT

What: Chamber Music Society of Detroit presents the Guarneri String Quartet

Where: 8 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 15

Where: Seligman Performing Arts Center, Detroit Country Day School, 22305 W. 13 Mile, at Lahser, Beverly Hills

Tickets: \$22-\$67, \$20 students, call (248) 855-6070.

forming Saturday, Feb. 15, at Seligman Performing Arts Center in Beverly Hills as part of the Chamber Music Society of Detroit series.

Three of the four us, except for David who was 11 years older, were all students at the Curtis Institute and that led to a close relationship musically and as friends, a close enough



The Guarneri String Quartet just returned from a European tour and will be performing Feb. 15 in Beverly Hills.

bond to last us a lifetime. "David retired because he got fed up with the travel. He celebrated his 80th birthday this month and remains active. It's mainly that travel is becoming

increasingly difficult," said Tree. A familiar face is sliding into Swayer's vacant chair. Wiley was a former student of Swayer's in the late 1960s when he attended the Curtis Institute at the age of 13.

Later as a member of the Beaux Arts Trio, Wiley performed more than 1,000 concerts.

"We're happily rolling along," said Tree. "We've known Peter for many years. We're currently

learning and relearning repertoire with Peter."

A few of the works are from their latest CD (Surrounded by Entertainment Records), which features quartets by Ravel, Debussy and Faure. They're also rehearsing for their annual six concert series at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, and the Feb. 15 program for the Chamber Music Society of Detroit - Haydn's String Quartet in C Major, Op. 54, No. 2, Bartok's Quartet No. 6, and Beethoven's String Quartet in C Major, Op. 59, No. 3.

"That's one of the benefits of being around this long. We only play works that are our favorites," said Tree who passes along all his experience to students at the Curtis Institute, The Juilliard School and Manhattan School of Music. In addition to teaching, he and the rest of the quartet give master classes to aspiring young music students at the University of Maryland eight times a year.

lchamin@se.home.com | (734) 953-2145

DWORKIN

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two years. From there he went on to earn music degrees at the University of Michigan. In every place Dworkin studied music, he was the only one, or among a handful of minorities.

"I wondered why was that the case and how could I impact that, not only for musicians, but those in the audience," said Dworkin. "Our goal is to build diversity. The two largest, most under-represented groups, are blacks and Latinos. Of the major orchestras only 1 1/2 percent are black, 1 1/2 percent Latino. We want to build diversity in classical music, increase awareness in young children. I tell them it's not a white European thing but has a rich history."

Sphinx is more than a competition. Programs, including visits to schools, are offered year-round.

"We've made strides. It was basically unheard of six years ago for a black or Latino string musician to solo with an orchestra. Now they've performed with at least 20 major orchestras," said Dworkin. "Ten years down the road, I hope to see diversity on stage, and in the audience, also music being written by black and Latino composers, and performed at concerts not just during Black History Month."



Jason Amos of Southfield competes in the Junior Division of the Sphinx Competition.

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