

An Interview With Quatuor Despax



Quatuor Despax

Our Education & Outreach Coordinator Chloe Weston had the privilege to chat with the quartet ahead of their performances in Parry Sound at this year's Festival.

Formed in 2003 by four brothers and sisters in Gatineau, Quatuor Despax regularly gives concerts in the Outaouais region and Montreal. They have performed at various festivals in Ontario and Quebec, including the Westben Festival, the Alexandria Festival, the Abitibi-Témiscamingue Classical Festival (Val d'Or), the Luminato Festival (Toronto), L'Art de la Music (Gatineau), SweetWater Music Festival (Owen Sound), and are returning to Parry Sound this summer to join us at Festival of the Sound.

Hello Cendrine, Jean, Maxime, and Valérie! We are very much looking forward to having you back in Parry Sound this summer! Your quartet is so unique and special - four siblings making music together! For those who are new to the Festival, please tell us - how did your quartet form? Were your parents a strong musical support at the beginning

Our parents are both musicians! Our mother is a pianist and my father was a guitarist, composer, and conductor. They are also music school teachers so they were adamant to teach us music. Cendrine and Valérie are the oldest so they both started on violin at 3 years old. Cendrine stayed on the violin and Valerie switched to cello. Jean and I (Maxime) also started on violin, around 4 years old, but I did not want to play music when I was young so I did everything in my power to not play (tantrums!). When I turned around 6 or 7 years old, I got interested in music and that is when our father introduced the viola to me. And in 2003, we formed the Quatuor Despax!

*The last time you were with us you visited local schools as part of our **Music Scores** program. A lot of your work involves sharing music with the next generation - through your own outreach concerts, as well as your Quatuor Despax Music Camp. Tell us a little about your Music Camp and how you approach instilling a love of music in young people.*

Cendrine is the head of the Quatuor Despax Camp. When we were little, we ourselves went to music camp, so we wanted to give a similar experience to our students. In our music camp, we try to give students the opportunity to touch many types of music and also art forms! We call that in French "Éveil musical" and we teach kids of all ages. We teach violin, viola, cello, piano, and some other instruments like recorder, xylophone, etc. We also try to have a balance. Yes, practising

is important, but physical health is also important. We do different activities like play soccer games or go to the pool. It brings a lot of fun to the kids!

That's a wonderful way to share your art with your community and to help introduce music to kids of all ages! One of your performances with us this summer will be an event at the Parry Sound Public Library where you will perform for children and their families and share about your own instruments. What music do you enjoy playing the most for young people?

Video game music is our go-to. Jean has a YouTube channel where he plays many covers of well known themes of video game soundtracks such as Mario Bros., Zelda, and more! We also enjoy playing music that kids will recognize. For example, most songs from Disney movies will be a hit. Our bestseller is "Let It Go" from Frozen (obviously...). At the same time, we want to incorporate classical music. This allows us to give them a taste of what professional classical musicians play. Hopefully, they get inspired to go listen to more on their own time!

We can't wait to have your quartet perform for our community and help them explore familiar as well as new music! In addition to participating in many music festivals across the country, you have curated your own festival: L'Art de la Musique in Gatineau, QC. This July will be your festival's seventh season! This is incredible. Tell us about your inspiration to begin your own festival.

The Festival l'Art de la Musique was created by Cendrine and Valérie. Jean and I often play in it and help in other areas of the festival, but it is our sisters' baby! Cendrine got the idea when we were touring in Italy. She saw so many small festivals that were curated by small organisations and she was inspired by it. She wanted to bring classical music to Gatineau. It was hard to start for all the reasons you can imagine: money, staff, artists, etc. However, the results are always rewarding and the response is positive so she will continue to run it as long as she can!

(You can learn more about L'Art de la Musique at
<https://www.festivalartdelamusique.com/>*)*

Our Festival is lucky to have you join us - what are you most looking forward to about performing at the Festival of the Sound this summer, and what music are you excited to share with us?

To be honest, we are excited for everything! Whether it is the concert at the library, or with Graham and James, or the Chopin concerto with Bruce and Joel, we are grateful to be able to perform with all of these wonderful musicians. Also, since the pandemic happened, we have learned that every opportunity to play music is a blessing and we cannot wait to share our music and love for the profession.

While you are here in Parry Sound, not busy performing, what do you like to do in your down time?

We are usually very busy, so we will probably just walk around and rediscover Parry Sound. We do love nature so we will try to explore and go by the water to relax. We are also very interested in food and drinks so we will find the best beer in town and let the world know!

Thank you Cendrine, Jean, Maxime and Valérie for chatting with us - we can't wait to have you here in July and enjoy your infectious energy and love of music!



[Click here to watch Quatuor Despax perform *Metamorphoses Nocturnes* by Hungarian composer György Ligeti.](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RASU9PeQSOI)

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[Click here to watch Quatuor Despax perform *Fantasy Movement 1* by Emmanuel Despax.](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W5_Jfej-3Q)

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Enjoy performances by Quatuor Despax at these events:

QUATUOR DESPAX | Tuesday, July 19 — 1:00pm

Parry Sound Public Library

With Instrument Petting Zoo

QUATUOR DESPAX AND FRIENDS | Tuesday, July 19 — 6:00 PM

Charles W. Stockey Centre Deck

Quatuor Despax; Graham Campbell, guitar; James Campbell, clarinet; David Jalbert, piano

CAMERON'S CHOICE | Wednesday, July 20 — 3:30 PM

Charles W. Stockey Centre Hall

Cameron Crozman, cello; David Jalbert, piano; Quatuor Despax

CANADIAN PIANOFEST III CHOPIN AND DVOŘÁK | Wednesday, July 20 — 7:30 PM

Charles W. Stockey Centre Hall

Bruce Xiaoyu Liu, Rolston String Quartet, Quatuor Despax, Joel Quarrington