



**Valhalla Quartet**

**Sarena Hsu, First Violin** - Currently studies under the tutelage of Ian Swensen, two-time winner of the prestigious International Naumberg Violin Competition, and professor at both the San Francisco Conservatory of Music and Sacramento State University. Hsu will receive her Bachelor of Music degree in violin performance this May and will be attending San Francisco Conservatory of Music for graduate school in the fall. She began her violin studies at the age of 6 with Robin Reid, continued with Julie Athayde through middle school, and studied with Wei He (a renowned San Francisco Conservatory teacher) throughout high school. Hsu has performed in the Yehudi Menuhin Seminar for Jeremy Menuhin, participated in prestigious music camps such as Tanglewood Institute Music Camp, and has performed on "From the Top," National Public Radio's (NPR) program, which is notorious for showcasing its young and talented performers. Throughout high school, she won numerous competitions and awards, soloing twice with the Diablo Valley College Philharmonic Orchestra. For three years, she was a member of the San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra, and toured with them on their 2008 Europe tour of Germany and Czech Republic, where she performed in the Berlin Philharmonic Hall, Munich Philharmonic Hall, and Smetana Hall in Prague. She is currently concertmaster of the CSUS Symphony Orchestra, and is an active member of the NorthState Symphony and Townsend Opera Players. She has also performed with the Juneau Symphony and VITA Academy Orchestra. For the past two years, Hsu has been the first violinist of Sacramento State University's student Valhalla quartet, which won the A.J. and Susana Watson Student Chamber Music Competition scholarship for 2011, and the Sacramento Saturday Club scholarship in 2011. Next spring, she will be performing the Sibelius Violin Concerto with the CSUS Symphony Orchestra as 2012's concerto competition winner. In addition to being a full-time student, for the past 5 years, she has been teaching privately and running her own violin studio in the Bay Area. This coming summer, she will be holding her first chamber music ensemble workshop for young children in the Bay Area and Roseville area.

**Jennifer Jim, Second Violin** - Is from Modesto, California. She received her undergraduate degree from University of California Los Angeles in Music Education and Ethnomusicology and graduated on the Dean's list. She attended UCLA as a Regents and Alumni scholar and is currently studying violin performance in her last year of

graduate studies at Sacramento State University. She has studied violin with Sato Duffy, Leo Reynolds, and is currently studying with Anna Presler. She is the recipient of various musical and academic achievements, including the Modesto Symphony Guild's Outstanding Musician of Stanislaus County Award, the Modesto City Schools Musician Apprentice of the Year, and has performed at the California Piano Convention for MTAC. Jennifer is passionate about teaching music through the medium of public school. After graduating from UCLA, she returned to Modesto and began teaching middle school band and orchestra in the Sylvan Union School District. From there, she became the K-12 orchestra director and strings teacher for Modesto City Schools. While with Modesto City Schools, she traveled with her orchestra to perform in Germany and Austria. She is currently the violin and general music instructor for VITA Academy in Esparto, CA and is an instructor and secretary for the Sacramento State University String Project. In addition, she is an ongoing teacher with the Modesto Suzuki Association, having completed her teacher training for volume one with Judy Bossuat. Jennifer has played with various performance ensembles, including the Townsend Opera Players and UCLA Symphony and Philharmonia. When not teaching, Jennifer spends her time with various performance groups. She is currently a member of the Sacramento State Orchestra, as well as numerous chamber groups. She has performed with the Valhalla Quartet for the past two years, which had the honor of receiving the A.J. and Susana Watson Student Chamber Music Competition scholarship for 2011. Jennifer currently resides in Sacramento CA.

**Vijay Chalasani, Violist** - Will complete his Bachelor of Music degree in Viola Performance at Sacramento State in Spring 2012. At Sacramento State, he studied viola with Anna Kruger; chamber music with Ian Swensen, Anna Kruger and Andrew Luchansky; and conducting with Leo Eylar. Chalasani began studying violin at the age of 10 and switched to the viola at 13. He has worked with various viola teachers including Anna Kruger, Carla Maria Rodrigues, Charles Noble, John Scanlon, Joyce Ramee, and Pauline Metzgar. Chalasani performs regularly with the Townsend Opera Players, the VITA Academy Orchestra, Bravo Bach Festival Orchestra, Auburn (CA) Symphony, and the Sacramento State Symphony Orchestra, where he has been Principal Viola for the past three years. He is a member of the Valhalla Quartet, a student string quartet at Sacramento State, which recently won first prize in the inaugural A.J. and Susana Watson Student Chamber Music Competition. He has participated in numerous festivals, including the International Baroque Institute at Longy, the Lake Tahoe Music Festival Academy Orchestra, Summer Music West at the San Francisco Conservatory, and CalCap Chamber Music Workshop. While participating in the college level curriculum at the Max Aronoff Viola Institute in June 2009 and 2010, Chalasani taught as a Seminar and Special Topics Instructor, directing classes on warm-up techniques and fiddle music for high school viola students. He has been a featured soloist in the Mozart Sinfonia Concertante, the Hoffmeister Viola Concerto and Brandenburg Concerto No. 6. He played in master classes for Met Opera Orchestra principal cellist Jerry Grossman, pianist and composer Eric Zivian, early music luminary Wieland Kuijken, and baroque violinist Manfredo Kraemer. As a member of the early music ensemble Camerata Capistrano, Chalasani has presented concerts on the Bravo Bach series, Chico (CA) Bach series, and Manteca Kindred series. Chalasani plans to continue his education through a Doctor of Music Arts degree, after which he hopes to teach at the university level while continuing to perform with orchestras, chamber ensembles, and early music ensembles.

**Alex Winter, Cellist** - Born in San Francisco, CA, and started cello when he was 7 years old. He began his studies with Julie Hochman in Davis, and is now a student of Andrew Luchansky, Professor of Cello at CSUS. He has received master classes from members of the Tokyo String Quartet, Alexander String Quartet, the Los Angeles Piano Quartet, as well as Gil Kalish and Jerry Grossman. Programs and festivals Alex has attended include Summer Music West, The Lake Tahoe Music Festival, and The Charles Castleman Quartet Program in Fredonia, NY. He has been the winner of the CSUS String Department Scholarship, the Marin Music Chest Award, the Sacramento Saturday Club Scholarship, and most recently the A.J. and Susana Watson Chamber Music award as a member of the Valhalla Quartet. Alex also plays in a piano trio, and is currently the principal cellist of the CSUS Orchestra.