

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Debut album release of *Amy Wurtz String Quartets* – multifaceted collaboration between composer, ensemble, and community**

CHICAGO (March 15, 2012) – [Chicago Q Ensemble](#), founded in 2009, is one of the few string quartets in the city that is specifically dedicated to collaboration with other art forms and championing works of living composers. Local pianist and composer [Amy Wurtz](#) approached the ensemble with her String Quartet No. 2 in early fall of 2011. By November they had embarked on a major recording project of Wurtz's Quartets No. 1 & 2. The debut album, *Amy Wurtz String Quartets*, will be officially released on April 15, 2012 at 3pm during their CD release party hosted at Jennifer Norback Fine Art, 217 W. Huron St. in downtown Chicago.

Recording projects are often understood as a major collaborative effort between composer and musician. This project, however, was collaborative in the fullest sense by engaging the community to help fund the various costs involved in producing an album. Using the increasingly popular fundraising platform, Kickstarter, Wurtz and the ensemble raised just over \$3,000 from individual donations, surpassing their goal. Take a closer look at their campaign [here](#).

The ensemble considers this recording to be part of the ongoing effort to bring awareness to the music of women composers. Chicago Q Ensemble violinist Ellen McSweeney shares, "We immediately felt that we wanted to help share Amy's music with the world. The two quartets were head and shoulders above other contemporary works that we'd read. They are full of challenging harmonies, textures, and techniques found in most 21<sup>st</sup> century music, but also have the qualities of great traditional string quartet works." McSweeney continues, "We saw this not only as an opportunity to premiere two outstanding pieces, but also to help change the under-representation of women in new music."

### **CD Release Party - *Amy Wurtz String Quartets***

**Sunday, April 15, 2012 at 3pm**

**[Jennifer Norback Fine Art](#) | 217 W. Huron St. Chicago, IL 60654**

**Reception with Live performances by Chicago Q Ensemble**

**Free Admission**

To **hear samples** and **learn more** about *Amy Wurtz String Quartets*, visit the Chicago Q [Press Page](#).  
You can also learn more about Amy by visiting her website [www.amywurtz.com](http://www.amywurtz.com).

For artist interviews or CD copy requests, contact Stephanie Photakis at (815) 342-7666 or email [stephanie@littlelightmarketing.com](mailto:stephanie@littlelightmarketing.com).

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#### CD information

*Amy Wurtz String Quartets*

Performed by Chicago Q Ensemble:

Kate Carter, *violin*

Ellen McSweeney, *violin*

Aimee Biasiello, *viola*

Sara Sitzer, *cello*

#### Track Listing

String Quartet No. I

1. I. *Dolcissimo – Moderato*
2. II. *Giocoso – Piu Lento, un poco doloroso- A Tempo Giocoso*
3. III. *Moderato – Allegro Moderato*

String Quartet No. II

4. *Tranquillo, un poco solenne – Piu Vivo – Poco Agitato – Andante con tenerezza – Molto Moderato – Animato – Agitato*

Total Playing Time: 58:53



#### Amy Wurtz

Amy Wurtz studied Piano and Creative Writing (B.M., B.A., summa cum laude) in her native California at the University of Redlands before completing Master's degrees in both Musical Composition and Piano Performance at the University of Minnesota. She studied piano with Alexander Braginsky and Louanne Long, and was a composition student of Judith Lang Zaimont and Alexandra Pierce. During her studies Wurtz was the recipient of various scholarships and stipendiums and held positions as a lecturer in Music Theory at the Minneapolis Community Technical College and as a Teaching Assistant for the University of Minnesota. Since completing her studies, Wurtz has worked as a freelance pianist, accompanist, composer, music copyist, and teacher, with students in piano, composition, counterpoint, and harmony, and also worked at the East Metro Music Academy in St. Paul, Minnesota, where she was appointed Chair of the Piano Department for almost the entire duration of her tenure. Among her accomplishments are performing the American premiere of Armenian composer Beatrice Ohanessian's "The Dawn," and winning first prize in the Vocal Composition category of the 2001 Beyer National Federation of Music Clubs Composition Competition for her work, "Mariposa en arrullo," a song cycle for Mezzo-Soprano and piano using the poetry of Pablo Neruda. In 2004, Wurtz traveled to Argentina in order to study piano with Master Teacher Inés Gómez-Carrillo. After one year of intensive study in Buenos Aires, Wurtz moved to Germany, to focus on presenting her work, "Message from the Soul," with text by Professor Sadegh Angha. Ms. Wurtz organized, rehearsed, and conducted performances of this 70-minute work for Chorus, Chamber Orchestra, Soloists and speaker in various cities throughout Europe. Wurtz moved to Chicago in 2008, where she composes, teaches and performs throughout the city and surrounding areas. She is a member of the Calumet Chamber Musicians, and also performs regularly with Access Contemporary Music and other chamber ensembles. She is Music Director at Hemenway United Methodist church, teaches at SPACE Conservatory, and is the Vice President of New Music Chicago.



### **Chicago Q Ensemble**

Praised by Chicago Classical Review for finding "both raw energy and serene quiet," Chicago Q Ensemble has been heard in concert throughout Chicago, including recitals at the Green Mill, Chopin Theater, Northwestern University, DePaul University, Ganz Hall, Uncommon Ground Devon, the Poetry Foundation, and the Music Institute of Chicago. In addition to performing great classical works, the quartet is committed to interdisciplinary collaboration and the work of living composers. They have premiered works by Brian Baxter, Eric Malmquist, Matthew Pakulski, Amy Wurtz, and

award-winning jazz arranger Joe Clark. In 2011, they teamed up with composer and video artist Patrick Liddell (aka Ontologist) to create a multimedia concert piece. In 2012, they will commission jazz composer, arranger and clarinetist James Falzone. They recently completed a residency at the Poetry Foundation which included six sold-out performances of Fjords, a major collaboration with shadow puppet company Manual Cinema, composer Kyle Vegter, and poet Zachary Schomburg. Their recording of Vegter's music from Fjords will be released by Black Ocean Press with Schomburg's book of poems, Fjords vol. 1. The quartet was the 2011 fellowship ensemble at the Worcester Chamber Music Society summer festival, where their activities included a recital, educational workshop, pre-concert lecture, and a performance of the Mendelssohn Octet with Boston-based string quartet QX. In the summer of 2012, they will make their debut at the Gesher Festival in St. Louis, performing works of Shostakovich.