



JACK Quartet Releases First-Ever Recording of Composer John Zorn's Complete String Quartets

Close Collaborator with the JACK Quartet Since 2007, Zorn's Last Two Quartets were Composed with JACK in Mind

2-CD Set Out Today on Tzadik Records
Press-Only EPK (PW- Zorn):

<https://bit.ly/ZornCompleteSQ>

Physical Copies Available Upon Request

Album Release Concert Feat. Ikue Mori

Friday, January 17, 2025 at 8:00pm

Roulette Intermedium | Brooklyn, NY

[Tickets](#)

“our leading new-music foursome” – *The New York Times*

“among the finest new-music groups on Earth” – *San Francisco Classical Voice*

www.jackquartet.com

New York, NY (January 17, 2025) – Praised for their “once in a lifetime” (*Musical America*) performances, the GRAMMY®-nominated [JACK Quartet](#) continues to celebrate its 20th anniversary season with the release of composer and frequent collaborator **John Zorn's** complete string quartets on a 2-CD set out today on **Tzadik Records**. Comprised of violinist **Christopher Otto**, violinist **Austin Wulliman**, violist **John Pickford Richards**, and cellist **Jay Campbell**, JACK's *The Complete String Quartets* features eight John Zorn quartets, with the last two quartets, *The Remedy of Fortune* (2015) and *The Unseen* (2017), composed with JACK in mind.

JACK celebrates the album's release with a concert at **Roulette Intermedium** in Brooklyn, NY featuring **Zorn's *Memento Mori*** and ***Necronomicon*** and featuring special guest **Ikue Mori** tonight, [Friday, January 17, 2025 at 8:00 pm](#).

JACK has a long and fruitful relationship with American composer, conductor, saxophonist, arranger, and producer **John Zorn** that goes back to 2007 and continues to this day. Passionate and dedicated supporters of his work, JACK has been involved in close to 100 performances of Zorn's compositions in major venues all over the world.

Composed from 1988 to 2017—a time span of about thirty years—each composition in *The Complete String Quartets* is a distinctive world of its own. The musical language across the eight pieces grows and expands as the years go by, and the techniques required to perform the music shift, morph, and deepen in a variety of ways. Of the album, John Zorn says, “The string quartet format is very dear to my heart—Bartók, Webern, and Carter being among my personal favorites. It has always been a dream to create a catalog of pieces for string quartet that could stand alongside these masterpieces—and on hearing these astounding recordings that the formidable JACK Quartet has made of my eight quartets it feels like I might have accomplished that goal. Challenging, idiosyncratic, but with a profound connection to tradition, this is a uniquely compelling body of work.”



In addition, the album's release will be celebrated at a performance of *John Zorn's Memento Mori and Necronomicon* on **Friday, January 17, 2025 at 8:00pm** at Roulette. Consisting of two of Zorn's greatest masterpieces, the concert includes *Memento Mori*, which features **Ikue Mori** as a guest soloist, improvising her signature live electronics alongside JACK Quartet's dynamic interpretation of this vexing and emotional work; and the challenging *Necronomicon*, which marks Zorn's triumphant return to the string quartet medium after a ten-year hiatus. The album will be available for purchase at the performance.

Cat O'Nine Tails (1988) is a freewheeling tribute to many of Zorn's musical heroes and sets the stage for the surprising poetics of Zorn's “fast-moving quicksilver block-form systems.”

The Dead Man (1990) was inspired by the short novel by Georges Bataille, and fuses hardcore punk energy with the precision of Webern's Bagatelle miniatures.

Inspired by **Alban Berg's Lyric Suite** and dedicated to **Ikue Mori**, **Memento Mori (1992)** is the most rigorous of the quartets, utilizing a strange hermetic language that unfolds slowly over the course of twenty-five minutes, filled with hidden messages, deep lyricism, and microtones.

Kol Nidre (1996), originally from the Masada songbook, is a kind of prayer and has been arranged for string quartet, string orchestra, and clarinet quartet.

Necronomicon (2003) was composed after the violin concerto *Contes de Feés* (1999) and *Goetia* (2002) for solo violin. Zorn says, “A subtle tribute to one of my very favorite string quartets—Bartók's 4th—it stretches classical string techniques to the breaking point.” In five movements, this piece draws upon hermeticism, alchemy, magick, mysticism, and more, portraying a sense of avant-garde musical theater.

The Alchemist (2011) is described by Zorn as “a miracle, almost an impossibility—a quartet written after *Necronomicon*,” and it explores some startling new places, including a few fleeting references to Beethoven's *Grosse Fugue*.

The Remedy of Fortune (2015) is a beautiful piece influenced by one of Zorn's first loves—medieval music. Zorn remarks that it “trades my trademark tritones for open fifths. The subtitle confirms that this is a romantic work, filled with intense emotion and heartbreak.”

The Unseen (2017) was inspired by the philosophies and spiritual art of Hilma af Klint, and premiered at the Guggenheim Museum during their huge retrospective of her work in 2018. “This could be the last string quartet I will ever compose,” Zorn adds.

The Complete String Quartets Tracklist:

Disc 1

1. John Zorn – Cat O'Nine Tails (1988) – [13:17]
2. John Zorn – The Dead Man (1990) – [11:22]
3. John Zorn – Memento Mori (1992) – [24:37]
4. John Zorn – Kol Nidre (1996) – [6:27]

Disc 2

5. John Zorn – Necronomicon (2003) – [20:05]
6. John Zorn – The Alchemist (2011) – [19:40]
7. John Zorn – The Remedy of Fortune (2015) – [14:53]
8. John Zorn – The Unseen (2017) – [13:22]

Total Time: 02:03:43

Christopher Otto, violin

Austin Wulliman, violin

John Pickford Richards, viola

Jay Campbell, cello

Produced by JACK Quartet and Ryan Streber

Executive Producer: John Zorn

Associate Producer: Kazunori Sugiyama

Recorded, edited, and mixed 2023 at Oktaven, Mount Vernon, NY by Ryan Streber

Mastering by Scott Hull

John Zorn obi/booklet portrait by Mathieu Amalric

JACK Quartet digi and booklet cover portraits by Shervin Lainez

Score photos and JACK Quartet portrait drawings by John Zorn

Design by Chippy (Heung-Heung Chin)

Special thanks to Alex Mony

Program Information:

Friday, January 17, 2025 at 8:00PM

JACK Quartet Plays John Zorn's Memento Mori and Necronomicon

Roulette Intermedium | Brooklyn, NY

Link: <https://roulette.org/event/jack-quartet-plays-john-zorn-with-mori/>

Tickets: \$30 advance, \$35 doors, \$25 Student/Senior (w/ ID, Senior 65+), doors open at 7pm

Program:

John Zorn – *MEMENTO MORI* (1992)

with Ikue Mori, electronics

John Zorn – *NECRONOMICON* (2003)

I Conjurations

II The Magus

III Thought-Forms

IV Incunabula

V Asmodeus

Christopher Otto, violin

Austin Wulliman, violin

John Pickford Richards, viola

Jay Campbell, cello

Ikue Mori, electronics

About JACK Quartet

Comprising violinists Christopher Otto and Austin Wulliman, violist John Pickford Richards, and cellist Jay Campbell, **JACK Quartet** is dedicated to the performance, commissioning, and appreciation of 20th and 21st-century string quartet music. JACK embraces close collaboration with the composers they perform, yielding a radical embodiment of the technical, musical, and emotional aspects of their work. Through its successful nonprofit model, the quartet has both self-commissioned and been commissioned to create new works with artists such as George Lewis, Catherine Lamb, John Zorn, Liza Lim, and John Luther Adams, with upcoming and recent premieres including works by Anthony Cheung, Ellen Fullman, Natacha Diels, and Tristan Perich. The world's top composers choose JACK because of its singular dedication to innovation and experimentation. Through intimate, long-standing relationships with many of today's most creative voices, the quartet has a prolific commissioning and recording catalog, has been nominated for two GRAMMY® Awards, and is the 2024 recipient of Chamber Music America's Michael Jaffee Visionary Award.

JACK has performed to critical acclaim at Carnegie Hall (USA), Lincoln Center (USA), Berlin Philharmonie (Germany), Wigmore Hall (United Kingdom), Muziekgebouw (Netherlands), The Louvre (France), Kölner Philharmonie (Germany), the Lucerne Festival (Switzerland), La Biennale di Venezia (Italy), Suntory Hall (Japan), Bali Arts Festival (Indonesia), Festival Internacional Cervantino (Mexico), and Teatro Colón (Argentina). Among their honors, they have earned an Avery Fisher Career Grant and Fromm Music Foundation Prize; been selected as *Musical America's* 2018 "Ensemble of the Year; and received Lincoln Center's Martin E. Segal Award, New Music USA's Trailblazer Award, and the CMA/ASCAP Award for Adventurous Programming.

According to *Musical America*, “many of their recordings are must-haves, for anyone interested in new music.” They have been nominated for multiple GRAMMY® Awards, the most recent being Best Chamber Music/Small Ensemble Performance for John Luther Adams’ *Waves and Particles*. Other albums include music by Helmut Lachenmann, Catherine Lamb, Du Yun, Nick Dunston, Zosha di Castri, Iannis Xenakis, and upcoming releases of the complete quartets of Elliott Carter and John Zorn.

JACK Quartet created JACK Studio in 2019 to support commissions, recordings, and workshops with emerging music artists who are interested in exploring and expanding the repertory for string quartet. By bringing together diverse groups of excellent and adventurous people to not only create new projects, but to contribute to the evolution of the JACK Studio project itself, JACK has created an artistic ecosystem that links the quartet with artists from around the world. As JACK marks its 20th Anniversary Season, JACK Studio will grow to include a full range of commissions including prominent composers who will also serve as mentors to JACK Studio’s earlier-career collaborators.

More than 40 composers have worked with JACK Quartet through JACK Studio thus far, hailing from Argentina, Belarus, Canada, Germany, Malaysia, Mexico, Myanmar, South Africa, Syria, and the United States. Their projects have been performed by JACK Quartet at venues including The 92nd Street Y, TIME:SPANS, Central Park, the Lucerne Festival, MoMA PS1, and Mannes School of Music, in addition to being recorded for professional releases. Commissioned artists have been paired with musical mentors including Marcos Balter, Clara Iannotta, George Lewis, Catherine Lamb, Georg Friedrich Haas, Donnacha Dennehy, Claire Chase, and Nadia Sirota.

JACK Quartet makes their home in New York City, where they are the Quartet in Residence at the Mannes School of Music at The New School and provides mentorship to Mannes’s Cuker and Stern Graduate String Quartet. They teach at summer music festivals such as the Lucerne Festival Academy, Banff Centre for the Arts, Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, and New Music on the Point. JACK Quartet has long-standing relationships with the University of Iowa String Quartet Residency Program, where they teach and collaborate with students each fall and spring. Learn more at www.jackquartet.com.

About John Zorn

John Zorn is an American avant-garde composer, arranger, record producer, saxophonist and multi-instrumentalist. Zorn’s recorded output is prolific with hundreds of album credits as a performer, composer, or producer. His work has touched on a wide range of musical genres, often within a single composition, but he is best-known for his avant-garde, jazz, improvised and contemporary classical music. Zorn has led the punk jazz band Naked City, the klezmer-influenced quartet Masada and composed the associated ‘Masada Songbooks’, written concert music for classical ensembles, and produced music for film and documentary. Zorn has stated that “I’ve got an incredibly short attention span. My music is jam-packed with information that is changing very fast... All the various styles are organically connected to one another. I’m an additive person – the entire storehouse of my knowledge informs everything I do. People are so obsessed with the surface that they can’t see the connections, but they are there.”

After releasing albums on several independent US and European labels, Zorn signed with Elektra Nonesuch and attracted wide acclaim in 1985 when he released “The Big Gundown” with his interpretations of music

composed by Ennio Morricone. This was followed by the album "Spillane" in 1987, and the first album by Naked City in 1989 which all attracted further worldwide attention. Zorn then recorded on the Japanese DIW label and curated the Avant subsidiary label before forming Tzadik in 1995, where he has been prolific, issuing several new recordings each year and releasing works by many other musicians.

Zorn established himself within the New York City downtown music movement in the early 1980s but has since composed and performed with a wide range of musicians working in diverse musical areas. By the early 1990s Zorn was working extensively in Japan, attracted by that culture's openness about borrowing and remixing ingredients from elsewhere, where he performed and recorded under the name Dekoboko Hajime, before returning to New York as a permanent base in the mid 1990's. Zorn has undertaken many tours of Europe, Asia, and the Middle East, often performing at festivals with varying ensembles to display his diverse output.

About Roulette Intermedium

Founded in 1978 by a group of artists in a Tribeca loft in NYC, Roulette Intermedium has grown into an internationally recognized performing arts venue and presenter of experimental music, movement, and media featuring some of today's most prolific artists and their extraordinary emerging counterparts. Roulette presents 120+ annual performances alongside an additional 150 community/rental events, serving up to 70,000 annual visitors in a 12,000-square-foot venue in Downtown Brooklyn. In addition to its robust in-person and virtual live programming, Roulette presents a monthly podcast, weekly and monthly radio shows, and weekly TV segments on Manhattan and Brooklyn public access. Our mission is to support artists and present performances of innovative music, movement, and media art; build audiences interested in experiencing new work; and trace the evolution of experimental performance in a freely accessible public archive. More at roulette.org.

**Photo Credit of JACK Quartet: Shervin Lainez*