

[guardian.co.uk](http://guardian.co.uk)

## TOMSERVICE ONCLASSICAL BLOG



# Party hard with the Calder Quartet

Whether they're performing with Thomas Adès, Andrew WK or David Letterman's house band, the Calder string quartet are blazing exciting new ground

---

In Stockholm on Sunday, the [Calder Quartet](#) played the most insightful and moving performance of Thomas Adès's *Arcadiana* I've ever heard. It was the European debut of these young musicians (all under 30), who had come from Los Angeles to take part in a week-long festival of Adès's music put on by the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra at their [Konsertuset](#).

The Calder Quartet have a repertoire as steeped in the classics as any young quartet, with a cycle of Bartók's six quartets coming up, and a deep immersion in Mozart and Haydn. In Stockholm, they also played Adès's Piano Quintet, giving it a dynamism and clarity I haven't heard in other performances of this mercurial, magisterial piece. Adès himself was the virtuosic pianist. (He was no less virtuosic a conductor in the festival's thrilling opening programme of his Violin Concerto, Tevot, and Britten's *Sinfonia da Requiem*. You can stream the next two orchestral concerts in the Adès festival, featuring Asyla and the multimedia piano concerto *In Seven Days*, live from Stockholm on [Swedish Radio](#)).

But the Calder Quartet boys have other musical lives. In LA and in New York, they play with rock bands and for TV shows (Letterman and Leno among them). And for the past couple of seasons, they've toured rock venues with party-metal and positive-thinking supremo [Andrew WK](#).

What's brilliant about the Calder Quartet is that they are not trying to pull another po-faced Kronos job on us string quartet lovers and create the crossover or world music of the future. Instead, they approach whatever they're doing with respect, whether they're playing a mosh pit in the midwest or the gilded glory of the Grönewald Hall in Sweden. See for yourself on YouTube: the Calder Quartet with Andrew WK is a gig I want to go to, for the Bach, the Glass, the versions of WK's party songs – and for the John Cage encore. Watching the reactions to WK and the Calder Quartet playing a scrupulously observed three-movement version of *4'33"* to [audiences of headbanging good-timers in Chicago and LA](#) is thrilling proof that the avant garde goes on creating meanings in ways no one could have imagined a generation ago.

Download the Calder Quartet's album of Adès, Ravel and Mozart [here](#) (and have a look at the

bespoke artwork by Dave Muller). And, if you're in New York later in November, you're in luck: the Calder give a tantalising, [thought-provoking programme](#) of Janáček and Fred Frith, in collaboration with Czech singer Iva Bittová.

[Next](#)

[Previous](#)

[Blog home](#)

### **[Ads by Google](#)**

#### **[BATONS for Conductors](#)**

batons & gifts for music directors Conductor Batons by Premier Batons

[www.premierbatons.com](http://www.premierbatons.com)

#### **[Convert Unsure Browsers](#)**

Start Talking To Your Customers Now Join Our Free Trial Today!

[www.peerant.com](http://www.peerant.com)

#### **[Doggie Dreams](#)**

Calm and Soothing Music for Dogs Famous Melodies on the Cello&Piano

[www.elegantcello.com](http://www.elegantcello.com)

## **Comments in chronological order (Total 0 comments)**

Comments are now closed for this entry.

 Staff

 Contributor

There are no comments yet for this article.

guardian.co.uk © Guardian News and Media Limited 2009