



String quartets are cool, and two recent Friends of Music concerts prove it

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Memo to the volunteers who run New Orleans Friends of Music: Please send big wet kisses to the Ariel String Quartet which played at the University of New Orleans on Nov. 8.

The Ariel Quartet made it clear that powdered wigs and lace cuffs are no longer part of the quartet repertoire — and their athletic performances should help the Friends sell tickets in early 2012. That's when the presenting group hosts a trio of astounding string quartets: Pacifica (Jan. 25), St. Lawrence (Feb. 15) and Ebene (March 14).

For [details](#) about the upcoming shows call 504.895.0690.

The Ariel Quartet made me jump up and down in my seat.

Ariel spanned three centuries with a program of works by Mozart, Janacek and Brahms, but never sounded like archivists. With each piece, they stretched the musical fabric, seeking opportunities to unleash dance rhythms, vaulting dynamic shift, and dramatic stops and starts. And they wrapped everything in a big burnished string sound of near-orchestral richness.