For Immediate Release

University of Minnesota School of Music Presents
Grammy-Winning Parker Quartet, 2/8

MINNEAPOLIS, MN (1/26/2012)—The University of Minnesota School of Music will present the Parker Quartet in concert on Wednesday, February 8, 2012 at 7:30 p.m. at Ted Mann Concert Hall. Hailed by The New York Times as “something extraordinary,” the Grammy Award-winning Parker Quartet visits as part of the School of Music's Creative Instructional Residency Initiative (CIRI) program. Program to include works by Mendelssohn, Kirchner, and Dvořák. This concert is free and open to the public.

The School of Music’s Ted Mann Concert Hall (2128 Fourth Street South, Minneapolis, MN 55455) is located on the U of M’s West Bank campus. Convenient parking is available at the University's 19th Avenue and 21st Avenue parking ramps; you must pay a fee to park in these ramps.

The Parker Quartet has rapidly distinguished itself as one of the preeminent ensembles of its generation. The quartet began its professional touring career in 2002 and garnered international acclaim in 2005, winning the Concert Artists Guild Competition as well as the Grand Prix and Mozart Prize at the Bordeaux International String Quartet Competition in France. In 2009, Chamber Music America awarded the quartet the prestigious biennial Cleveland Quartet Award for the 2009-2011 seasons.

Performance highlights of the quartet’s 2011-12 season include a European tour, with appearances at Wigmore Hall in London, Stadthalle Marburg, Kultur im Oberäu, and Concerts Classiques d’Épinal; appearances with pianist Shai Wosner at Amherst College and Carnegie Hall; and visits to many of the leading colleges and universities of the United States, including the Eastman School of Music, San Francisco State University, and UCLA. This season, the quartet is partnering with the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra to launch All Hearts Listen, a concert series in the Twin Cities of Minnesota. This series will feature the quartet in six performances throughout the Twin Cities.

Successful early concert touring in Europe helped the quartet forge a relationship with Zig-Zag Territoires, which released their debut commercial recording of Bartók’s String Quartets Nos. 2 and 5 in July 2007. The disc received high praise by numerous critics, including Gramophone: “The Parkers’ Bartók spins the illusion of spontaneous improvisation… they have absorbed the language; they have the confidence to play freely with the music and the instinct to bring it off.” The quartet’s second recording, of György Ligeti’s String Quartets Nos. 1 and 2 and Andante & Allegretto, was released on Naxos in December 2009 to critical acclaim. The Ligeti recording won the 2011 Grammy Award for Best Chamber Music Performance. The quartet’s next disc will be a selection of Haydn string quartets, produced by Grammy Award-winner Judith Sherman.

The Parker Quartet has been profiled in Time Out NY, The Boston Globe, Chamber Music Magazine, and on Musical America.com for their pioneering performances for audiences in non-traditional venues. In addition to concerts in bars and clubs nationwide, the ensemble was the first String Quartet-in-Residence at Barbès Bar and Performance Space in Brooklyn, New York, in 2007. The residency embraced a series of collaborative concerts with artists of various genres including jazz, folk, and world music. This season, the quartet also collaborated with slam poets through the organization With Our Words.

(continues)
Their collaboration included pianist Seth Knopp and baritone William Sharp in a program that interwove poetry and music to illuminate both mediums.

The Parker Quartet served as Quartet-in-Residence with the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra from 2008 through 2010 and were the first-ever Artists-in-Residence with Minnesota Public Radio for the 2009-2010 season. This year, they will be in residence at the University of Minnesota, working throughout the year with chamber music students. They will also be teaching instrumental lessons at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, MN.

The Parker Quartet’s members hold graduate degrees in performance and chamber music from the New England Conservatory of Music and were part of the New England Conservatory’s prestigious Professional String Quartet Training Program. Their mentors include the Cleveland Quartet, Kim Kashkashian, György Kurtág, and Rainer Schmidt.

Established in 1902, the University of Minnesota School of Music offers a dynamic, comprehensive program to more than 550 music students in undergraduate and graduate programs, led by a world-class faculty of more than 50 artists, scholars and teachers. The School of Music presents more than 400 free concerts per year. For a complete schedule of events, visit www.music.umn.edu or call (612) 626-1094 for a brochure.

###