

## Armida Quartet, String Quartet

### Biography

**Martin Funda**, violin

**Johanna Staemmler**, violin

**Teresa Schwamm-Biskamp**, viola

**Peter-Philipp Staemmler**, violoncello

*"(...) soulful perfectionists with a special ensemble chemistry (...) Just how well the Armida Quartet's precision work, trained in the classical repertoire, works, especially in emotionally charged confessional music, was exemplified in Leos Janáček's late autobiographical work 'Intimate Letters'. More Janáček intensity is hard to come by, even from the best Czech colleagues."* Rhein-Neckar-Zeitung, Klaus Roß, 30/04/2024

The Armida Quartet is one of the leading German string quartets of the younger generation. Founded in Berlin in 2006, the award-winning quartet has been playing in the same formation ever since and has developed a distinctive ensemble sound, a synergetic interaction on a common breath: clear and transparent, at the same time intense and powerfully flowing with extremely precise timing. The Armida Quartet's musical expertise, expressiveness and energy on stage are unique - they know how to ignite a spark in the audience.

Since their spectacular success at the 2012 ARD International Music Competition, where the quartet was awarded first prize, the audience prize and six other special prizes, the ensemble has embarked on a unique career. After concerts and radio recordings as BBC New Generation Artists (2014-16) and subsequently as ECHO Rising Stars (2016/17), the musicians have made a name for themselves in the most famous chamber music halls in Europe, Asia and the USA. In addition to appearances at major European festivals such as the Rheingau Music Festival, the Schwetzingen SWR Festival, the Beethovenfest Bonn and the Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Festival, the quartet has enjoyed great success at the Concertgebouw Amsterdam, the Berlin Philharmonie and London's Wigmore Hall, among others.

Highlights of the 2024/25 season include the prizewinners' concerts at the Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Festival, two concerts at the Teatro La Fenice in Venice, performances with Alexander Melnikov at the invitation of the Kronberg Academy Foundation, at the Schubertiade Hohenems, in Madrid at the invitation of the renowned Círculo de Bellas Artes, at the Prinzregententheater in Munich and at a whole series of other concerts with the renowned clarinetist Sabine Meyer.

Other artistic partners of the quartet include musicians such as Maximilian Hornung, Martin Helmchen, Julian Steckel, Benjamin Appl, Kit Armstrong, Nils Mönkemeyer and Kilian Herold. There is a special connection to the Serbian composer Marko Nikodijević, whose first and second string quartets were premiered by the Armida Quartet. They studied with former members of the Artemis Quartet and Rainer Schmidt (Hagen Quartet) and owe important impulses to Reinhard Goebel, Alfred Brendel, Marek Janowski and Tabea Zimmermann.

The Armida Quartet has placed a special focus on Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Since 2016, the musicians have been collaborating with G. Henle Verlag, for whom they acted as musical advisors for a new edition of all of Mozart's quartets. The complete recording for CAVi, which was released at the same time, received rave reviews, with the quartet setting new standards for Mozart's chamber music (NDR Kultur) and leading the way for Mozart interpretation in the 21st century (Klassik Heute). The fourth album of the complete recording of Mozart's string quartets, which has been available in five volumes since 2023, was awarded the Opus Klassik.

The ensemble gives masterclasses in Germany and abroad and is involved in social and educational projects. The issues of sustainability and climate protection are particularly important to the quartet: the Armida Quartet was the first chamber music ensemble to be appointed ambassador of the 'Orchestra of Change' association, a climate and nature conservation initiative by members of numerous professional orchestras.

In addition to the complete recording of Mozart's string quartets, the quartet's discography includes their debut CD with works by Bartók, Ligeti and Kurtág, released by CAVi in 2013, which immediately made it onto the best list of the German

Record Prize. A recording with works by Beethoven and Shostakovich was also released by CAVi in 2016, followed by Fuga Magna with works by Scarlatti, Bach, Goldberg, Mozart and Beethoven in 2017. The quartet has also contributed to various compilations of contemporary works by Samy Moussa, Ursula Mamlok, Birke J. Bertelsmeier and Milica Djordjević, among others.

With two recordings in 2023, both also released by CAVi, the quartet shows its late Romantic side: clarinet quintets by Max Reger and his pupil Johanna Senfter with Kilian Herold, frequent guest solo clarinetist with the Berliner Philharmoniker, as well as piano quintets by César Franck and Frank Martin with pianist Martin Klett. Both recordings have been acclaimed by the press, and the Reger-Senfter recording was longlisted by the German Record Critics.

The choice of the ensemble's name emphasises its passion for quartet playing: *Armida* refers to an opera by Joseph Haydn, the "father of the string quartet".

2024/25 season

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