Armida Quartet, String Quartet

Biography

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Armida Quartet is at the top of its game. The Strad, May 2022.

Winning the ARD International Competition in 2012 (also sweeping all other prizes including the audience prize) propelled the Armida Quartet on to the international concert platform. After concerts and radio recordings as BBC New Generation Artists (2014-16) and subsequently as ECHO Rising Stars (2016/17), the musicians have established themselves as regular guests in the best-known chamber music halls in Europe, Asia, and the USA. In addition to regular appearances at European festivals such as the Festspiele Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and the Rheingau Musik Festival, the quartet has enjoyed great success at the Concertgebouw Amsterdam, the Berlin Philharmonie, and London's Wigmore Hall, among others. Highlights of the 2023/24 season include concerts in the Laeisz Hall in Hamburg, the Auditorio Madrid, Wigmore Hall in London, the Schwetzingen SWR Festival, the Bach Festival Leipzig, and the Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Festival.

Acclaimed for their musical unity, which is evident in their fine-tuned sound and timing as well as their shared breaths, the musicians also emphasise their commitment to quartet playing with their choice of ensemble name: *Armida* refers to an opera by the composer Joseph Haydn, who is considered the "father of the string quartet". They studied with former members of the Artemis Quartet and with Rainer Schmidt (Hagen Quartet); they owe further important impulses to Reinhard Goebel, Alfred Brendel, Marek Janowski, and Tabea Zimmermann.

The Armida Quartet places a special focus on the works of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. The third album of the complete recordings of his string quartets for CAvi Records was described as ground-breaking for Mozart interpretation in the 21st century (Klassik Heute). Fono Forum recently praised the fine nuances in sound, dynamics and articulation, saying the recording (Vol IV) set new standards (March 2022). The ensemble pursues its passion for Mozart, among other things, in its own concert series "Mozart Exploded," in which each of the composer's string quartets are combined with masterpieces of contemporary music and occasionally presented in experimental concert formats in Berlin. The series has already been enthusiastically received in New York as well. In addition, the young musicians have cooperated with G. Henle Verlag, for whom they act as musical advisors for the new Urtext edition of the Mozart quartets, including their own fingerings and bowings made available for the associated Henle Library App. In doing so, the quartet is not only at the forefront of the latest technological developments, but also advocates for closer collaboration between performing artists and musicologists.

Whether in its curatorial functions or on stage, collaboration with other artists is a priority for the Armida Quartet. They have a special relationship with the Serbian composer Marko Nikodijević, whose first and second String Quartets they premiered. In the meantime, however, musicians such as Thomas Hampson, Martin Fröst, Tabea Zimmermann, Jörg Widmann, Julian Steckel, Sabine Meyer, and Daniel Müller-Schott have also become regular partners. In addition, the ensemble gives master classes in Germany as well as abroad and is committed to social and educational institutions, including initiatives such as Rhapsody in School and Yehudi Menuhin Live Music Now. Most recently, the Armida Quartet has become the first chamber music ensemble to be an ambassador for the Orchestras of Change Germany association, which was founded in 2020 as a climate and nature conservation initiative by members of numerous professional orchestras.

Along with the complete recordings of Mozart’s string quartets, the quartet's discography also includes their debut CD with works by Béla Bartók, György Ligeti, and György Kurtág (CAvi), released in 2013, which was included in the German Record Prize's Best List. A recording with works by Beethoven and Shostakovich was also released by CAvi in 2016, followed in 2017 by Fuga Magna with works by Scarlatti, Bach, Goldberg, Mozart, and Beethoven.Together with Martin Klett, the ensemble recently added another album on CAvi with piano quintets by César Franck and Frank Martin. Also, the

quartet has participated in various compilations of contemporary works by Samy Moussa, Ursula Mamlok, Birke J. Bertelsmeier, and Milica Djordjević, among others.

2023/24 season

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