

## Gringolts Quartet, String Quartet

### Biography

**Ilya Gringolts, violin**  
**Anahit Kurtikyan, violin**  
**Silvia Simionescu, viola**  
**Claudius Herrmann, violoncello**

*A deep-dug, chunky tone, often quite rugged, is offset by moments of intense sweetness, as well as great delicacy and refinement. Besides being beautifully balanced and transparent, some of the softest passages acquire an 'innigkeit' (introspection) that can make you hold your breath.* BBC Music Magazine, Jessica Duchon, July 2024

A lively, intense dialogue between the eras - that is a fundamental concern of Ilya Gringolts, one of the outstanding violinists of his generation and primarius of the Gringolts Quartet. Founded in 2008, the string quartet stands for a luminous, unified and at the same time extremely differentiated ensemble sound: glowing, dense, warmly shining like bronze and gold, with maximum expressive effect, then again mercurially agile and dynamic, transparent and audible down to the smallest detail. The Gringolts Quartet's interpretations are characterised by great musical maturity and impressive technical superiority, which is never superficial but always at the service of the music.

The Zürich-based, internationally assembled ensemble - Ilya Gringolts has Russian roots; violinist Anahit Kurtikyan from Armenia; violist Silvia Simionescu from Romania; and cellist Claudius Herrmann from Germany - has established a distinguished reputation in the world's most prestigious concert venues and major international festivals. The four musicians had been bonded by friendship and numerous chamber-music encounters long before the quartet's formation, having played together in various configurations; Claudius Herrmann and Anahit Kurtikyan were at one time members of the renowned Amati Quartet.

In recent seasons, the quartet has performed at the Salzburg Festival, the Lucerne, Verbier, Gstaad and Edinburgh International Festival, at the Settimane Musicali Ascona, and regularly performs in prestigious concert halls such as Concertgebouw Amsterdam, Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, Wigmore Hall London, Philharmonie Luxembourg, Stockholm's Konserthuset, Festspielhaus Baden-Baden, L'Auditori Barcelona, Sociedad Filarmónica de Bilbao, Lugano Musica, and the Società dei Concerti in Milan.

Highlights of this season include a renewed invitation to the Philharmonie Luxembourg, a tour across Sweden, as well as performances once again at the international Mizmorim Chamber Music Festival in Basel. The quartet is also regularly heard in quintet and sextet formations - in this season for example with viola player Lilli Maijala and Brahms's Quintets at the Teatro Carlo Felice in Genoa, or by invitation of the Associazione Alessandro Scarlatti in Naples, where they will perform Mozart's Quintet on gut strings together with violist Lily Francis. For the renowned label Arcana/Outhere, there will be two new recordings specifically on gut strings in 2026: both all of Mozart's String Quintets and two Dvořák String Quartets.

From the very beginning, the Gringolts Quartet drew attention with exquisite CD recordings. The series of awards began in 2012 with the ECHO Klassik for the first recording of Walter Braunfels' quintets together with cellist David Geringas. The recording of Glazunov and Taneyev's quintets with cellist Christian Poltéra won the Diapason d'Or in 2016. The 2017 BIS release with the Finnish String Quartet Meta4, featuring octets by Mendelssohn and Enescu, was awarded the Quarterly Critics' Prize of German Record Critics. The Gringolts Quartet is also known for outstanding Schoenberg expertise: in 2017, BIS released a recording of his String Quartets Nos. 2 and 4 that the press hailed as a "reference recording." The second volume, released in 2022, featuring Schoenberg's Quartets Nos. 1 and 3, was awarded a Diapason d'Or. The 2024 BIS release of Brahms's Quintets with Lilli Maijala received enthusiastic reviews.

The quartet maintains musical partnerships with renowned artists such as Jörg Widmann, Andreas Ottensamer, Malin

Hatelius, James Boyd, Christian Poltéra, Katia Skanavi and Alexander Lonquich. The musical encounter with the American pianist Leon Fleisher (1928 - 2022) has enriched the quartet in a lasting way. Just as important to the four musicians as the classical repertoire is the performance of contemporary music, including works by Heinz Holliger, Valentyn Silvestrov, György Kurtág, Marc-André Dalbavie, Jörg Widmann and Lotta Wennäkoski.

All members of the Gringolts Quartet play on rare Italian instruments: Ilya Gringolts plays a Stradivarius 'ex-Prové', Cremona 1719, Cremona 1742-43 from private ownership, Anahit Kurtikyan a Camillo Camilli violin, Mantua 1733, Silvia Simionescu a Jacobus Januarius viola, Cremona 1660 and Claudius Herrmann a Maggini cello, Brescia 1600. By the way, on this instrument Prince Golizyn once played, a great admirer of Beethoven, as the first performer of the late string quartets he commissioned from the composer.

2025/26 season

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