

Biography

Quatuor Ysaÿe

Guillaume Sutre (violin)
Luc-Marie Aguera (violin)
Miguel da Silva (viola)
Yovan Markovitch (cello)



www.ysayerecords.com

Received wisdom attributes French musicians with a particular sensitivity for colour and timbre – a truism, maybe, but undeniably valid in the case of the Quatuor Ysaÿe. The ensemble, acknowledged as one of the world's supreme quartets, captivates audiences with its subtlety of nuance and its exceptional "joy in sound and patience with sound" as the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* observed after a concert in Munich's Herkulessaal in early 2009; it featured two of Beethoven's late quartets, opp 127 and 132, and the application of French finesse to these German masterpieces resulted in a profound and memorable musical experience.

The Quatuor Ysaÿe, named after the great Belgian violinist, composer and quartet player Eugène Ysaÿe, was founded in 1984 and rapidly achieved recognition as one of the leading ensembles of its generation. Its members, all from France, studied with Walter Levin of the LaSalle Quartet and with the Amadeus Quartet in Cologne, and in 1988 won first prize in the International String Quartet Competition in Evian, becoming the first French group to do so.

This marked the beginning of an international career which has taken the Quatuor Ysaÿe from London, Rome and Riga to Washington, Tel Aviv and Tokyo and to festivals such as Stavanger, Edinburgh and Bonn's Beethovenfest. The ensemble enjoys a particularly close association with the festival of L'Épau in Northern France.

Since 1993 the players' busy concert schedule has been complemented by teaching activity with string quartet classes at the Paris Conservatoire. They also teach regularly in Riga, São Paulo, Aldeburgh and at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles.

Ysaÿe Records is the quartet's own recording label, which since 2003 has produced releases of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schumann, Fauré, Franck, Magnard and others. Contemporary composers also play a central role in the quartet's performing activities, among them André Boucourechliev, Pascal Dusapin, Frank Krawczyk, Eric Tanguy and Thierry Escaich, who have all written new works at the quartet's instigation. In 2006 the Vienna Konzerthaus was the venue for the world premiere, in collaboration with Paul Meyer, of a new clarinet quintet by the Austrian composer Friedrich Cerha.

In the same year the Quatuor Ysaÿe engaged especially closely with the music of Haydn, performing his 69 quartets at the Besançon Festival. In 2008 they turned to the Beethoven cycle, performing it at the Musée d'Orsay in Paris.

The 2010/2011 season brings appearances at the Salzburg and Rheingau festivals, followed by concerts in Munich and Cologne, all opportunities for this inimitably French ensemble to provide further evidence of its special qualities. The Ysaÿe's plans include also a sextet project with two former members of the Alban Berg Quartett, Valentin Erben und Isabel Charisius.

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