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ARDITTI QUARTET

IRVINE ARDITTI (VIOLIN), ASHOT SARKISSJAN (VIOLIN),
RALF EHLERS (VIOLA), LUCAS FELS (CELLO)

Biography

The Arditti Quartet enjoys a global reputation for their spirited and technically refined interpretations of contemporary and earlier 20th century music. Several hundred string quartets and other chamber works have been written for the ensemble since its foundation by first violinist Irvine Arditti in 1974. These works have left a permanent mark on 20th century repertoire and have given the Arditti Quartet a firm place in music history. Such composers as Adès, Aperghis, Birtwistle, Cage, Carter, Dufourt, Dusapin, Fedele, Ferneyhough, Francesconi, Gubaidulina, Harvey, Hosokawa, Kagel, Kurtág, Lachenmann, Ligeti, Nancarrow, Rihm, Scelsi, Sciarrino and Stockhausen have entrusted the world premieres of their music to them, and the quartet's repertoire comprises all of the string quartets of many of the above composers and others.

The ensemble believes that close collaboration with composers is vital to the process of interpreting modern music and therefore attempts to collaborate with every composer whose works it plays. Teaching for many years at the Darmstadt Summer Courses for New Music, the players have given numerous master classes and workshops for young performers and composers all over the world.

The Arditti Quartet's extensive discography now features well over 180 CDs. 42 discs have so far been released as part of the ensemble's continuing series on the French label Naïve Montaigne alone. The series presents numerous contemporary composer features as well as the first digital recordings of the complete Second Viennese School's string quartet music. Renowned for recording many composers' works in their presence, the quartet recorded the complete quartets of Luciano Berio shortly before his death. Legendary episodes in recent music history have also been immortalised on CD such as the ensemble's recording of Stockhausen's spectacular *Helicopter Quartet*.

Over the past 40 years, the ensemble has received many prizes for its work. It has won the *Deutscher Schallplatten Preis* several times and the *Gramophone Award* for the best recording of contemporary music in 1999 (Elliott Carter), 2002 (Harrison Birtwistle) and 2018 (Pascal Dusapin). The prestigious Ernst von Siemens Music Prize was awarded to them in 1999 for lifetime achievement in music, setting the quartet on a par with other winners such as Berio, Britten, Carter, Ferneyhough, Lachenmann, Ligeti and Rihm.

This season, the Arditti Quartet appear as guests at many festivals, starting with the Enescu Festival in Bucharest, followed by the Beethovenfest Bonn and the Musikfestival Bern. For the first time, the quartet will be featured at the Festival Van Vlaanderen in Ghent with a concert and a master class for young composers. At the beginning of their tour of Japan in November 2019, they will premiere a new string quartet by Toshio Hosokawa in Takasaki; further stops on the tour will be Yokohama, Nagoya and Tokyo.

At the beginning of 2020, two world premieres are scheduled for the Paris String Quartet Biennale: 93-year-old Betsy Jolas and 35-year-old Christian Mason have dedicated new works to the quartet. In February, the ensemble will again perform as a soloist with orchestra and will give the first performance

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of a new work by Turgut Ercetin with the SWR Symphony Orchestra and Michael Wendeborg. Further concert invitations will bring the Arditti Quartet to Vienna (Wien Modern), Amsterdam (String Quartet Biennale) and London (Wigmore Hall).

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