

„A string quartet that can easily  
morph into a jazz band“

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## QUATUOR ÉBÈNE

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PIERRE COLOMBET (VIOLIN), GABRIEL LE MADADURE (VIOLIN),  
MARIE CHILEMME (VIOLA), RAPHAËL MERLIN (VIOLONCELLO)

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wrote the New York Times after a 2009 performance by the Quatuor Ébène. The ensemble opened with Debussy and Haydn and then improvised on a film music theme—with exactly the same enthusiasm and passion.

What began in 1999 as a distraction in the university’s practice rooms for the four young French musicians has become a trademark of the Quatuor Ébène, and has generated lasting reverberations in the music scene. The four breathe new life into chamber music through their consistently direct, open-minded perspective on the works. Regardless of the genre, they approach the music with humility and respect. They change styles with gusto, and yet remain themselves: with all the passion that they experience for each piece, and which they bring to the stage and to their audiences directly and authentically.

There is no single word that describes their style: they’ve created their own. Their traditional repertoire does not suffer from their engagement with other genres; rather, their free association with diverse styles brings a productive excitement to their music. From the beginning, the complexity of their oeuvre has been greeted enthusiastically by audiences and critics.

After studies with the Quatuor Ysaÿe in Paris and with Gábor Takács, Eberhard Feltz and György Kurtág, the quartet had an unprecedented victory at the ARD Music Competition 2004. This marked the beginning of their rise, which has culminated in numerous prizes and awards including the 2007 Borletti-Buitoni Trust and – as first ensemble ever - the 2019 Frankfurt Music Prize.

With their charismatic playing, their fresh approach to tradition and their open engagement with new forms, the musicians have been successful in reaching a wide audience of young listeners; they communicate their knowledge in regular master classes at the Conservatoire Paris.

In 2005, the ensemble won the Belmont Prize of the Forberg-Schneider Foundation. Since then, the Foundation has worked closely with the musicians, who are performing on instruments chosen with and loaned by Gabriele Forberg-Schneider since 2009.

Pierre Colombet	Violin by Francesco Rugeri, Cremona (ca.1680) Bow by Charles Tourte (Paris, 19th century)
Gabriel Le Magadure	Violin with a Guarneri label (mid 18th century) Bow by Dominique Pecatte (ca.1845)
Marie Chilemme	Viola by Marcellus Hollmayr, Füssen (1625) prior possession of Mathieu Herzog
Raphaël Merlin	Violoncello by Andrea Guarneri, Cremona (1666/1680)

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The Quatuor Ébène's CDs, featuring recordings of music by Haydn, Bartók, Debussy, Fauré, Mozart and the Mendelssohn siblings have won numerous awards, including the Gramophone Award, the BBC Music Magazine Award and the Midern Classic Award. Their 2010 album "Fiction" with jazz arrangements, has only solidified their unique position in the chamber music scene, as well as their 2014 crossover CD "Brazil," a collaboration with Stacey Kent, and their recent recording with Michel Portal, „Eternal Stories“ (Mai 2017). In fall 2014, Erato released „A 90th Birthday Celebration“, a live recording (on CD and DVD) of Menahem Presslers birthday celebration concert with the Quatuor Ebène in Paris. In 2015/2016 the musicians focussed on the genre of the „Lied“. They collaborated with Philippe Jaroussky for the CD „Green (Mélodies françaises)“ which won the BBC Music Magazine Award 2016 and published a Schubert CD. On the one hand, it includes Lieder, recorded with Mathias Goerne (arranged for string quartett, baritone and bass by Raphaël Merlin) and on the other hand, the string quintett, recorded with Gautier Capuçon.

From April 2019 through January 2020 the Quatuor Ébène will go on a world tour with the theme "Beethoven Live Around the World" with concerts in North America, South America, Africa, Australia & New Zealand, Asia and Europe. The Quartet will guest in concert halls including the Perelman Theater Philhadelphia, Sala São Paulo, Melbourne Recital Centre, and the Pierre Boulez Saal in Berlin. Each of these seven tours will end with a live recording of the last concert. These recordings will be released in a box in 2020 by Erato.

The quartet will indeed present the complete Beethoven cycle in 2020 for their 20th anniversary as well as for 250th jubilee of the composer in concert halls including Carnegie Hall New York, the Alte Oper Frankfurt, the Wiener Konzerthaus, the Concertgebouw Brugge, the Philharmonie de Paris and at the Verbier Festival

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