



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

QUATUOR ÉBÈNE

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

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 Ysaye 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.

In 2005, the ensemble won the Belmont Prize of the Forberg-Schneider Foundation. Since then, the Foundation has worked closely with the musicians.

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.

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 „Lied“ genre. They collaborated with Philippe Jaroussky for the CD „ Green (Mélodies françaises)“ which won the BBC Music Magazine Award 2016 and published a

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Schubert CD. It includes both Lieder, recorded with Mathias Goerne (arranged for string quartett, baritone and bass by Raphël Merlin) as well as the string quintett, recorded with Gautier Capuçon.

From April 2019 to January 2020, Quatuor Ébène went on a world tour under the theme "Beethoven Live Around the World" with concerts in North America, South America, Africa, Australia & New Zealand, Asia, and Europe. Each of these 7 tours resulted in a live recording (Perelman Theater Philadelphia, Wiener Konzerthaus, Suntory Hall Tokyo, Sala São Paulo, Melbourne Recital Centre, Alliance Française Nairobi, Philharmonie de Paris). These Beethoven recordings have been released as a box set by Warner/Erato in Spring 2020.

On the occasion of its 20th anniversary and the 250th birthday of Ludwig van Beethoven, the quartet will perform the complete Beethoven cycle in 2020 at Carnegie Hall in New York, Alte Oper Frankfurt, Vienna Konzerthaus, Concertgebouw Brugge, Philharmonie de Paris, and the Verbier Festival.

Instruments & bows

Pierre Colombe is playing two violins: a 1717 Antonio Stradivari violin kindly loaned by a generous sponsor through the Beares International Violin Society and a 1736 Matteo Goffriller violin generously loaned by Garbiele Forberg-Schneider as well as a bow by Charles Tourte (Paris, 19th century) loaned by the Forberg-Schneider Foundation.

Gabriel Le Magadure is playing a 1727 Antonio Stradivari violin loaned through the Beares International Violin Society and a bow by Dominique Pecatte (ca.1845) loaned by the Forberg-Schneider Foundation.

Marie Chilemme is playing a viola by Marcellus Hollmayr, Füssen (1625) loaned by the Forberg-Schneider Foundation, prior possession of Mathieu Herzog.

Raphaël Merlin is playing a cello by Carlo Tononi, Venice (approx. 1720) loaned through the Beares International Violin Society.

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