

“Personal and profound” (BBC Music Magazine): “With no ifs or buts, the ‘Schumanns’ are among the best quartets in the world” (SZ) and certainly “one of the most exciting string quartets of the present day.” (Fono Forum)

SCHUMANN QUARTETT

ERIK SCHUMANN (VIOLINE), KEN SCHUMANN (VIOLINE),
VEIT HERTENSTEIN (VIOLA), MARK SCHUMANN (VIOLONCELLO)

The Schumann Quartet has reached a stage where anything is possible, because it has dispensed with certainties. This also has consequences for audiences, which from one concert to the next have to be prepared for all eventualities: “A work really develops only in a live performance,” the quartet says. “That is ‘the real thing’, because we ourselves never know what will happen. On the stage, all imitation disappears, and you automatically become honest with yourself. Then you can create a bond with the audience – communicate with it in music.” Their live performance will be expanded in the near future with partners such as Andreas Ottensamer, Kit Armstrong, Anna-Lucia Richter, Sabine Meyer, Sharon Kam and Alexey Stadler.

Highlights of the 2024/2025 season include: the Beethoven string quartet cycle, performed at the renowned Suntory Hall in Tokyo in June 2025; an extensive quartet tour of North America; and the resumption with Kit Armstrong of the “Expedition Mozart” project, which will make guest appearances at Flagey in Brussels, Alte Oper Frankfurt and Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, among others. The quartet will also perform again at Wigmore Hall London, Gewandhaus Leipzig and Concertgebouw Amsterdam, to name but a few.

Its album “Intermezzo” (2018 | Mendelssohn Bartholdy, Schumann und Reimann with Anna-Lucia Richter) has been hailed enthusiastically both at home and abroad and received the award “Opus Klassik” in the category quintet. In 2020 the quartet has expanded its discography with “Fragment” and his examination of one of the masters of the string quartet: Franz Schubert. On the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the radio, the quartet will dedicate itself to a very special project: An album of pieces around and from 1923. Together with the Bavarian Radio, they will record works by Alban Berg, Leoš Janáček, Ernst Krenek and Aaron Copland.

The three brothers Mark, Erik and Ken Schumann have been playing together since their earliest childhood – meanwhile violist Veit Hertenstein completes the quartet. The four musicians enjoy the way they communicate without words. Although the individual personalities clearly manifest themselves, a common space arises in every musical work in a process of spiritual metamorphosis. The quartet's openness and curiosity may be partly the result of the formative influence exerted on it by teachers such as Eberhard Feltz, the Alban Berg Quartet, or partners such as Menahem Pressler.

Awards, CD releases – it is always tempting to speculate on what factors have led to many people viewing the Schumann Quartet as one of the best in the world. But the four musicians themselves regard these stages more as encounters, as a confirmation of the path they have taken. “We really

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want to take things to extremes, to see how far the excitement and our spontaneity as a group take us," says Ken Schumann, the middle of the three Schumann brothers. They charmingly sidestep any attempt to categorise their sound, approach or style, and let the concerts speak for themselves.

And the critics approve: "Fire and energy. The Schumann Quartet plays staggeringly well [...] without doubt one of the very best formations among today's abundance of quartets, [...] with sparkling virtuosity and a willingness to astonish" (Harald Eggebrecht in Süddeutsche Zeitung).*

Erik Schumann plays on a violin by Joseph Guarneri filius Andrea from 1690, kindly made available to him by the Guadagnini Foundation Stuttgart.

Ken Schumann plays an old Italian violin from the mid-18th century, kindly made available to him privately.

Veit Hertenstein plays a viola made by the Amati brothers in 1616.

Mark Schumann plays a cello by Giovanni & Francesco Grancino from 1680, generously loaned to him by MERITO Sit Vienna.

**Quotes taken from an interview with journalists from the classical music magazine VAQuotes taken from an interview with journalists from the classical music magazine VAN (van-magazin.de)*

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Kurfürstendamm 211
DE-10719 Berlin

+49 (0)30 41 47 81 710
www.impresariat-simmenauer.de