

„The Leonkoro Quartet [...] has an enormous stage presence, glows for the music, takes full risks and amazes with its empathy for the respective sound of the pieces [...]“

LEONKORO QUARTETT

JONATHAN SCHWARZ (VIOLIN), AMELIE WALLNER (VIOLIN),
MAYU KONOE (VIOLA), LUKAS SCHWARZ (CELLO)

The String Quartet, founded in Berlin in 2019, can hardly be described more aptly than in the review published in the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung in January 2022.

The ensemble is framed by the brothers Jonathan and Lukas Schwarz on first violin and cello, while the middle voices are formed by Amelie Wallner on second violin and Mayu Konoë on viola. Leonkoro, in Esperanto: Lionheart, does not coincidentally allude to Astrid Lindgren's children's book about two brothers, the story juxtaposes the grave reality of death with a large and heartfelt yearning for comfort and solace - a sentiment that string quartet repertoire addresses in several instances.

In 2022, the Leonkoro Quartet garnered a series of prestigious accolades, solidifying their place among the most celebrated ensembles of their generation. In March, they were bestowed with the highly prestigious Jürgen Ponto Foundation Music Prize, a biennial award recognizing outstanding String Quartets. Subsequently, the quartet triumphed at the International String Quartet Competition held at London's Wigmore Hall, earning 1st prize and a collection of 9 special awards, including interpretations, residencies, and concert prizes.

Continuing their triumphant journey, the quartet seized the top honours - 1st prize - at the Concours International de Quatuor à Bordeaux in May. Their exceptional performances not only impressed the esteemed jury but also captivated the audience, resulting in the quartet receiving both the Audience Prize and the Young Audience Prize. Shortly thereafter, they were invited to join the BBC Radio 3 New Generation Artists program, where they will participate from 2022 to 2024.

November 2022 witnessed yet another remarkable achievement for the quartet when they were bestowed with the MERITO String Quartet Award. Unlike conventional competitions, this award recognizes selected quartets over a year, as they are observed by a panel of renowned String Quartet musicians. The Leonkoro Quartet's exceptional musicianship and talent were duly acknowledged, and they will be supported by the MERITO String Instrument Trust for four years including a composition commission.

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The quartet's international recognition commenced in the summer of 2021 when, as the youngest ensemble, they claimed 2nd prize (in the absence of a 1st prize) and the coveted Audience Prize at the renowned Premio Paolo Borciani International String Quartet Competition.

Alongside their academic pursuits in chamber music under the tutelage of Heime Müller (Artemis Quartet) at the Musikhochschule Lübeck, the quartet has been studying with Günter Pichler (Primarius Alban Berg Quartet) at the Chamber Music Institute of the Escuela Superior de Música Reina Sofía Madrid since 2020. Notable mentors of the ensemble include Eckart Runge and Gregor Sigl (Artemis Quartet), as well as pianist Alfred Brendel, with whom the Leonkoro Quartet maintains a regular collaboration.

In Autumn 2023, the quartet will release its highly anticipated debut album, featuring Ravel's String Quartet and Schumann's 3rd quartet, on the Mirare label.

In the 2023/2024 season, the Leonkoro Quartet will make debuts at the Berlin Philharmonie, the Kölner Philharmonie, the Flagey Brussels, the Concertgebouw Amsterdam and the Konzerthaus Wien, to name a few, and will take the musicians to renowned festivals such as the Rheingau Music Festival, the String Quartet Biennale Paris, the Heidelberg Fruehling. Furthermore, the quartet continues its residency in Leeds.

The Leonkoro Quartet represents Pirastro as Pirastro Artists and serves as Henle App Ambassadors.

Jonathan Schwarz's sound is brought to life by a cremonese violin by Girolamo Amati II (1696) generously loaned to him by Emmanuel Jaeger through ProQuartet.

Amelie Wallner plays a Vincenzo Postiglione violin, generously provided by a private donor.

Mayu Konoe plays privately owned viola.

Lukas Schwarz plays a cello by Carlo Tononi, Venice (approx. 1720) loaned by the Beares International Violin Society.

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