

“It is not only the Leonkoro Quartet's insight into the longings and distortions of human desire, but also their outstanding ability to shape these insights into sound that leaves us stunned.”

LEONKORO QUARTETT

JONATHAN SCHWARZ (VIOLIN), EMIRI KAKIUCHI (VIOLIN),
MAYU KONOE (VIOLA), LUKAS SCHWARZ (CELLO)

In its August 2024 review, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* offers perhaps the most fitting description of the playing of the quartet founded in Berlin in 2019.

The ensemble is framed by brothers Jonathan and Lukas Schwarz on first violin and cello, while Emiri Kakiuchi on second violin and Mayu Konoe on viola form the inner voices. Leonkoro— from Esperanto: "lionheart"—is no accidental reference to Astrid Lindgren's children's book about two brothers, a story that sets a heartfelt sense of comfort against the weighty reality of death—a theme also explored in many parts of the string quartet repertoire.

In the years 2022 -2025, the Leonkoro Quartet received numerous prestigious awards and prizes, cementing its position among the most sought-after ensembles of its generation. In March, it was honoured with the prestigious Jürgen Ponto Foundation Music Prize. Shortly after, the quartet went on to win 1st prize and nine special prizes at the International Competition at London's Wigmore Hall, including awards for interpretation, residencies and concerts. In May, they followed this by winning 1st prize at the Concours International de Quatuor à Bordeaux as well as the Audience Prize and the Young Talent Prize. Soon after, the quartet was selected for the prestigious BBC Radio 3 New Generation Artists programme (2022-2024) as well as MERITO String Quartet Award in November 2022.

In March 2024, the Leonkoro Quartet received the Young Talent Award of the Concertgebouw Amsterdam - marking the beginning of a promising collaboration. This was followed by the prestigious Borletti-Buitoni Trust Award and the Tiemann Ensemble Prize of the Festspiele Mecklenburg-Vorpommern at the beginning of the 2024/25 season. In July 2025, the quartet received the Lotto Sponsorship Prize of the Rheingau Music Festival.

From the 2025/26 season, the Leonkoro Quartet and the Simply Quartet will present their joint cycle called string. at the Wiener Konzerthaus - a significant artistic honour.

In addition to studying chamber music with Heime Müller (Artemis Quartet) at the Musikhochschule Lübeck, the quartet studied from 2020 to 2025 with Günter Pichler (Primarius Alban Berg Quartet) at the Chamber Music Institute of the Escuela Superior de Música Reina Sofía Madrid. The ensemble also received guidance from esteemed mentors including Eckart Runge and Gregor Sigl (Artemis Quartet), as well as pianist Alfred Brendel.

IMPRESARIAT SIMMENAUER

The quartet's debut album, featuring Maurice Ravel's String Quartet and Robert Schumann's String Quartet Op. 41 No. 3, was released by Mirare in autumn 2023. Just a few weeks later, it was awarded the Choc de Classica de l'année 2023.

Since spring 2024, the quartet has been signed with the renowned record label Alpha Classics. In January 2026, the album "Out of Vienna" featuring works by Berg, Schulhoff, and Webern was released there.

After a season of highly successful debuts at major international concert series and festivals, the ensemble continues its global rise this season, with appearances in the Black Diamond in Copenhagen, the House of Nobility in Helsinki, the Library of Congress in Washington D.C., Carnegie Hall in New York City, NY, Ukaria in Adelaide, Melbourne Recital Hall and Toppan Hall in Tokyo.

The Leonkoro Quartet is a Pirastro Artist and Henle App Ambassador.

Jonathan Schwarz plays a violin by Giovanni Battista Guadagnini (1759/60), generously provided by a charitable foundation.

Emiri Kakiuchi plays a violin by Santo Serafin (1725), generously provided by a private patron.

Mayu Konoe plays a viola by Lorenzo Storioni, generously provided by a private patron.

Lukas Schwarz plays a 1595 Antonio und Hieronymus Amati violoncello kindly on loan from MERITO String Instruments Trust GmbH.

2025/2026

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