

"The way scents seem to transition into sounds, echoes resonate from the depths of space, and the Four intertwining attentively, only to then grab hold vigorously and expand vivaciously - it was exhilarating."

Süddeutsche Zeitung, March 2023

QUATUOR ÉBÈNE

PIERRE COLOMBET (VIOLIN), GABRIEL LE MAGADURE (VIOLIN),
MARIE CHILEMME (VIOLA), YUYA OKAMOTO (VIOLONCELLO)

Attending a concert by the Quatuor Ébène is a musical and sensual happening. In the past two decades the quartet has set standards by making familiar repertoire accessible in new ways beyond perfection, and by constantly seeking the exchange with the audience. Yuya Okamoto, who joined the quartet's esteemed ranks in spring 2024, has added a new dimension.

After studies with the Quatuor Ysaÿe in Paris as well as with Gábor Takács, Eberhard Feltz and György Kurtág, the unprecedented and outstanding success at the 2004 ARD Music Competition followed, marking the beginning of the Quatuor Ébène's rise to fame, which resulted in numerous other prizes and awards: In 2005, for example, the quartet was awarded the Belmont Prize of the Forberg-Schneider Foundation; in 2007 it was prize winner of the Borletti-Buitoni Trust, and in 2019 - as the first ensemble ever – it was honored with the Frankfurt Music Prize.

In addition to the traditional repertoire, the quartet also dives into other styles ("A String Quartet that can easily morph into a jazz band" New York Times, 2009). What began in 1999 as a distraction in the university's practice rooms - improvising on jazz standards & pop songs - has become a trademark of Quatuor Ébène. To date, the quartet has released 3 albums in these genres, Fiction (2010), Brazil (2014) and Eternal Stories (2017). In June 2024, the quartet brought "Waves", a new project with electronic sound artist Xavier Tribolet, to the stage. The free approach to various styles creates a tension that is beneficial to every aspect of their artistic work. The complexity of their oeuvre has been greeted enthusiastically by audiences and critics.

Quatuor Ébène's albums, with recordings of Bartók, Beethoven, Debussy, Haydn, Fauré and the Mendelssohn siblings, have received numerous awards, including Gramophone, BBC Music Magazine, and the Midem Classic Award. In 2015 & 2016 the musicians dedicated themselves to the theme "Lied". They participated in the album "Green (Mélodies françaises)" by Philippe Jaroussky and released a Schubert album with Matthias Goerne (arrangements for String Quartet, baritone, and double bass, by Raphaël Merlin) and the Schubert String Quintet with Gautier Capuçon. Together with Antoine Tamestit, Quatuor Ébène recorded the Mozart String Quintets K. 515 and K. 516, which were released in the spring of 2023. The album has received accolades such as Choc Classica, Diapason d'Or, Gramophone of the month.

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First and foremost is the recording of Beethoven's 16 String Quartets, for which the quartet travelled across six continents between May 2019 and January 2020. With this complete recording, the four celebrated their 20th stage anniversary, which they additionally crowned with performances of the complete String Quartet cycle in major European venues such as the Philharmonie de Paris or the Alte Oper Frankfurt. Invitations from Carnegie Hall New York, the Verbier Festival and the Vienna Konzerthaus were also on the agenda.

In January 2021, the quartet was appointed by the University of Music and Performing Arts in Munich to establish a String Quartet class as part of the newly founded „Quatuor Ébène Academy“.

Since the 21/22 season, the quartet has performed a joint cycle at the Wiener Konzerthaus with the Belcea Quartet and was the ensemble in residence at the Philharmonie Luxembourg in the 23/24 season. As Quatuor en résidence à Radio France, the quartet will once again perform three times in Paris this season.

Further highlights of the season include appearances at the Salzburg Festival, the Berlin Philharmonie, the Liszt Academy in Budapest, Wigmore Hall London and the Muziekgebouw Amsterdam. In addition, the quartet will be touring North and South America and Asia together with their colleagues of the Belcea Quartet, with concerts at the Carnegie Hall in New York, the Teatro Cultura Artística in São Paulo and the Grand Hall of the Lee Shau Kee Lecture Center in Hong Kong, among others.

Instruments & bows

Pierre Colombet is playing two violins: a 1717 Antonio Stradivari violin, the « Piatti », kindly loaned by a generous sponsor through the Beare's International Violin Society, and a 1736 Matteo Goffriller violin generously loaned by Gabriele Forberg-Schneider, as well as a bow by Charles Tourte (Paris, 19th century) also loaned by Gabriele Forberg-Schneider.

Gabriel Le Magadure is playing two violins: a Bartolomeo Guiseppe Guarneri del Gesù (Cremona 1743/45) loaned by Serge and Florent Boyer luthiers, and a violin from around 1740 with a Guarneri label loaned by Gabriele Forberg-Schneider. He plays a bow by Dominique Pecatte (ca.1845) loaned by Gabriele Forberg-Schneider.

Marie Chilleme is playing two violas : a 1734 Stradivari, the « Gibson », generously loaned by the « Stradivari Foundation Habisreutinger », and a viola by Marcellus Hollmayr, Füssen (1625) loaned by Gabriele Forberg-Schneider.

Yuya Okamoto is playing a violoncello by Giovanni Grancino, Milan, from 1682.

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