

The Karol Szymanowski Quartet

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Ever since its founding in Warsaw in 1995, the Karol Szymanowski Quartet has been characterised by a constant search for new inspiration and an openness to the unpredictable; and great musicians have contributed their voices to the sound of the renowned ensemble. To this day, its members are united by an extraordinary common understanding of music, a shared basic inspiration grounded in a commitment to Polish music and the Polish composer, Karol Szymanowski. His music, with its immense freedom and infinite possibilities of expression, still exercises a strong power of identification on the ensemble even after 25 years.

The Karol Szymanowski Quartet began its chamber music education at the Hanover University of Music and Performing Arts with Hatto Beyerle. Eberhard Feltz, Walter Levin, Isaak Stern, Bernard Greenhouse, Alfred Brendel, Seiji Ozawa, Friedemann Weigle, as well as members of the Amadeus, Emerson, Juilliard and Guarneri Quartets were other important mentors. Numerous prizes and awards followed, for example at competitions in Weimar, Hannover, Melbourne, Osaka and Florence. Beginning in 2001, the quartet benefitted from a three year membership of the BBC's "New Generation Artists Scheme".

The Karol Szymanowski Quartet has received great recognition for its exploration of Alban Berg's music and for the first performance of works dedicated to the quartet. But it was above all as ambassadors of Szymanowski's string quartets and the music of Polish and Eastern European composers, including Witold Lutosławski, Sofia Gubaidulina, Mieczysław Weinberg and Krzysztof Penderecki - with whom the quartet had a close working relationship - that enabled it to enter the top rank of the international music scene over the next few years; a commitment that was honoured in 2005 with the renowned "Szymanowski Prize" and in 2007 with the Polish Medal of Honour.

The Karol Szymanowski Quartet is primarily concerned with the search for connection and exchange beyond epochs and national borders. On this understanding, the musicians devise exciting concert programmes with great enthusiasm and experience, which are highly praised by critics and audiences alike. This approach is also reflected in the Karol Szymanowski Quartet's exciting discography, which includes works by Haydn, Dvořák and Shostakovich, as well as numerous rarely recorded compositions by Bacewicz, Zelenski, Zarebski, Friedman, Weinberg and Rózycki. However, the ensemble's close connection to its audience is created above all in the numerous live concerts it performs around the globe. The quartet has been a guest at renowned concert halls such as New York's Carnegie Hall, London's Wigmore Hall, the Concertgebouw Amsterdam, the Vienna Musikverein, the Berlin Konzerthaus and the Shanghai Symphony Hall and has performed at the international festivals in the Rheingau, Schleswig-Holstein, Schubertiade, BBC Proms and Lockenhaus as well as concert series in Los Angeles, Paris, London, Warsaw, Moscow, Cheltenham, Basel and Perth.

In every concert, the quartet shows itself to be open to the unexpected and the unpredictable, to new impulses and thoughts. And so, a uniquely intimate atmosphere is always created that inspires audiences worldwide and has carried the Karol Szymanowski Quartet through every renewal and change for 25 years.