

“The Kuss Quartet has long ranked amongst the most interesting quartets on the international scene.”

*Thomas Schacher, Neue Zürcher Zeitung, May 2018*

The trademark of the Kuss Quartet is their concept-based programming. With common themes running throughout their programmes, they offer unique experiences to accustomed audiences and new listeners alike.

Leader Jana Kuss and Oliver Wille have been playing side by side for over 25 years. Together with colleagues William Coleman and Mikayel Hakhnazaryan, they seek to validate the eternal “muss es sein?” of string quartet playing with their own particular brand of curiosity.

One such project in this vein is the collaboration with Nicola Hümpel, director of “Nico & the Navigators”. Their staged concert of Beethoven’s string quartet Op.135 received its first performance at the Sommerliche Musiktage Hitzacker in July 2018. The concept will be developed in Beethoven’s anniversary year 2020 with the Grosse Fuge Op.133, and programmed as “Force and Freedom” in the Konzerthaus Dortmund, the Palais des Beaux Arts in Brussels and the Radialsystem V in Berlin.

The ensemble is currently working on a complete Beethoven quartet cycle, which they will perform in chronological order in the Suntory Hall in Japan in 2019.

Thanks to a grant from the state of Lower Saxony and Musik 21, the quartet was able to commission four new works for string quartet from Enno Poppe, Aribert Reimann, Manfred Trojahn and Bruno Mantovani.

“Freizeit” (Poppe) and “Die schönen Augen der Frühlingsnacht” (Reimann) received their premieres in 2016 and 2017. Trojahn’s 5th String Quartet and Mantovani’s “Beethoveniana” follow in 2018 and 2019. Each of the works has attracted prestigious concert promoters, including Amsterdam’s Muziekgebouw, Paris Biennale, London’s Wigmore Hall and Suntory Hall in Tokyo.

The Kuss Quartet was one of the first ensembles to bring classical music to the club scene. The “Kuss-Plus” series enjoys continuing success in RBB (Rundfunk Berlin-Brandenburg) Kulturradio’s “Klassik Lounge”.

The exceptional openness of the four musicians can be seen in their boundary-breaking concerts combining compositions for quartet with works of literature. This has led to numerous programmes with renowned actor Udo Samel and slam poet Bas Böttcher.

In 2002 the Kuss Quartet was awarded first prize by the German Music

Council and in the Borciani competition. The following year they won the Borletti-Buitoni Award and were selected for the European Concert Hall Organisation's "Rising Stars" programme.

Their performing career has taken them from New York's Carnegie Hall, via the Philharmonie in their home city of Berlin, to all the major international concert halls and festivals.

The Kuss Quartet inspires the next generation of chamber musicians in numerous international masterclasses.

Furthermore, both William Coleman (Salzburg) and Oliver Wille (Hannover and Birmingham) hold professorships at European conservatoires.

Following the success of the album "Bridges" (Sony Classical), the highly-acclaimed CD "Theme Russe" appeared on the English label Onyx Classics in January 2012, with works and transcriptions by composers including Tchaikovsky, Stravinsky and Schnittke. In November 2013 Onyx Classics released a third disk: Schubert's quintet with cellist Miklós Perényi - a musician with whom the quartet are particularly fond of working.

Their most recent album of Schoenberg's second quartet (with Mojca Erdmann), Brahms's third quartet and Brahms Lieder for soprano and string quartet arranged especially for the ensemble, was released in Autumn 2016 and received enthusiastically by the press.