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Karol Szymanowski Quartet



Agata Szymczewska - violin

Robert Kowalski - violin

Volodia Mykytka - viola

Gustaw Bafeltowski - cello

Founded in Warsaw in 1995, the Karol Szymanowski Quartet has, from the very beginning, been driven by a constant search for new inspiration. Each of its distinguished musicians brings an individual voice to the ensemble, creating a unique and instantly recognizable sound. Today, the quartet is united by a profound mutual understanding of music and a

deep connection to the works of Polish composers, especially their patron, Karol Szymanowski. His music, marked by freedom and expressive richness, continues to be a vital source of inspiration for the ensemble. For its members, who share Polish and Ukrainian roots, it is also a catalyst for exploring their own identity and for crossing boundaries – both artistic and cultural. This spirit has been the foundation of their remarkable international career.

The quartet's artistic journey began at the Hochschule für Musik in Hanover under the guidance of Hatto Beyerle. Their development was further shaped by renowned mentors such as Eberhard Feltz, Walter Levin, Bernard Greenhouse, Alfred Brendel, Seiji Ozawa, as well as members of legendary ensembles including the Amadeus, Emerson, Juilliard, and Guarneri Quartets. A defining moment in their early history was an intensive masterclass with Isaac Stern in New York, culminating in performances at Carnegie Hall. Soon after, the quartet received top prizes at prestigious competitions in Weimar, Hanover, Melbourne, Osaka, and Florence. From 2001 to 2004, they were part of the highly regarded BBC New Generation Artists Scheme.

The Karol Szymanowski Quartet has gained international acclaim for its interpretations of Alban Berg and for premiering numerous works written especially for the ensemble. Central to its mission, however, is championing the music of Karol Szymanowski and other Polish and Eastern European composers, including Witold Lutosławski, Sofia Gubaidulina, Mieczysław Weinberg, and Krzysztof Penderecki. In recognition of this work, the quartet received the Karol Szymanowski Foundation Award in 2005 and, two years later, the distinction "Meritorious for Polish Culture."

In 2008, the ensemble founded the Lviv Chamber Music Festival, a platform for cultural exchange and collaboration that has brought together world-class musicians in a vibrant artistic setting.

Always seeking new contexts and connections between eras, the quartet creates concert programs that surprise audiences with fresh perspectives and innovative juxtapositions. This approach is also reflected in their discography, which includes canonical works by Haydn, Dvořák, and Shostakovich, as well as rarely recorded masterpieces by Grażyna Bacewicz, Władysław Żeleński, Juliusz Zarębski, Ignacy Friedman, Mieczysław Weinberg, and Ludomir Różycki.

Yet the most profound bond between the quartet and its audience is forged in live performance. The ensemble has appeared in the world's most prestigious venues, including Carnegie Hall in New York, Wigmore Hall in London, the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, the Wiener Musikverein, Konzerthaus Berlin, and the Shanghai Symphony Hall, as well as at renowned festivals such as the Rheingau Musik Festival, Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festival, Schwetzingen Festspiele, and Lockenhaus Festival.

Each performance of the Karol Szymanowski Quartet is distinguished by its remarkable energy and deep communication with the audience, creating an intimate and moving atmosphere – the hallmark of the ensemble for nearly three decades.

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