

# KUSS QUARTETT

Jana Kuss (Violin)  
Oliver Wille (Violin)  
William Coleman (Viola)  
Mikayel Hakhnazaryan (Cello)

[www.kussquartet.com](http://www.kussquartet.com)

With its unique approach to music-making, the Kuss Quartet ranks amongst the world's best-renowned ensembles.

'Worlds away from shallow showmanship' its members constantly strive for interpretations of a 'revelatory nature', 'whose individuality (is derived) entirely from a deep and comprehensive exploration of the idiosyncrasies of each work.' (Frankfurter Rundschau)

Deep understanding of a work takes time to mature - that is self-evident for the Kuss Quartet; as is the courage, borne of personal discoveries, to develop their passion for experimentation. This is what the Kuss Quartet has stood for since the beginning of its professional career in 2002.

The two founder members, Jana Kuss and Oliver Wille (violin) have been travelling the same musical path for 25 years. Together with their colleagues William Coleman and Mikayel Hakhnazaryan, they are pioneers of a concept-based presentation of chamber music, which reveals new musical perspectives and attracts a wide-ranging and cultured audience.

'Kuss Plus' -the ensemble's classical lounge series - has become legendary in its success, making its mark on the Berlin music scene and getting close to its audience, not only in the literal sense. However, even whilst performing in cult clubs, classical music remains the quartet's top priority.

The exceptional openness of the players can be seen in their boundary-breaking concerts combining compositions for quartet with works of literature. Regular collaborations between the quartet and renowned actor Udo Samel have led to invitations for the five to perform in numerous festivals and concert halls in Germany and Austria, with programmes such as 'Ohne Grund nicht denken' (Brecht/ Berg/ Beethoven), 'Traumbilder' (Heine/ Mendelssohn/ Schumann) and 'Das Rauschen der Zeit' (Mandelstam/ Stravinsky/ Tchaikowsky).

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 international career has taken them from New York's Carnegie Hall to Amsterdam's Concertgebouw, from London's Wigmore Hall back to the Philharmonie in Berlin, their home city. Frequent engagements at major festivals include the Schubertiade Schwarzenberg, the Beethovenfest Bonn, Rheingau Musikfestival and the Edinburgh and Salzburg festivals, and they have toured the USA, Australia, South America and Japan.

The Kuss Quartet inspires the next generation of chamber musicians in numerous international masterclasses. Furthermore, William Coleman (in Salzburg) and Oliver Wille (in Hannover and Birmingham) hold professorships at European music colleges.

In terms of repertoire the Kuss Quartet casts its net wide, ranging from the music of the Renaissance to compositions by Helmut Lachenmann, Aribert Reimann and György Kurtág, with whom the group has close contact.

Thanks to a grant from the state of Lower Saxony, the quartet are able to commission new works over the coming four years. Enno Poppe's composition "Freizeit" was premiered in November 2016, another piece by Aribert Reimann will follow.

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

Their recent album with Schoenberg's second quartet (with Mojca Erdmann), Brahms's third quartet and Brahms Lieder for soprano and string quartet arranged especially for the ensemble got highly praised by international and national critics.

The quartet enjoys further collaborations with artists such as Paul Meyer, Pierre-Laurent Aimard, Mojca Erdmann and slam poet Bas Böttcher.

### **SEASON 2016/17**

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