

Barbican Quartet – String Quartet

www.barbicanquartet.com



BIOGRAPHY 2024/2025

Barbican Quartet

Amarins Wierdsma, Violin

Kate Maloney, Violin

Christoph Slenczka, Viola

Yoanna Prodanova, Cello

The Barbican Quartet love to take risks in their playing and are not afraid to push boundaries. [...] Founded in 2014, the quartet has a distinctive style: with their very own sound, their emotional interpretations, but also in their programming.

– Marcus Stäbler in “Album der Woche”

(“Album of the Week”) on NDR Kultur (09.06.2024)

The Barbican Quartet is an original voice on the international chamber music scene. Praised for their unique sound and character, as well as for intensely personal and intelligent performances, the Barbican Quartet celebrates the individual strengths of its members and at the same time forges these into a homogenous entity, exploring with fervour both the great string quartet repertoire as well as contemporary music.

In September 2022, the Barbican Quartet won first prize at the 71st ARD International String Quartet Competition. They were also awarded the special prize for the best interpretation of the commissioned work by Dobrinka Tabakova, the GEWA Prize, the Henle Urtext Prize and the Genuin classics CD production special prize. The resounding success at the ARD Competition followed the ensemble's third prize win at the Bordeaux International String Quartet Competition in May 2022. The Quartet also won first prize at the 2019 Joseph Joachim International Chamber Music Competition and received awards from the Hattori Foundation, the Royal Philharmonic Society and the Musicians' Company UK.

In June 2024 the Barbican Quartet released their debut CD, “Manifesto on Love”, on the Genuin label. BR Klassik lauded their playing in this recording as “tonally balanced and perfectly coordinated”, while Pizzicato Classical Music Journal awarded the CD its Supersonic Award and praised their “exhilarating, sometimes even a little boiling interpretations that cannot leave you cold.” The CD was also featured as album of the week on BR Klassik and NDR Kultur.

Other exciting highlights of the past season include their debuts at the Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, TivoliVredenburg, Davos Festival and Merano Music Weeks and return visits to the Montreal Chamber Music Festival and the Peasmarch Festival.

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The Barbican Quartet is a regular guest at international festivals such as Vibre! Quatuors à Bordeaux, Zeister Muziekdagen, the Montreal Chamber Music Festival, the Peasmarsh Festival, IMS Prussia Cove and Aldeburgh, where they perform together with musicians and ensembles such as Quatuor Ébène, James Ehnes, Nicolas Baldeyrou, Richard Lester, Anthony Marwood and Andrew Marriner. Their performances have been broadcast on BR Klassik Radio, NDR, NPO Radio 4 and BBC Radio 3.

This season will see the Barbican Quartet making its debut at the Alte Oper in Frankfurt, touring the USA and performing at the Lake District Music Festival and at festivals in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and Regensburg. Further concert performances will take place at the Concertgebouw Amsterdam, the Prinzregententheater in Munich, as well as in further cities across Germany, Italy and the UK.

The Quartet currently holds the Nina Drucker Quartet Fellowship at the Royal Academy of Music in London, where they coach chamber music.

The Barbican Quartet's founding members, Amarins, Christoph and Yoanna, met during their studies at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London, while Kate joined in 2022. In the course of their further studies, the ensemble also received mentoring from the Quatuor Ébène and Eberhard Feltz at the University of Music and Theatre Munich, as well as support and guidance from Günter Pichler at the Reina Sofia String Quartet Academy in Madrid, where they studied from 2017 to 2023. The Quartet attended further masterclasses and received coaching from the Belcea Quartet, Ferenc Rados, András Keller, Oliver Wille, David Watkin, Krzysztof Chorzelski, Alasdair Tait and David Waterman.

The name of the Quartet has a double significance: a “barbican” is a fortified outpost or gateway of a medieval city or castle, which the quartet members associate with their quest to discover, develop, but also to defend the tradition of string quartet playing. Furthermore, as the Quartet is closely connected to London, the name is a reminder that it was there at the Barbican Centre that they gave their inaugural concert in 2015. The Quartet now divides its time between London, Vienna and Munich.

Amarins is grateful to the Dutch Musicals Instrument Foundation for their support, Kate plays a violin by Francesco Ruggieri (Cremona, 1685) on loan from the Canadian Canimex Group, Christoph plays a 2010 Bernd Hiller viola and Yoanna's cello is a 1782 Giovanni Gagliano, also on loan from Canimex.

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