

Zehetmair Quartet | Biography

String Quartet



Thomas Zehetmair | Violin
Jakub Jakowicz | Violin
Ruth Killius | Viola
Daniel Haefliger | Violoncello

"The world grew dark—as Brahms' music does anyway. But through the Zehetmair Quartet's performance, it begins to glow."

Founded in 1994 by Austrian violinist and conductor Thomas Zehetmair, the Zehetmair Quartet now ranks among the world's finest string quartets. The quartet is renowned for its refined, intellectual interpretations characterized by a pristine, uncompromising approach. The four virtuosos perform at an exceptionally high technical level, instilling in their music an exceedingly rare combination of authenticity and remarkable expressiveness. In addition to a repertoire of widely known works, the quartet also captivates audiences with its profound understanding of contemporary music.

One of the unique artistic feats achieved by the quartet include, among other things, its cyclical performance of all string quartets by Robert Schumann in London's Wigmore Hall, the world premiere of String Quartet No. 2 by Heinz Holliger – a work commissioned by Köln Musik GmbH for the Zehetmair Quartet. The 2009 performance by the Zehetmair Quartet during festivities celebrating the 100th birthday of Elliott Carter in New York proved to be a phenomenal success.

The quartet regularly performs at Europe's most important musical centers such as Amsterdam, Barcelona, Luxembourg or Helsinki and at the most renowned festivals, among these, the Salzburg Festival, Hong Kong Arts Festival, Edinburgh International Festival or the Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festival.

For its recording of Bartók's 4th and Hartmann's 1st String Quartet as well as the 1st and 3rd String Quartet by Schumann with ECM, the Zehetmair Quartet garnered awards such as the *Diapason d'Or de l'Année*, the *Gramophone Award* (Record of the Year) and the *Edison* and *Klara Prize* for the year's best international production.

A recording featuring String Quartets No. 4 by Hindemith and No. 5 by Bartók was acclaimed as a reference recording in the media and was recognized with the *Diapason d'Or de l'Année*. Most recent is an album dedicated to Brahms which Gramophone Magazine called "truly revelatory". This album was recorded with the quartet's longtime and highly regarded cellist, Christian Elliott, who passed away in the spring of 2025.

In November 2014, the Zehetmair Quartett was awarded the *Paul Hindemith Prize* by the city of Hanau for its outstanding musical abilities.