

The Quartet

The Philharmonic String Quartet represents the young generation of musicians of the Berlin Philharmonic: cosmopolitan, versatile and artistically passionate. In the winter of 2018, three young Philharmonic members – Helene Madoka Berg (violin), Dorian Xhoxhi (violin) and Kyoungmin Park (viola) – founded a new ensemble out of a desire to make music together with enthusiasm. Together with Christoph Heesch (cello), who brings his experience as a soloist to this intimate setting of making music, they strive to inspire their listeners with fresh impulses and outstanding sound quality.

The musicians are aware that they are following in great footsteps: with the Philharmonic String Quartet they are continuing the venerable tradition of the Berlin Philharmonic's ensembles of making chamber music at the highest level. All four musicians have won various top-class competitions and have vast experience in various chamber music formations. The Philharmonic String Quartet offers them the opportunity to create their own musical expression. They feel less committed to a certain style than to their virtuosity, and they follow the motto of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart: "... because we love to talk to all kinds of masters – with the old and modern."

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Helena Madoka Berg (violin)

The violin plays an important role in her family: her parents are violinists, and after her big sister started getting lessons from them, Helena Madoka Berg did not want to be left behind. The desire to become a professional musician however came later. Born and raised in Berlin, she studied at the Julius Stern Institute of the Berlin University of the Arts (UdK) with Tomasz Tomaszewski (1997–2004), at the Juilliard School New York with Robert Mann, and at the Hanns Eisler University of Music with Antje Weithaas. She also attended master classes with Kurt Saßmannshaus, Thomas Brandis, Rainer Kussmaul and Christian Tetzlaff among others. Her training was supported by several grants, including the Deutsche Stiftung Musikleben and the Villa Musica Rheinland-Pfalz.

The winner of various competitions, such as the Jakob Stainer Violin Competition and the Ibolyka Gyarfas Violin Competition, she gained her first orchestral experience in the Jeunesses Musicales World Orchestra, the Berlin State Youth Orchestra, and the Gustav Mahler Youth Orchestra. From 2009–2010 she apprenticed in the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra Academy studying under Guy

Braunstein and Christian Stadelmann. Her first orchestral position led her to the Munich Philharmonic, and since 2012 she has been a member of the Bayreuth Festival Orchestra. In September 2013 Helena Madoka Berg returned to the Berlin Philharmonic as a member of the second violins, and in February 2016 joined the first violins. Aside from her love for making music, she keeps busy with her two small children.

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Dorian Xhoxhi (violin)

Violinist Dorian Xhoxhi joined the Berliner Philharmoniker as a member of the first violin section in 2010. Before that, he was a member of the Deutsches Symphonie Orchester Berlin and later became Principal Concertmaster of the Second Violins in the Gewandhausorchester Leipzig.

At the age of six, Dorian received his first violin lessons from his father, university professor Roland Xhoxhi, in Tirana. He later studied in Munich and Berlin with Prof. E. Sebestyen, Prof. S. Picard and Prof. A. Weithaas. Through achieving a fellowship at the Villa Musica Mainz and attending master classes from Midori, R. Fein, Z. Bron and E. Feltz, Dorian received further crucial impulses. In 2006 he was awarded first prize at both the International Queen Sophie Charlotte Competition in Mirow und the International Louise Henriette Competition in Oranienburg.

As a member of the Berliner Barock Solisten, Dorian frequently works with artist personalities such as Reinhard Goebel, Emmanuelle Haim and Vittorio Ghielmi. In this context, the performance with period instruments has developed into an integral part of Dorian's artistic work throughout several years.

A demanded soloist, chamber musician and teacher, Dorian is regularly active in Europe and Asia. In 2018, he became an associate professor for violin at the Rostock University of Music and Drama. In the same year, his enthusiasm for chamber music led Dorian to establish the Philharmonic String Quartet with his Philharmonic colleagues Helena Madoka Berg and Kyoungmin Park. Dorian plays a violin from Camillo Camilli, Mantova 1739.

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Kyoungmin Park (viola)

South Korean violist Kyoungmin Park was born in 1990. She received her first violin and piano lessons at the age of 6. When she was 11, she was won over by the dark patina of the viola and swapped instruments, and she began her viola studies in 2003 with Ulrich Schönauer and Wolfgang Klos at the Vienna University of Music and Performing Arts. Since 2008, she continued her training at the Hanns Eisler Musikhochschule in Berlin, first with Walter Kussner and later with Tabea Zimmermann. The winner of numerous international competitions, with prizes from competitions such as the Lionel Tertis International Viola Competition and the Berlin Max Rostal Viola Competition, she was recently awarded the 2nd prize at the 2013 ARD Munich International Music Competition.

Kyoungmin has performed with orchestras such as the Baden-Baden Philharmonic, Potsdamer Chamber Academy, the Korean Symphony Orchestra, and the Polish Chamber Philharmonic. She is intensely involved in chamber music performance. She has participated in renowned workshops for chamber music, including the International Music Academy Switzerland under the direction of Seiji Ozawa and the Zermatt Festival Academy.

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Christoph Heesch (cello)

Christoph Heesch is one of the most promising artists of today's music scene and impresses with his soloistic and chamber music skills — meanwhile he is celebrating great success both nationally and internationally. The main focus of his artistic work is the examination of music from a stylistically critical perspective, taking into account the technical skills of instrumental playing combined with an exciting interaction with the audience. Born in Berlin in 1995, the artist began playing the cello at the age of six. In the following years he studied at the Julius Stern Institute, worked for several years with Jens Peter Maintz and attended master classes with David Geringas, Wolfgang Boettcher and Lászlo Fenyő. Today Christoph Heesch studies at the University of the Arts Berlin with Wolfgang Emanuel Schmidt. As solo cellist of the Ensemble Esperanza and the Chamber Orchestra Eroica Berlin he combines knowledge of historically informed performance practice with modern instruments.

The artist pays particular attention to classical concerts, which he would like to open up to a broad audience. The innovative concerts and other music mediation formats of the TONALi project offer an ideal home for his musical and conceptual ideas. Christoph Heesch is a laureate of national and international competitions: He was awarded at the "Antonio Janigro" competition in Croatia and the international "Witold-Lutosławski" competition as well as at the XIIth Domenico Gabrielli Competition. Christoph Heesch has also been awarded the "Mieczysław Weinberg" prize and a special prize for the best music mediation at the TONALi15 music competition. At the German Music Competition 2016 in Bonn he received a scholarship after reaching the semifinal and he was semifinalist of the Queen Elisabeth Competition 2017. He holds a scholarship at the Musikakademie Liechtenstein and has been playing a cello by Domenicus Montagnana from the German Musical Instrument Fund „Deutsche Stiftung Musikleben“ since 2017.

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