

klenke quartett | streichquartett

Annegret Klenke/Violin
Beate Hartmann/Violin
Yvonne Uhlemann/Viola
Ruth Kaltenhäuser/Cello

“A string quartet can be such an exhilarating affair.” (Concerti)

Four women, one path: Since its founding in 1991 at the Music Academy in Weimar, the Klenke Quartet has maintained its original lineup.

Annegret Klenke (1st Violin), Beate Hartmann (2nd Violin), Yvonne Uhlemann (Viola), and Ruth Kaltenhäuser (Cello) have established themselves as one of Germany's prominent string quartets on the international stage, regarded as “one of the most distinguished European ensembles” (Gewandhaus Magazine). Depth, lyrical quality, and intimate musicianship, combined with a strong programmatic dramaturgy and a sound intensity that resonates even in the softest tones, characterize the Klenke Quartet.

Numerous CD recordings document the extensive oeuvre of the Klenke Quartet, earning accolades such as the Choc du Mois, the Midem Classical Award, and multiple Supersonic Awards. Among their impressive live recordings is the instrumental Passion story “The Seven Last Words of Our Savior on the Cross” by Joseph Haydn (Berlin Classics, 2008), the complete recording of Tchaikovsky's string quartets (2010), and a Schubert quartet recording (2015). The ensemble has also dedicated itself intensively to the works of Mozart, with their complete recording of the ten famous string quartets by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (Hänssler) released between 2004 and 2010.

In 2018, they produced a complete recording of Mozart's string quintets with Harald Schoneweg (Cherubini Quartet) for Accentus Music, which was featured as “Recording of the Week” in BBC Magazine and Radio. Editor Martin Hoffmeister remarked in MDR: “(...) for me, this recording is an absolute reference.”

In 2021, they released a recording of Mozart's horn and clarinet quintets in collaboration with Stephan Katte (natural horn) and Nicola Jürgensen (clarinet). The ensemble's most recent recording, “Traditional Tunes,” was released by Accentus Music in 2024. Pizzicato praised the quartet for their “totally electrifying performance” of the largely unknown quartet by Ulvi Cemal Erkin, which unites Western musical traditions with folkloric Turkish elements.

Collaboration with colleagues serves as a vital source of inspiration for the ensemble. The Klenke Quartet has performed with artists such as Martin Stadtfeld, Matthias Kirschner, and the Auryn and Vogler quartets. Together with actors Axel Milberg, Gudrun Landgrebe, and Anette Renneberg, the Klenke Quartet regularly presents refined and atmospheric reading concerts.

Their exquisite concert series in Weimar, titled „Auftakt“, is conceived as a homage to their founding city. In 2020/21, the concert series was supported by the Federal Ministry for Culture and Media under the title „Experiencing Beethoven“ (in collaboration with musicology, German studies, music education, and acting).

In recent years, the quartet has toured Iran, Japan, Austria, Italy, Slovenia, and the Netherlands, as well as participating in numerous German chamber music festivals. A planned tour to Israel in the fall of 2020 transformed into an exciting digital collaboration with Israeli pianist Ishay Shaer, supported by the Goethe Institute, resulting in a joint realization of Shaer's arrangement of Beethoven's Rondo for Piano and Orchestra WoO 6. In 2024, a concert tour took the Klenke Quartet to Algeria.

The ensemble has long been committed to contemporary music and is supported by the Ursula Mamlok Foundation. In 2021, the Klenke Quartet presented the commissioned work “Beethoven Reflections” by composer Helmut Schmidinger, and in 2023, they performed the German premiere of a string quartet by Detlev Glanert.

A particular concern for the four musicians is to inspire the very young generation for chamber music through children's and family programs. The Klenke Quartet has realized children's programs at venues such as the Tonhalle Düsseldorf, the Cologne Philharmonie, the Luxembourg Philharmonie, the Laeiszhalle in Hamburg, and the Vienna Concert Hall.

