

“Beauty of tone, vitality and textural clarity” - The Strad

“Stunningly accurate playing... an impressive debut” - BBC Music Magazine

Founded in Vienna in 2019 on the principles of “chaos” within art, science, and philosophy, the **Chaos String Quartet** has quickly made its mark on the international music stage. Much like the butterfly effect in physics, where small changes can lead to significant outcomes, the quartet’s performances showcase the profound impact of each musician’s contribution.

Selected as BBC Radio 3 New Generation Artists for 2023–2025, the ensemble has frequently recorded for BBC Radio 3 and performed at some of the UK’s most renowned festivals and venues, including Wigmore Hall.

They have received multiple awards at prestigious competitions, including the ARD Competition in Munich, the Bordeaux International String Quartet Competition, the String Quartet Competition in Bad Tölz, the Joseph Haydn Chamber Music Competition in Vienna, the Bartók World Competition in Budapest, and the Rimbotti Competition in Italy.

Their debut album, featuring works by Haydn, Hensel, and Ligeti (Solo Musica München, 2024), received critical acclaim and was nominated for the “Prize of the German Record Critics”. A second album, set for release in February 2026 on the same label, will explore the concept of chaos in the classical repertoire, original arrangements, and through improvisation.

Contemporary music holds a special place in the quartet’s repertoire. Several composers, including Riccardo Panfili and Alessio Elia, have dedicated works to them. In December 2025, they will premiere a new piece by Errollyn Wallen, co-commissioned by the BBC and the Henry Barber Trust. The group is also part of the ULYSSES Network, promoting contemporary music and emerging composers across Europe.

The Chaos String Quartet also develops interdisciplinary projects and new concert formats, including collaborations with the soundpainter and composer Samu Gryllus to create improvisational transitions for various programs.

After completing the ECMAster program under the mentorship of Prof. Johannes Meissl (Artis Quartet) in Vienna, the ensemble continued their postgraduate studies at the Scuola di Musica di Fiesole under the guidance of the Cuarteto Casals. They have also gained valuable insights from artists such as Eberhard Feltz, András Keller, Oliver Wille, Steven Isserlis, and Helmut Lachenmann.

Known for their powerful stage presence, thoughtful musical exploration, and original programming, the Chaos String Quartet regularly performs in renowned venues such as Wigmore Hall, the Musikverein Vienna, the Concertgebouw Amsterdam, the Bozar in Brussels, the Salle Bourgie in Montréal, the Guangzhou Opera House, the Philharmonie de Paris, and the Elbphilharmonie Hamburg. They are also frequent guests at prestigious festivals, including the Beethovenfest Bonn, Ravenna Festival, Classiche Forme, Paris String Quartet Biennale, Wien

Modern, Montreal International Chamber Music Festival, Lofoten International Chamber Music Festival, Davos Festival, Lockenhaus Festival, Mozartfest Würzburg, Heidelberg Streichquartettfest, and the Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Festival.

Highlights of the 2025/26 season include their debut at the Konzerthaus Berlin and multiple performances at the Amsterdam String Quartet Biennale, where they will showcase a transdisciplinary project based on Haydn's complete Op. 20.

Since 2025, the quartet has held a teaching residency at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna (MDW), coaching and working with students to help develop artistic projects.

Susanne Schäffer plays a violin by Carlo Giuseppe Testore (c. 1711) on loan from the MERITO String Instruments Trust and Bas Jongen plays a cello by Hendrick Jacobs (Amsterdam, 1696), a kind loan by the Dutch Musical Instruments Foundation (NMF).