



HERMÈS QUARTET

"World-class quartet playing. All four musicians combine personality and beauty of sound with pinpoint accuracy, projected with flair and imagination. They will likely take their place among the top quartets of our time."

– THE WASHINGTON POST

"The Hermès Quartet is ready to take its place in the new generation. These four poised, confident and accomplished young musicians brought an unusual, and winning, combination of decisiveness and depth. The intense and colorful playing of the quartet kept you riveted."

– THE NEW YORK TIMES



"The moment they began their performance, the Hermès Quartet showed the audience why they are one of the greatest musical discoveries of recent years. Their interpretation of Debussy was simply breathtaking, filled with wonderfully sweet sophistication, rhythmic esprit and colorful shimmering French undertones. It was masterful."

– HAMBURG ABENDBLATT (Germany)

"Cellist Anthony Kondo plays his melodies in the Adagio beautifully, nicely contrasted with the anguished dialogue in twisting semiquavers between second violinist Elise Liu and violist Yung-Hsin Chang... These are superb performances by a quartet that sounds like a single instrument with its immaculate ensemble, tonal blend and purity of intonation."

– THE STRAD

"These young people enchanted from their first notes, with a remarkable performance of refinement the likes of which usually defines the art of a quartet after years of experience."

– L'ARENA (Italy)

"The four musicians were quite simply dazzling in their interpretations. First violinist Omer Bouchez's playing was astonishingly sensitive, as was Elise Liu and Yung-Hsin Chang's surprising delicacy of feeling; cellist Anthony Kondo's playing captivated with its quiet strength."

– LYON CAPITALE (France)

"Their musical intelligence, sensitivity and overall unity of ensemble beautifully displayed the maturity one expects from the greatest quartets"

– LE COURRIER (France)

"We have often heard this piece (Dutilleux's 'Ainsi la Nuit'), but rarely with such balance, power, and intelligence."

– CONCERT CLASSIC (France)

Florence Gould Foundation Fellowship • The Peter Marino Debut Prize
First Prize, 2012 Young Concert Artists International Auditions
First Prize, 2012 Young Concert Artists European Auditions (Leipzig, Germany)
First Prize and "Coup de Coeur Breguet", 2011 Geneva International Music Competition
First Prize and Audience Prize, 2009 Lyon International Chamber Music Competition
Helen F. Whitaker Chamber Music Chair of YCA

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Photo: François Sechet



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HERMÈS QUARTET

Omer Bouchez and Elise Liu, violins

Yung-Hsin Chang, viola Anthony Kondo, cello

The luminous talent of the **Hermès Quartet** members has consistently brought acclaim. *The Washington Post* writes that it “will likely take its place among the top quartets of our time.” The Quartet’s far-reaching and flourishing career has taken it to the United States, Japan, Argentina, France, United Kingdom, Italy, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Poland, Belgium and the United Arab Emirates. Upcoming appearances include a concert at the Wigmore Hall in London.

Winner of the 2012 Young Concert Artists International Auditions, the Hermès Quartet made its acclaimed U.S. debuts at the opening concerts of the YCA Series at Carnegie’s Zankel Hall, and at the Kennedy Center’s Terrace Theater. Among its other numerous concerts throughout the U.S. are recitals at the Morgan Library and Museum in New York City, National Gallery of Art and Embassy Series in Washington, Boston’s Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Lied Center of Kansas, the University of Georgia, the Friends of Chamber Music in Texas, Iowa State University, University of Florida Performing Arts, Manhattan’s Peoples’ Symphony Concerts, Buffalo Chamber Music Society, Schneider Concerts at The New School, Hayden’s Ferry Chamber Music Series, Wave Hill, and Stephens Performing Arts Center.

The Quartet has been awarded many prestigious prizes, including First Prize at the Geneva International Music Competition and the special “Coup de Coeur Breguet” prize, which brought a recording on the Ysaÿe Records/Nascor label, and First Prizes in the European Young Concert Artists Auditions in Leipzig, Germany; European Chamber Music Competition in Paris, and Lyon International Music Competition. It has been honored with the Helen F. Whitaker Chamber Music Chair of YCA and the Florence Gould Foundation Fellowship, and served as Artist in Residence at the Queen Elisabeth Music Chapel in Brussels from 2012 to 2016. The Quartet’s CD, *Schumann’s 3 Quartets Op. 41*, is garnering critical praise and prizes including *Classica Magazine’s* “Choc de l’année” and “Le Choix de France Musique.”

Currently based in Paris, the members of the Hermès Quartet met at the Lyon Conservatory and formed the ensemble under the tutelage of Zoltan Toth and Reiko Kitahama in 2008. They have worked with Alfred Brendel, the Artemis Quartet and the Ysaÿe Quartet. The Quartet receives support from France’s Banque Populaire and Singer-Polignac Foundations.

[Group name is pronounced: *air-MEZ*]

[Omer Bouchez: *Oh-mare Boo-shay*

Elise Liu: *Eh-leeze Lee-ew*

Lou Yung-Hsin Chang: *Lou Young-Shin Chang*

Anthony Kondo: *Anthony Condo*]

NOTE: When editing, please do not delete references to Young Concert Artists.
Please do not use previously dated biographies.

06/2018



Hermès Quartet

the Strad
ESSENTIAL READING FOR THE STRING MUSIC WORLD SINCE 1890

**This Month's Recommended Recordings: Hermès Quartet,
Schumann String Quartets, Op 41**

Tim Homfray | The Strad | February, 2015



★ **SCHUMANN** String Quartets in
A minor op.41 no.1, F major op.41
no.2 & A major op.41 no.3

Hermès Quartet

LA DOLCE VOLTA LDV 17

**Performances that bring out
the Romantic urgency of
Schumann's writing**

The Hermès Quartet finds plenty of drama in Schumann's quartets, and the players like to keep things moving. The First Quartet moves from the still, small voice of the Introduzione into playing of emotionally gripping dynamism and power. Both the scherzo and the final Presto move at a frenetic pace, full of breathless excitement. Cellist Anthony Kondo plays his melodies in the Adagio beautifully, nicely contrasted with the anguished dialogue in twisting semiquavers between second violinist Elise Liu and violist Yung-Hsin Lou Chang.

The Second Quartet also presses forward, the first movement propelled by the give-and-take of its dovetailed phrases, the scherzo light as well as scampering. The Andante second movement is both wistful and playful, and come the finale the players are channelling the spirit of Haydn.



Superb performances
of Schumann from
the Hermès Quartet

In the Third Quartet the playing is flexible and fluid, catching the halting, questioning nature of the music with its unsettling syncopations. In contrast, the fugato and Tempo risoluto sections of the second movement are almost alarming in their muscular certainty, and the finale is full of exuberant, toe-tapping dance. These are superb performances by a quartet that sounds like a single instrument with its immaculate ensemble, tonal blend and purity of intonation. The recorded sound is close and resonant.

TIM HOMFRAY



Hermès Quartet

theguardian

Quatuor Hermès: Schumann String Quartets, Op 41 CD review – thoughtful and vivacious

Andrew Clements | The Guardian | October 23, 2014



Capture Schumann's lyricism ... Quatuor Hermès.
Photo: François Sechet

Recordings of Schumann's three string quartets may not be anything like the novelties they were even a decade ago, but performances as thoughtful, vivacious and individually coloured as these by the young French-based Quatuor Hermès are always welcome. They perfectly catch the works' position in the early history of Romantic chamber music, with the regular echoes of Mendelssohn's early quartets in the faster music and the foreshadowing of Brahms in the more introspective passages, such as the opening of the F major work, Op 41, No 2. Beethoven's late quartets cast a long shadow over everything, but Quatuor Hermès are also, importantly, truthful to the qualities in the music that are very much Schumann's own – the expressive impulsiveness, the unquenchable lyricism. These come together in a delightful performance of the last of the set, the A major quartet, Op 41, No 3.



Hermès Quartet

The New York Times

A Zest for Peril and Playfulness

Hermès Quartet Makes Its New York Debut at Carnegie Hall

Anthony Tommasini | *The New York Times* | October 18, 2013

Whatever the economic challenges facing classical music, there is no shortage of superb young artists eager to enter the field. In recent years, the Ebène Quartet, comprising four young men based in Paris, emerged as the most exciting new string quartet to come out of France. Now another Paris-based ensemble, the Hermès Quartet, is ready to take its place in the new generation. The Hermès made its impressive New York debut on Wednesday night at Zankel Hall, an event presented by Young Concert Artists. These four poised, confident and accomplished young musicians (the violinists Omer Bouchez and Elise Liu, the violist Yung-Hsin Chang, the cellist Anthony Kondo) met as students at Lyon Conservatory and formed their quartet in 2008. Last year they won the Young Concert Artists International Auditions.



Hermès Quartet (Photo: Jean-Claude Capt)

It took some courage for the Hermès to begin with Debussy's Quartet in G minor. This early Debussy piece is probably the best-known work from the French string-quartet repertory. By playing it, the quartet was inviting comparisons. The musicians brought rhythmic+ crispness and finesse to the animated first movement. Over all their well-blended sound favored dark, mellow colorings and rich textures, for an unusual, and winning, combination of decisiveness and depth. The Hermès captured the playful and ominous qualities of the second movement. The episodic finale, which can seem the weak point, here had narrative urgency and shape, which made the music even more exciting.

In tribute to the composer Henri Dutilleux, who died in May at age 97, the Hermès played that French modernist master's "Ainsi la Nuit" ("Thus the Night"), completed in 1976. This 20-minute piece, in seven connected movements, may seem elusive on the surface. Enigmatic melodic phrases come and go, alternating with quietly whirling figures, skittish pizzicati bursts, sustained passages of pungent atonal harmonies, and more. But the intense and colorful playing of the quartet kept you riveted.

After a lithe account of Schubert's bustling Quartettsatz in C minor, the Hermès paid tribute to Verdi about a week after his 200th birthday by ending the program with that composer's only large-scaled chamber work: Quartet in E minor, written in three weeks in 1873. The music alternates rigorous compositional techniques, including episodes of counterpoint and fugue, with passages of operatic melody and drama.

The musicians brought clarity and energy to the bouts of complex writing and counterpoint. My guess is that these French string players are Verdi opera fans. Only that would explain their beguiling way with the quartet's unabashed operatic writing. You could hear the danger beneath the deceptively breezy melody of the second movement, much the way the evil Lady Macbeth toasts the dinner guests at her husband's castle. And in a soaring solo cello melody of the third movement, Mr. Kondo revealed his inner Verdi baritone.



Hermès Quartet

The Washington Post

Hermès Quartet shows polish, potential at Kennedy Center performance

Robert Battey | *The Washington Post* | October 9, 2013



Hermès Quartet (Photo: Francois Sechet)

The Young Concert Artists of Washington has been presenting rising talent at the Kennedy Center for 35 years now, and Tuesday it hit a home run with a spectacular debut by the Hermès Quartet. This remarkably mature group was formed only five years ago, while studying in France and Germany. On Tuesday, at the Terrace Theater, its members demonstrated world-class quartet playing.

All four musicians combine personality and beauty of sound with pinpoint collective accuracy. From the opening phrase of the De-

bussy Quartet in G Minor, it was clear that every single articulation and expression mark on the page was going to get its due, but projected with flair and imagination rather than dutiful literalness. Climaxes and surprises were expertly prepared, but everything had a natural, surging flow. The Andantino was undercharacterized, the articulation a little wan, but otherwise the Hermès mastered every technical challenge, allowing the music to bloom and dance.

Henri Dutilleux's "Ainsi la Nuit," from the 1970s, is by now a true classic, one of the very few atonal pieces people listen to with actual enjoyment. It has been something of a calling card for the Hermès, which has won several competitions with it, and Tuesday's performance was filled with color and fantasy.

The group gave only a glimpse of its abilities in earlier repertoire, Schubert's brief "Quartettsatz" and a Haydn encore. The former was lithe and clean, although the leader tended to skate over rather than dig into his virtuoso runs. The Haydn slow movement, in F-sharp major, further confirmed the quartet's miraculous control of intonation. It does remain to be seen how well the musicians understand and unlock the universe behind the "simple" notes of the classical masters, but they certainly have every tool. (Although, like another young quartet I heard last week, the violist's instrument did not seem equal in quality to those of the others.)

The concert closed with the rarely heard and extremely difficult Verdi Quartet in E Minor. Here again, the virtuosity dazzled, particularly in the prestissimo, the whiplash passage-work framing a droll, perfectly phrased cello solo.

If these young artists persevere and develop together, they will likely take their place among the top quartets of our time.



Hermès Quartet



An Incredible Performance by Young Virtuosi

Sud Ouest, From the *Jour de la Musique en Vallée de Gavaudun* Festival (France)

May 25, 2012



The Hermès Quartet is already among the great ones.

(Photo: Michel Debiard)

A mind-blowing discovery

A bolt of excitement came from the four very young musicians (between 24 and 27 years old) of the Hermès Quartet, an ensemble formed only four years ago, but one which impresses as having achieved absolute maturity.

Omer Bouchez and Élise Liu on the violin, Yung-Hsin Chang on the viola and Anthony Kondo on the cello all possess faultless technique and great virtuosity. Each of them adds to these gifts a sensitivity full of finesse and a perfectly elegant touch. The most impressive aspect of their playing, however, is the cohesion of the ensemble, their musical clairvoyance and the sonorous color which already characterizes their work. Thanks to all these qualities, they offered us a radiant Beethoven, a sharp but subtle Haydn and one of the most clear and brilliant interpretations of Debussy ever heard. Added to that was the total commitment they showed in two more contemporary works, two nocturnal evocations of mysterious and poetic beauty by Dutilleux and Ligeti, which will forever leave a mark on the history of this Gavudunois musical society.



Hermès Quartet

Hamburger Abendblatt

A Magical Evening: the Hermès Quartet and Wishful Singing

Marcus Stäbler

Hamburg Abendblatt (Germany)

March 22, 2012

The moment they began their performance of Haydn's Quartet op. 20, 5 at the NDR's Rolf Liebermann Studio, the Hermès Quartet showed the audience why they are one of the greatest musical discoveries of the last few years. The four young musicians, who hail from France and who are only in their mid-20s, show much more than great promise; though they are still 'sorcerer's apprentices' of Berlin's Artemis Quartet, they have long been conjuring up their very own magical sound. Their interpretation of Debussy was simply breathtaking, filled with wonderfully sweet sophistication, rhythmic esprit and colorful shimmering French undertones. A veritable *tour de force*. No doubt: Something big is happening here.

A fantastic evening, with a number of musical moments that gave us a glimpse of world-class performances to come.



Hermès Quartet



66th Geneva International Music Competition

Alain Cochard
Concert Classic
November 20, 2011



The Hermès Quartet

The **Hermès Quartet** had already garnered a lot of attention when it won First Prize at the Chamber Music Competition in Lyon in 2009. In fact, it was at Lyon's Conservatoire National Supérieur that Omer Bouchez, Elise Liu, Yung-Hsin Chang and Anthony Kondo founded their ensemble in 2008. This is a poetic quartet. The opening Nocturne of "Ainsi la Nuit" had only just begun and already a *sonorous world* of radiant beauty started to come alive. In 2009 in Lyon, the Hermès Quartet received a special Sacem Prize for their interpretation of this work by Henri Dutilleux. We have heard it often, but rarely with such balance, such suggestive force, as much intelligence in the sonorous reverberations. The happiness, the collective delight of the Hermès Quartet were palpable as they shared the music - with each other, of course, but just as much with the audience. This held true both in the Dutilleux and also in Quartet No. 12 Op. 127 by Beethoven. Structure and rigor were coupled with freshness and a natural breath (as well as humor in the *Scherzando vivace*), giving us a touching and human Beethoven. It's worth noting that the Hermès Quartet was also awarded the Coup de Coeur Bréguet Prize, which brought them a CD recording- an invaluable boost for a young ensemble on the cusp of a promising career!