



Notos Quartet

Sindri Lederer – *violin* Andrea Burger – *viola*
Philip Graham – *cello* Antonia Köster – *piano*

“A stupendous performance. The ensemble is clean, detailed, delicate, and miraculously, elastically organic”
Classical Source - July 2021

The **Notos Quartet** is one of the most celebrated, young, chamber ensembles to emerge in recent years - praised for its virtuoso brilliance, passion, sensitivity, and mature interpretive powers.

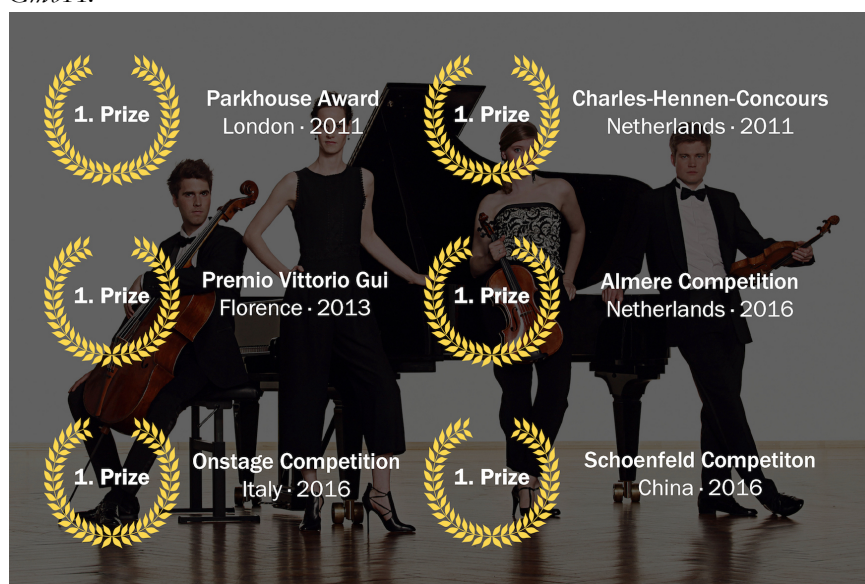
Founded in 2007, the Berlin-based piano quartet first drew attention winning first prize in six major, international competitions. Since then it has established itself worldwide, performing at renowned European concert halls, such as the Philharmonie Berlin, Konzerthaus Berlin, Konzerthaus Vienna, Concertgebouw Amsterdam, London’s Wigmore Hall, Tonhalle Zürich, and BOZAR Brussels, as well as important festivals in Rheingau, Schwetzingen, Würzburg, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Usedom, Radio France in Montpellier, and traveling abroad for concerts in Australia, South Africa, Great Britain, Russia, and in Asia: China, Japan and Vietnam. They made their American debut in 2022 with three concerts for Chamber Music San Francisco and returned in October 2023 for their first North American tour.

Their repertoire spans from the great classical masterpieces to contemporary music. The Notos

Quartet has a strong commitment to new music as shown by numerous commissions and collaborations with such composers as Beat Furrer, Bryce Dessner, Garth Knox, and Bernhard Gander. They also search for important lost or forgotten works to bring to new audiences. Their 2017 debut CD, “Hungarian Treasures,” on Sony Classical/ RCA includes an unknown piano quartet by Béla Bartók, recorded for the first time ever, and paired with music of Kodaly and Dohnanyi. Their 2nd Sony CD, “Brahms: The Schönberg Effect (2021),” includes Brahms’ great Piano Quartet in G Minor, but also Brahms’ Symphony No. 3 arranged for the Quartet by Andreas N. Tarkmann. Their 3rd CD, “Paris Bar” released by Sony in 2022 as a tribute to Paris features music of Jean Françaix, the Polish/French composer Alexandre Tansman, and the Hungarian, László Lajtha, who studied in Paris where he was highly regarded, but whose music was banned in Hungary. For its first recording, the Notos Quartet was recognized by ECHO Klassik 2017 as “Newcomer of the Year,” an award they returned in 2018, the first artists to ever do so, in response to the ECHO Pop Awards honoring an album with anti-Semitic content. The range of the Quartet’s programming has been documented by numerous concert recordings, interviews and features on radio and television at home and abroad, including ARD, ZDF, Deutschlandfunk, BBC, France Musique, ORF, NHK Japan and IPR USA. In 2022 they received the €25.000 Würth Prize of Jeunesses Musicales Germany for their passionate and expressive interpretations.

An important aspect of the Notos Quartet’s work is its commitment to young musicians. In 2019 in cooperation with the Jeunesses Musicales Germany, it founded the *Notos Chamber Music Academy*. The Quartet has taught at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester and led the masterclass, *Saigon Chamber Music*, in Vietnam.

The Notos Quartet is grateful for the support of its mentors: notably Günter Pichler, leader of the legendary Alban Berg Quartet, with whom they studied at the Escuela Superior de Música Reina Sofía, the Mandelring Quartet, Menahem Pressler, András Schiff, Clemens Hagen and Uwe-Martin Haiberg. Through the support of the *Merito String Instruments Trust*, the Quartet performs on exceptional instruments by old Italian masters. They perform exclusively on strings made by *Pirastro GmbH*.



Updated January 2024 - please discard any previous version.

Press Comments:

Noto Quartet fascinates at Leutkircher Klassik

“Wow! A musical sensation, highly virtuoso, with verve and spirit, in front of an enthusiastic audience. The renowned Notos Quartet, at home on stages all over the world, has just presented the series’ highlight of the year. The centerpiece: a new arrangement of ‘Verklärte Nacht’ by Schönberg. Sindri Lederer), Andrea Burger, Philipp Graham and Antonia Köster were at the peak of their abilities in the well-attended hall. Surprising sound effects, unusual interlockings, stirring, touching both the heart and the head. There were shouts of bravo, and almost endless applause. The concert opened with Mahler: painful beauty, flattering, beguiling, and a jubilant ending with a delicate pizzicato. In Brahms the Notos Quartet makes something very special. The Allegro is furious, the Adagio sensitive, with a silky, velvety sound of the strings. A fierce attack afterwards - how can a quartet produce such a storm of sound? - and a wild finale. Do you love Brahms? Definitely, and the audience was thrilled: enthusiastic, shouts of bravo, stomping. Cheering. A quiet encore brought everyone back to this world: the short Nocturne by Schönberg, was comforting. And beautiful.” Schwäbische Zeitung – January 22, 2024

“The Notos Quartet is a multi-award-winning piano quartet known internationally for their intense musicality and chemistry, creating a sense of one instrumental body. Displaying their youthful energy, the program highlighted early works from renowned composers. The highlight was Walton’s Piano Quartet, a piece written in Oxford. If it wasn’t already obvious from the Mahler that Notos Quartet has a kinetic chemistry where each instrumentalist truly communicates and listens to one other. The start of Walton’s Allegretto movement proved this. The swirling, whirlwind of sequences vibrated throughout the venue, making the quieter moments all the more lyrical and sweeter. Every instrument felt part of one large instrument, reverberating, further showcasing the ensemble’s connection. Andante tranquillo is the piece’s third movement. The cello is given this beautiful, soaring melody that broadens the instrument’s capacity. It brought the audience to a reverent silence and gave me chills. The piece ended with an extraordinary bang of all the instruments playing intensely and together, leading the program into the interval. Brahms’ Piano Quartet No. 2 introduces the audience to Notos Quartet’s great admiration for the composer. Allegro non troppo presents gliding strings against an equally graceful flowing piano, with both sets constantly conversing between each other. The second movement gradually grew into a beautiful, soaring violin passage, mirrored in the viola. Notos certainly lives up to their grand reputation, with chemistry and communication being at the heart of their performance, as well as a complete love and respect for the pieces they play.” The Oxford student – November 24, 2023

Notos Quartet thrills at series opener

“Gröbenzell Concerts opens its 33rd season with new momentum: sold out with a waiting list for a performance by the Notos Quartet. The musicians found balance characterized by suppleness and fusion. The strings were often juxtaposed with the piano, which led to conversational intimacy and organically breathing lines. They rode the fine line between carefree, cheerful character and noble, courtly grace exceptionally. In the Walton, they took the velvety, sensitive tone from Mozart. They complemented a large dynamic range and the contrast between filigree figures and the concentrated power of the harmonious interplay. The Andante tranquillo seemed like an impressionistic study whose depth of expression corresponded with spherical transport. Rhythmic impulses were the driving force of the final Allegro molto with a dialogue between eruptive and cantabile passages.

Schumann's quartet followed after the break in sparkling clean intonation and expressive vibrato: an abundance of cantabile melody leading to pathos-free enthusiasm. The trembling, shimmering sound-magic in the Scherzo contrasted, as did the extremely rapid final Vivace, delivered with extreme presence. After enthusiastic applause, the concert closed meditatively with a Shostakovich encore.”
Süddeutsche Zeitung – October 10, 2023

“Ecstatic, elegant, explosive, cultivated

“The Notos Quartet once again proved why it is one of the most sought-after chamber music ensembles. It presented two chamber music milestones in a rousing, beautiful-sounding manner. The Notos have retained their pronounced penchant for strong emotions, exciting contrasts, and unusual concert programs: consistently refusing to accept the familiar sound spectrum of a piano quartet in their search for new shades of color. The musical heart of the award-winning formation is pianist Antonia Köster. She is remarkably restrained and integrates herself wonderfully sensitively into the overall musical action. But when Brahms or Schubert demand it, the graceful artist mutates to the general astonishment again and again into a powerfully grabbing keyboard lioness. This is how we love Brahms: pure passion from the first note. It is an impetuous Brahms that the Notos Quartet celebrates. With its extraordinarily perfect and excitingly staged mixture of agitated romantic vocabulary and sound culture that sometimes increases to orchestral density, it convinces. An exploding playfulness flows in lavish abundance from the stage and inevitably draws the breathless audience under its spell. There was more of this in Schubert's ‘Trout’ Quintet, in which the Notos Quartet properly dispelled the cliché of the well-behaved ‘Schwammerl’: cheeky, lively and whimsical, the three string players let the trout whiz through the water. Of course, the audience demanded an encore.”
Die Rheinpfalz - January 17, 2023

“Favorites of the Year:” No. 4 *Paris Bar*: 1920’s Chamber Music

“Paris in the 1920s – the crazy years - is characterized by a creative spirit of optimism that promoted new forms of expression in music, art and film. This can be understood musically in the CD by Berlin’s Notos Quartet. Chamber music by Françaix, Tansman and Lajtha, these works are shaped by the multicultural diversity that prevails. It's music full of esprit: charming, funny and original. How wonderfully symbiotic the piano is balanced with the strings. It shows how well the four members of the Notos Quartet are attuned to each other.”
Bayerischer Rundfunk - December 8, 2022

“A stroke of genius by the then 17-year-old Béla Bartók, this youthful work had only two performances before its rediscovery: once with Bartók himself at the piano and then a second time in Hungary in the early 1960s. Bartók's Piano Quartet now experienced a sensational performance by the Notos Quartet. Eerily dense and compactly composed, it shows the potential that was already emerging in the young Bartók at that time. One could tell that the Notos Quartet's rendition of this composition was a real affair of the heart for them. With their magnificent collective ductus, their full-blooded musicianship and their expansive sonority, they developed almost symphonic grandeur towards the end, which lingered in the listeners for a very long time. It was fantastic to see how confidently the pianist Antonia Köster performed her piano part, which was peppered with demanding virtuoso runs and technical challenges - without ever playing herself into the foreground - and how wonderfully united, interlocked and interdependent the violinist Sindri Lederer, the violist Andrea Burger and the cellist Philip Graham united with her in true chamber music greatness.”
Nordwest Zeitung - November 21, 2022

“You'll have to remember the name: Notos Quartet. Greek mythology knows Notos as one of the wind gods, whose task was to sweep through the country with storm and rain in autumn. A suitable name for a multi-award-winning ensemble, which brought excitement to the scene with its return of the Echo Klassik Prize 2017. It is therefore a stroke of luck for the Musikverein that the piano quartet will be making an appearance in the Jakobi Church for the second time to start off the new season. In addition to ‘virtuoso brilliance and technical perfection,’ audiences and critics alike admire the ‘sense of balance and interplay, which makes every detail of the composition audible,’ and ‘strike the listener directly in the heart.’ The Notos Quartet has won six first prizes and numerous special prizes at international competitions and has established itself internationally. The ensemble performs in renowned European concert halls and is a guest at the important festivals in the Rheingau, Schwetzingen and Montpellier Radio France; it regularly travels to countries: Russia, Australia, South Africa and Asia, especially China and Japan.”

Güstel Mängelmedler - August 31, 2022

“A storm passed through with the Notos Quartet. Sindri Lederer played the violin confidently, self-assuredly, and sonorously; Andrea Burger filled the middle register richly; and Philip Graham not only provided a strong foundation, but a velvety cello tone in the solos. Virtuoso, secure, and sensitive, Antonia Köster skillfully displayed the advantages of the piano. Intense, as if from the same mold, the four played with passion and determination, full of drama and emotion. Mozart's E-flat Major quartet is quite different with the Notos, in a tangible, dense conception, a powerful, modern interpretation in which no detail was lost. The opening succeeded festively and brilliantly. So much dynamic, tempo, sound. This inspired the audience to enthusiastic applause for an intense, uncompromising experience. Great.”

Saarbrücken Zeitung – July 14, 2022

With heart and a mature mind

“The chamber series of Kamp-Lintfort is known for its high performance level. Music lovers appreciate the highlights in particular, which always bring world flair to the Lower Rhine. This was the case in the most recent concert, one of the outstanding chamber music formations of today, the Notos Quartet. The Notos Quartet delighted the audience at the Schirrhof. Antonia Köster, Sindri Lederer, Andrea Burger and Philip Graham presented works by Mahler, Mozart and Brahms. The Notos quartet proved its exceptional ability both in the polished and carefully structured interaction as well as in the individual mastery of the four musicians. Mozart wished for musicians who have heart and a mind that is mature. He probably would have enjoyed the interpretation of the Notos Quartet. The juicy, roaring finale was Brahms' famous Opus 25, which impressed with its sophisticated agogic accents, and a wonderful balance between strings and piano that only a few quartets achieve. Terrific! Notos thanked the audience for the rhythmic applause with a Viennese coffee house treat and gave the enthusiastic audience a lively farewell to the evening with Fritz Kreisler's *Liebesleid*.”

Rheinische Post – June 2, 2022

Marvellous performances

“The Françaix *Divertissement* is beautifully performed. Tansman's short central *Sarabande* and *Scherzino Polka* movements are beguilingly gorgeous. The main work is the Piano Quartet by László Lajtha, a major force in Hungarian music. The first thing that struck me about this formidable work was its stern gravitas and its similarity to the Franck Piano Quintet, the highest compliment I can find. I

would judge it a near masterpiece. The Notos do it proud with their impeccable intonation and ensemble and instinctive suavity.”

Limelight - May 28, 2022

“The Notos Quartet’s growing reputation has been based largely on music of an impassioned nature. Now this piano quartet has turned its attention to music that requires a lighter touch. In the Françaix, Antonia Köster injects just the right degree of playfulness. Violinist Sindri Lederer, violist Andrea Burger and cellist Philip Graham share a highly tuned sensitivity for musical balance and palpably enjoy the freewheeling neo-Classicism. The Tansman is emotionally more wide-ranging, and the Notos responds with playing that ranges from extreme delicacy to full-on melodic rapture.”

The Strad – April 29, 2022

“The ‘roaring 20s’ are back and in a flashy style. And these fun pieces sparkle with an exuberance that the Comedian Harmonists once embodied in Berlin. These tickle the ear until the diaphragm laughs. The piano quartet by Lajtha is of a different caliber, a masterpiece of the purest kind and is available here as a world premiere recording. Lajtha uses the polyphony of a JS Bach for filigree sound images that shimmer like stardust, combines the voluptuousness of a César Franck with the harsh chromaticism of Bartók to songs that, despite their weirdness, exude a hymn-like charisma. Overall he sounds like none of the above and designs his subtle, unpredictable music located on the edge of tonality, as if cast from a single mold. If there were still popes of critics, they would have to immediately elevate this piece, enchantingly recorded by the Notos Quartet, to the sacred status of a repertoire work.”

Wiener Zeitung – April 12, 2022

The Notos Quartet convinces with youthful rarities

“The Berlin Notos Quartet succeeded in making a convincing case at the Kölner Philharmonie for two pieces that one rarely encounters. The strings showed no shyness in their generous use of Romantic tonal devices: an intense vibrato gave the tone support and color; gliding changes of register ensured tightly bound legato playing. Where, on the other hand, the youthful expressive will threatens to go into overdrive, the four ensured a loose flow and free breath. The 28-year-old Johannes Brahms was already an old hand when he composed his A major quartet Op. 26. The giant work was performed with a sovereignty in sound balance and form dramaturgy that only a well-rehearsed team can achieve. In addition, there was a meticulous agreement down to the smallest details of the sound utterance, a joint setting of accents, a minimal rubato at the seams. In memory of the victims of the Ukraine war, the quartet included a work by the Ukrainian composer Volodymyr Runchak. His ‘Kyrie eleison’ for piano quartet is a quiet, minimalistically circling lament punctuated by abrupt impulses of pain - music that truly needs no explanation.”

Kölner Stadt Anzeiger – March 30, 2022

“The CD begins light and playful with Jean Françaix’s Divertissement, but sad reminiscences of World War I spread, putting the exuberant mood of the Années Folles into perspective. This mix is excitingly played in a gripping interpretation that differentiates the moods very well. Alexandre Tansman composed music of rich expressiveness and deft harmonies. And equally exemplary is the interpretation of the Notos Quartet, which expresses all moods, the parodic as well as the melancholic, the haunting as well as the lyrical-tender or the spirited. Lajtha’s so immensely rich Quartet, the quiet passages are as troubling as an official warning of a tsunami. The Notos Quartet plays this music deeply, leaving the listener with a

compelling impression. It's like a visit to the dark warehouses of Lajtha's memory. Then the variable last movement leaves one perplexed. Here everything seems to come together, night and day, light and darkness, past and above all an uncertain future. The Notos interpretation suggests a composer looking for substitutes to fill the emptiness he still feels inside.... This CD is a music-bar with high-proof that can be consumed without restriction.”

Pizzicato – March 25, 2022

“Chamber Music San Francisco returned to launch its 2022 season. The Notos Quartet gave its first performance in the United States as part of its debut tour of North America. Their program was organized around Schumann's Quartet in E-flat major and the first venture into that genre by Brahms: the Opus 25 quartet in G minor. Notos brought a fearless rhetoric to this final movement. The coordination of the four players in this account of Brahms could not have been better. More important was that their spirited account was just the right disposition for getting the CMSF season off to a delightful start. The Schumann quartet was given an equally engaging account. One might say it provided just the right introduction. The encore selection was Kreisler's 'Liebesleid.' It would not surprise me to learn that Notos prepared their own arrangement, allowing each of the four players a share in the spotlight.”

The Rehearsal Studio - February 14, 2022

MUSICWEB INTERNATIONAL Recordings of the Year 2021:

“Very fine performances of two undoubted masterpieces, one of them, Symphony No.3, appearing in a fresh arrangement. I was really impressed by this ensemble who seem destined for a very bright future.”

MusicWebInternational – December 2021

“This starts with a highly vigorous and involved performance of Brahms' first Piano Quartet. The four instrumentalists play very much as an equal ensemble. The highlights are in the forceful *Allegro*, the delightful and typically wistful *Intermezzo*. The Notos really get hold of the third movement which could emanate only from Brahms and is why he is a favorite composer. Here, the pianist is so empathetic and reflects the composer's passion. I find it near-perfection. The *Rondo* goes with real Hungarian bravado and swing. This is one of Brahms' finest chamber works. The musicians are totally inside this music and produce a very exciting sound; some poignant cello from Philip Graham is very well captured. All in all, this is a resounding success. certainly, up with the very many other fine recordings. I'd love to hear them perform it live. We have the novel idea of an arrangement of Symphony No. 3 made specifically for the Notos Quartet. My feeling is that if it is going to be performed this way, it could hardly be done better than it is here. Brahms' Third Symphony is a wonderful work. One listens in awe as this young ensemble plays this intricate work as if it were the most natural thing in the world. The second movement *Andante* is one of Brahms' most heartfelt creations. There is some lovely playing from pianist Antonia Köster. The *Poco Allegretto* is undoubtedly a success, and the final *Allegro* is a real tour de force with the Notos playing their hearts out, displaying spontaneity but also precision, and real emotion coupled with finesse. The final bars are most effecting and illustrate the skill, enthusiasm, and sincerity of this young group. These are two undoubted masterpieces, one, not the obvious, but in different attire. This is a highly enjoyable CD; I look forward to hearing their interestingly original debut and more in the future. Certainly, the outlook for them is bright.”

MusicWebInternational - 2021

“This CD from the Notos Quartet confirms the German chamber group as a premiere-league ensemble. The title refers to Schoenberg’s mighty orchestration of the equally mighty First Piano Quartet by Brahms. They pay back the compliment with Tarkmann’s arrangement for piano quartet of Brahms’s Third Symphony. Tarkmann is very skillful in the art of suggestion, and I found myself constantly being absorbed by his and the Notos’ subtle illumination of Brahms’s meticulous craft. The two inner movements work particularly well, and the players’ ear for detail and avoidance of striving for orchestral color is deeply satisfying. But listen to what the Notos players do with the Piano Quartet No. 1. This is a stupendous performance, which entirely gets the point of Brahms’s youthful energy and ambition. Antonia Köster’s piano playing is suitably aristocratic without being overwhelming, the ensemble between her and the three string players is clean, detailed, delicate as required, and miraculously, elastically organic; Sindri Lederer’s violin tone is opulent and beautifully voiced; Andrea Burger’s viola playing is ideal for this sort of repertoire; and Philip Graham endows the cello part with rich lyricism. Together they have worked out the work’s accumulative strengths, and the result is breathtaking. I’m still reeling from the sheer power of the Andante’s middle section. Highly recommended.”

Classical Source – July 2021

“*The Schoenberg Effect* could be the title of a Robert Ludlum thriller, though it refers here to Schoenberg’s beefy orchestration of Brahms’ G Minor Piano Quartet, which we get here in its original version. Schoenberg’s intention was to highlight the original’s symphonic bigness, prompting the Berlin-based Notos Quartet to record Brahms’s Symphony No. 3 in a striking transcription by Tarkmann which highlights the original’s introspection. Tarkmann’s understanding of Brahms’s style make for extremely idiomatic results. And with only four musicians, this performance has a winning flexibility and flow; shifts of tempo are perfectly achieved, and I like the players’ unerring ability to drop in and out of focus. Pianist Antonia Köster’s opening flourish is suitably imposing, before she slips discretely into the background for the 9/4 second subject, violinist Sindri Lederer making the clarinet theme his own. Everything’s deliciously autumnal; the third movement melody on solo viola works beautifully, and the symphony’s soft coda is extraordinary, a soft piano chorale decorated with quiet rustling strings. Good recorded performances of the G Minor Piano Quartet aren’t difficult to find, and here’s another one. The Notos Quartet’s playing is here more assertive and punchy, as befits this more extrovert work. There’s so much to savor; the third movement’s military march swaggers, and the work’s closing minutes are both thrilling and funny. Buy this for the symphony, with the Piano Quartet thrown in as an enticing bonus.”

The ArtsDesk – June 19, 2021

“A surprising audition in many ways: the discovery of an ensemble of chamber music in outstanding quality, but also an off-the-chain repertoire, as is this lovely combination made for the Brahms’ Third Symphony. The recording highlights the qualities of this chamber music group. ‘A fantastic ensemble’ are the words with which Zubin Mehta described the Notos Quartet - indeed, an ensemble that seems to seep directly into the essence of music and take you away, to take you far: cohesion, musicality, emotion, mastery of details, impetuosity - it’s hard to define this cocktail that makes their music so lively and full of light.”

Radio Romania Music – June 15, 2021

Brahms: The Schoenberg Effect – symphonic reduction brings expansion- 5 stars

“A new arrangement made especially for this ensemble, makes the Symphony No 3 sound as much of a bona-fide chamber work as the Piano Quartet No 1, which gets a fine performance alongside it. Thanks to the exactitude and delicacy of the playing, Tarkmann’s arrangement feels as though we can hear those lighter, brighter original colors for themselves. It loses one kind of richness and gains another. almost everywhere else there’s an irresistible feeling of propulsion that comes from being able to hear each musical line work itself through from beginning to end. None of this would work were the players not so unanimous in the way they shape the music and so impeccable in their blend and tuning – this is superb chamber music playing. If you love Brahms’s chamber music, here’s a brand-new example.”
The Guardian – April 29, 2021,

“The performance is full of energy and concentrated expressiveness. The sound always remains homogeneous and agreeably rhythmic. It is not a matter of outward appearances, but of the common will to play together, to strive in a vivid declamation for an interpretation that really makes sense. The main attraction of the CD is the Third Symphony. Tarkmann has undoubtedly done a very good job, for the symphony acquires a new individuality, and the listener does not miss the orchestra at all. But this is also due to the committed playing of the Notos Quartet, which enters weightily into the first movement and then develops it powerfully, without neglecting to differentiate the music in the right way. There is no doubt that we hear the right Brahms colors here, and the symphonic breath is not lost at any moment. The Allegro con brio is massive, tense, warm-blooded, lyrical, soulful as well as full of passion and allows the mood changes to become very clear.

The Andante, for all its cantabile nature, never remains merely nice and sweet, but has a latent restlessness and raises serious questions, which are not completely answered in the last two movements, certainly not in the Poco Allegretto, which sings wonderfully buoyantly at first, but then seems increasingly restrained and uncertain. This mood initially continues in the final movement until it is powerfully wiped away. The last movement shows Brahms in the brightest excitement, formidably urging on toward the conclusion. This is how this music must sound.”
Pizzicato – March 18, 2021

“The Notos Quartet perform this work in its original chamber ensemble setting, and to further demonstrate Schoenberg's precept that this composer's chamber and orchestral music were analogous, they present the premiere recording of a Piano Quartet version of his *Symphony No. 3 in F major*, reverse-engineering by Andreas N. Tarkmann. It pares down the music to its essential core. The members of the Notos Quartet perform it with such dramatic and dynamic expression as to not lose sight of its scope in the process. From the bold opening chords to the soft, nocturnal ending quivers the Notos Quartet always sound engaged and never lose track of the music's portent.”

Classical Music Sentinel – March 2021

A high degree of perfection

“Concert associations have long had a high level of excellence. What if one encounters a piano quartet whose music-making meets a degree of perfection that describes an absolutely exceptional level, like the Notos Quartet in the concert of the Musikverein?

Complete consistency in the quality of the instrumentation: the violin in complete 'harmony' with the viola, and cello, and everything combined with the most sensitive use of piano. The Piano Quartet in A Major by Brahms is of such a massive scale that it almost takes the listener's breath away. This work is worth acquiring this ability. And the Notos Quartet did so to an extent that deserves all the words of enthusiasm."

Der Patriot – October 1, 2020

"As multifaceted as the Notos Quartet is in its playing, it manages effortlessly. The piano sounds almost chaste, while violinist Sindri Lederer with Andrea Burger (viola) and Philip Graham (cello) make wonderfully tender music of the heavenly searching that Mozart often has. Thunderous applause for live music full of energy, surprise and excitement."

Süddeutsche Zeitung – September 2, 2020

Notos' demonstration of musical creative power

"Technique, imagination, passion. Three qualities that a classical quartet must combine in order to inspire. This is what happened Sunday evening at the concert in Vaterstetten, where the Notos Quartet first exhibited its skill in the stylistic subtleties of Schumann, and let the senses vibrate with the strings in Bartók. In short: the concert had it all. Pianist Antonia Köster allows her instrument to act as a fourth string player, taking the quartet idea to the extreme - savoring the *Adagio espressivo* with lyrical elegance and allowing the sound of the grand piano to glide into the music played by the strings. Heart-pounding atmosphere! In the Schumann, she led it into an intense dialogue, especially with the cello, which Philip Graham took up with verve and subtlety. The almost blind understanding between the two was a sensual delight - which was also true for Sindri Lederer (violin) and Andrea Burger (viola), whose interplay at times took on an intensity and tempo as if the two styles were one. This was the completely realized idea of turning playing next to each other into creating together. One understands why these four have already won a number of prestigious prizes; they will not be the last. One of them, not officially titled earned in the well-filled hall, for the most imaginative interpretation in this year's series. El Chan, by Bryce Dessner, bursting with colors, condensed into sound pictures of dramatic tension and courageous experiments. What some find off-putting about modern classical music becomes, in the hands of the Notos Quartet, a tickle for the mind and the senses. The Notos Quartet received expert and intense applause from the audience, in equal parts for technique, imagination and passion - and rightly so in every respect."

Süddeutsche Zeitung – November 26, 2019

"The much-awarded Notos Quartet gave chamber music lovers a special treat with its program at Kapfenburg Castle, that crowned the 20-year history of the Stiftung Internationale Musikschulakademie Kulturzentrum. The four virtuosos are a stroke of luck, a treasure. The audience was carried away to musically higher worlds with Mozart's spherical sounds. This increased when Schumann's Piano Quartet in E-flat Major was played with virtuoso brilliance and perfect harmony. Particularly impressive was when the four musicians played the Bartók Quartet, which they had rediscovered. The long-lost work was a small premiere played with technical perfection that is rare to hear. After repeated applause, a *good-night* song by Shostakovich followed as an encore. 'I have never heard anything so beautiful in my life,' said listener Michael Haag."

Schwäbische Zeitung – November 11, 2019

“It is a drama, this first movement of Martinu's (1890-1959) piano quartet, played brilliantly, stirringly by the Notos Quartet. One could have imagined that it would be a beautiful evening after the first bars of the opening movement. The musicians shaped the *Allegro* and savored the thematic richness. The *Larghetto* sounded like a treasure with its modulations, daring for Mozart's time, and a harmonious performance of this key work. The energy seemed to carry through into the first movement of Schumann's Piano Quartet. Then came the heart of the work. Here Graham's cello was allowed to sing itself out, interpreting passionately: like love with open eyes. Gripping, powerful, full-bodied, the Notos Quartet played the final *Vivace* and was rewarded with cheers and strong applause. One encore *petitese* from Tansman closed this strong evening of chamber music.”

Südwest Presse – September 21, 2018

“A packed house heard the Notos Piano Quartet give a shining performance of a reconstructed Mozart fragment, an early masterpiece by Walton, and the magnificent Brahms Op. 26 The Alban Berg Quartet has had the strongest influence on their development, and this shows in their impeccable intonation and incisive rhythm. Their sense of balance and ensemble is exemplary, and this gives their phrasing and harmonic progression a clarity which reveals every detail of the composition. A formidable piano quartet in D minor by William Walton, although an early work, already shows how mature Walton had become. The Notos gave it a vigorous and energetic rendition, making light of the difficult rhythms and high passage work in the strings. We heard a tender slow movement, and some majestic counterpoint, but each of the four movements had its own color. The main work in the program was Brahms Piano Quartet in A major. The Notos excelled in this pillar of the piano quartet repertoire. Such was their unanimity of phrasing that one could not tell who was leading the ensemble – and that is how it should be; each player complementing the other and none seeking the limelight.”

Chichester Observer – June 7, 2018

A true feast for the eyes and ears in Mertingen

“It is not a matter of course that a young ensemble is honored with the Echo Klassik, one of the most important and prestigious awards in the music world. But anyone who listened to the Notos Quartet in Donauwörth is certain of one thing: this ensemble is a worthy winner of this special prize. Not only is the ensemble a feast for the eyes, its playing is of wonderful color and intensity. From the first bow stroke, the first piano note, the ensemble captivated its audience with its sensitive playing that explored every nuance and entertained it at its best. The ensemble was able to convey the entire range of emotions magnificently in its playing. The ensemble, playing powerfully, intelligently and at the same time highly sensitively listening to each other, was completely convincing with this quartet and its unique playing - the enthusiastic and applauding audience got its reward - Fritz Kreisler's 'Liebesleid'.”

Augsburg Allgemeine – October 23, 2017

“One reason this piece grips the listener so irresistibly is the perfect level of passion for Bartók’s music – with commitment and flowing vibrato. The emotional density and technically outstanding performance make fort the highpoint of a recording that combines works of Hungarian composers toa thrilling program. Altogether a fulminant discographic kickstart of the Notos Quartet. Who can claim their place among the outstanding chamber music ensembles of our time.” FonoForum – September 2017

“The Bartok remained inaccessible until the highly enterprising Notor Quartet tracked down the manuscript. All in all this is an intelligently devised, brilliantly executed and warmly recorded disc, raising hopes that the Notos Quartet can come up trumps again with further worthwhile discoveries.” BBC Music Magazine – July 2017

“Hidden gems might have been a more fitting description in the album title. These works are seldom heard – Dohnányi’s Piano Quartet receives a committed performance, the Notos Quartet making no apology for the work’s epic quality. Kodály’s Intermezzo comes as a palate-cleanser. The airier texture is a delight, and beautifully captured on a recording that produces an ideal impression of acoustic space while retaining both the detail and the overall blend of the instruments. The Bartók is an eye-opener, not only in its remarkable assuredness, but also in the full-blooded élan that announces the composer as a card-carrying Romantic. The Notos Quartet is equally responsive to the dark lyricism of the Andante espressivo as to the crashing force of the finale.

The Strad – May 18, 2017

“There’s a real immediacy about their playing. It’s hard to imagine this piece being championed with more conviction. Dohnányi’s lyrical, bittersweet F sharp minor Piano Quartet was the real harbinger of genius here. The Notos Quartet play it with poetry and verve, and the piece itself is sufficiently rare for this recording to count as something of an achievement. An enjoyably dancelike account of Kodály’s Intermezzo for string trio serves as a ‘sorbet’ – and completes a well-played and enterprising debut disc from this excellent young German ensemble.” The Gramophone – May 2017

Fiery performance of lost early Bartók

“Play the last four tracks to your music-nerd friends and ask them to name the composer. They’ll never get it. This all-Hungarian disc by the Berlin-based Notos Quartett ends with the 1898 Piano Quartet by Bartók – but a 17-year-old Bartók, sounding more Brahmsian than Brahms himself. The work was lost, and while it’s unclear whether this really is the first ever recording, it’s certainly the only one available. The Notos players give a fiery performance, hot-headed in the second movement, alternating richness with stillness in the third, and doing what they can with Bartók’s finale. It’s paired with Dohnanyi, which they set about with passion, shaping its mammoth first movement into expansive phrases, and giving the whole thing plenty of Hungarian character. In between, Kodály’s Intermezzo for String Trio – a piquant, nonchalant little polka - is deliciously light on its feet.”

The Guardian - February 23, 2017

Triumphant start of the season: the Notos Quartet thrilled with brilliant performances.

“The excellent pianist Antonia Köster enriched the ensemble not only with the timbre of the instrument, but also with her high individual skill, creative power and team spirit: an ideal support for Sindri Lederer (violin), Andrea Burger (viola) and Philip Graham (cello), who captivated with brilliance and inspired with passion. So enthusiastic was the audience that they almost gave applause between movements, and on such occasions, one really wonders if one shouldn't finally cut off this old braid and just clap heartily. After this brilliant performance and a break, the multi-award-winning ensemble still managed to celebrate a Brahms at the highest level -another triumph in front of a cheering audience.”

Rheinpfalz – May 9, 2016

“The quartet seemed to revel in their surroundings, delivering a dynamic interpretation of Beethoven's Piano Quartet in E flat which perfectly balanced the coruscating piano with the warm tonality of the strings. Suk's Piano Quartet in A minor was a revelation in the hands of Notos. They grasped the strident romanticism writ large, which dances on a knife edge between classicism and modernism. From the jazzy tempestuousness of the allegro to the danced-infused finale this performance was a sensational tour de force. Their tightly knit sound suggested the comfortable ease of decades and this approach was to the fore in Brahms Piano Quartet in C minor. They immersed themselves in Brahms' foreboding majesty, melting melodies and stamping rhythms with heart-stopping bravado.”

The Scotsman – July 20, 2015

The sold-out Stadtsaal opened the Fürstenfeld Series with the Notos Quartet, an appearance that made them sit up and take notice. The playing of the four musicians was impressive above all in that they realized sound ideas that repeatedly reminded one of great role models such as the Beaux Arts Trio or the Alban Berg Quartet. In their gripping style of music-making, always grounded, the musicians contrasted the string section with the piano part as an equal partner. The Notos Piano Quartet succeeded in an interpretation that went far beyond the norm, above all through the careful handling of the tempo and its meticulous modifications as well as a genuinely apt, elegant coloration. There was great applause and bravos at the end.”

Süddeutsche Zeitung – April 10, 2015

“It was Germany's Notos Quartet that most consistently played superbly. Notos' perfectly blended, unified sound brought to mind the experience of a fine old burgundy – rich, warm, elegantly refined, glowing with an inner spirit that resulted in some of the finest chamber music performances I have heard anywhere.”

Classical Voice North America– June 24, 2014