



musikfest bremen

PRESS RELEASE

Bremen, 4 August 2026 / cp

Musikfest Prize 2026 goes to the Quatuor Ebène

The French string quartet is honoured for their services to the festival and the music world

The French Quatuor Ebène will receive the 2026 Bremen Musikfest Prize. Since 1998, the festival has awarded this non-cash prize annually to outstanding soloists, ensembles, orchestras and conductors who have made their mark on the international music scene through their exceptional artistic achievements and who helped shape the profile of the festival. Previous laureates include Nikolaus Harnoncourt, Jessye Norman, Marc Minkowski, Hélène Grimaud, Janine Jansen, Rolando Villazón, Philippe Herreweghe, Martin Grubinger and, most recently, Hervé Niquet.

The Quatuor Ebène was founded in 1999 by four young French students at the Conservatoire de Boulogne-Billancourt. After studying with the Quatuor Ysaÿe at the Paris Conservatoire Supérieur, as well as with Gábor Takács, Eberhard Feltz and György Kurtág, the quartet achieved international recognition in 2004 when they won the ARD Music Competition in Munich. They went on to perform in some of the world's most famous concert halls, including the Philharmonic halls in Paris, Berlin, Cologne and Luxembourg, as well as Carnegie Hall in New York, London's Wigmore Hall and the Vienna Konzerthaus. The albums they recorded during this period, featuring works by composers such as Bartók, Beethoven, Debussy, Haydn, Fauré and Mendelssohn, won numerous awards including the Gramophone Award, Diapason d'Or, Midem Classical Award and BBC Music Magazine Award. Alongside world-class interpretations of classical works, the Quatuor Ebène regularly presents concert programmes featuring jazz and film music. The quartet also gives regular masterclasses at the Conservatoire de Paris and teaches the „Quatuor Ébène Academy“ string quartet class, which was established in 2021 at the Munich University of Music and Performing Arts.

„Since their Musikfest debut in 2007, followed by concerts in Bremen, Bremerhaven, Oldenburg, Sögel, Sottrum, Apen and Worpswede, the Quatuor Ebène has consistently demonstrated why it has been one of the world's leading string quartets for over two decades. No other quartet has performed at Musikfest more frequently in recent years. Exceptional technical and interpretative skill, coupled with an almost telepathic understanding among its members, is paired with a captivating, passionate and refreshing approach that reveals new and unexpected facets, even in well-known works from the string quartet repertoire. This year's Beethoven cycle, in which the ensemble will perform all 16 quartets from the composer's early, middle and late periods over six evenings in the Small Auditorium of the Glocke during the first week of the festival, will be the crowning achievement of the Quatuor Ebène's work at the Musikfest to date,” the jury explained its

decision.

Quatuor Ebène made their Musikfest debut in 2007 alongside violinist Renaud Capuçon and pianist Nicholas Angelich, performing chamber music by Maurice Ravel and Ernest Chausson. In 2010, they performed Beethoven and Schubert string quartets at Clemenswerth Palace. At the BLG Forum in Überseestadt, they presented themselves as „The other Ebène“, performing works by Wayne Shorter, Charlie Chaplin, Astor Piazzolla, the Beatles and others. In 2013, they performed Haydn, Mendelssohn Bartholdy and Bartók string quartets in Bremerhaven and Oldenburg. In 2014, their Sottrum programme featured Mozart, Brahms and Bartók string quartets, followed by works from Astor Piazzolla, Charlie Chaplin, Antonio Carlos Jobim, Sting and Michael Jackson at the BLG Forum with singer Stacey Kent. On the opening night of the 2016 Musikfest, the Quatuor Ebène, together with Laurène Durantel on the double bass, presented chamber music by Haydn, Mozart and Schubert. In 2017, they performed Brahms' clarinet and piano quintets with Pierre Genisson on the clarinet and Nicholas Angelich on the piano. In 2022, they performed Haydn, Brahms and Janáček string quartets in Apen, and in 2024, their Worpswede concert featured Haydn, Mozart and Schubert string quartets. At Musikfest Bremen 2026, the Quatuor Ebène's Beethoven cycle will offer a rare opportunity to experience all 16 of the composer's string quartets in a concentrated programme over six evenings (16–23 August). The Musikfest Prize will be presented to the Quatuor Ebène after the final concert of the Beethoven cycle, at a private reception on Sunday 23 August in the Small Auditorium of the „Glocke“.

Photos of the Quatuor Ebène can be downloaded from „Press Office“ at www.musikfest-bremen.de

Further information for editors:

Musikfest Bremen gGmbH, Carsten Preisler,
Tel. +49 (0) 421 / 33 66 660, e-mail: preisler@musikfest-bremen.de