

matangi

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ABOUT MATANGI biography

The Matangi Quartet was founded in 1999 by four young musicians then studying at the Royal Conservatoire in The Hague and the Conservatory of Rotterdam. In 2003 Matangi completed the two-year, full-time course at the Netherlands String Quartet Academy under the direction of Stefan Metz (cellist, Orlando Quartet). At the Academy, the Matangi Quartet had the opportunity to take lessons from international renowned musicians, including the members of the Amadeus Quartet. The quartet also received intensive mentoring from Henk Guittart (violinist, Schönberg Quartet) for several years.

The Matangi Quartet has since developed into a regular performer in the Dutch chamber music scene and abroad. With their impassioned playing and smart presentation, Maria-Paula, Daniel, Karsten and Arno epitomize a new generation of classical musicians. They are often characterized by words such as communicative, provocative and refreshingly versatile. The Matangi Quartet has shared the stage with various top-class classical musicians such as the Schönberg Quartet, the Royal Quartet, Miranda van Kralingen, Tania Kross, Ivo Janssen, Paolo Giacometti and Severin von Eckardstein. The quartet has also been invited to perform in various festivals and concert series, including the Delft Chamber Music Festival, the Amsterdam Grachtenfestival, the Aix-en-Provence Festival, the Orlando Festival, the Robeco Summer Concert Series in Amsterdam, the Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival, Festival van Carthage in Tunisia, the World Expo 2010 in Shanghai and the International Conservatoire Festival in St Petersburg. Since 2005 the quartet has presented its own concert series in the 'Beurs van Berlage' in Amsterdam.

In 2002 Matangi was awarded the prestigious Kersjes van de Groenekan Award, an annual prize awarded to exceptional chamber music talent in the Netherlands. In 2008 the quartet won third prize at the International Joseph Joachim Chamber Music Competition in Weimar. The Matangi Quartet released several CDs issued by Challenge Records International which all received great critical acclaim. The latest releases were the CDs 'Mendelssohn' (2009) and 'Candybox' (2010). Together with viola da gamba player Ralph Rousseau the quartet won the Edison Audience Award 2009, for their CD 'Chansons d'amour' (Challenge Records 2008).

Matangi regularly participates in innovative crossover projects and has performed in collaboration with artists such as cabaretiers Herman van Veen and Youp van 't Hek, bandoneon player Carel Kraayenhof, jazz trumpeter Eric Vloeimans, DJ Kypski, singer songwriters Lory Liebermann and Tom McRae. These pioneering excursions beyond the borders of classical music have resulted in Matangi winning an enthusiastic new public for the string quartet. No less important, this has provided a source of inspiration for infusing performances of the rich classical repertoire built up over the past 250 years – from Haydn to Adès – with new élan. For essentially, the Matangi are focused on just one thing: letting the audience palpably experience the energy, passion and excitement that is inherent in all good music.

The Matangi Quartet comprises:

Maria-Paula Majoor - violin
Daniel Torrico Menacho - violin
Karsten Kleijer - viola
Arno van der Vuurst - cello

All four musicians perform on instruments of Dutch workmanship. The cello and first violin have been provided on loan by the Dutch National Musical Instrument Foundation.

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PRESS REVIEWS

Fanfare [USA] December 2010

I have often made the pronouncement in these pages that the level of instrumental playing these days is far superior to that of a generation ago. The youthful (despite the fact that this release is in celebration of its 10th year), Netherlands-based Matangi Quartet eloquently supports my contention. Its intonation, articulation, rhythmic acuity, and control of both color and balance are exemplary. More essentially, the musicians unfailingly demonstrate total empathy with the music before them. The result is extraordinarily vital ensemble playing. "In Hinduism," according to Wikipedia, "Matangi is the aspect of Devi (in other words, the Mahavidya), who is the patron of inner thought and speech. She guides her devotee to the incensed primordial sound." Here that notion and ideal are both compellingly and illuminatingly fulfilled. Technically speaking, the sound of this release is, like the Matangi Quartet itself, state-of-the-art.

Pizzicato [LUXEMBOURG] June 2010

The Dutch Matangi Quartet presented on the occasion of its 10th anniversary a colorful mix of very distinctive chamber music. According to the subtitle of the CD, this *Candybox* contains 'String Quartet sweets'. Well, this box is so colorful and diverse as any candy shop, and there are many flavors for every kind of taste. Some are sour and others taste sweet, some are juicy and others are sticky. There are hard and soft candies, round and square ones. The Matangi Quartet gives all of them one hundred percent attention. They turn and roll each candy, much to the listening pleasure of the music lover, who can add one of the most surprising quartet CDs of the catalog to his collection.

Musicalfeiten [THE NETHERLANDS] June 2010

However diverse the pieces are, they are all addressed with the same sense of style and commitment. Unmistakable highlights are the pieces of Meijering and Jenkins. How great the performances are can be proved by comparing them to other recordings, where possible: Jenkins by the Smith Quartet (Sony SK 87320), Revueltas by the Latin American Quartet (NewAlbion NA 062cd or Elan CD 82286), Suk by the Delme Quartet (Hyperion CDH 55002) or the Suk Quartet (Supraphon 11.1874-2) and Turin by the National Orchestra of Andorra (Nimbus NI 5570) or the Amigos Quartet (Meridian CDE8443). The Matangi Quartet from The Hague is advantaged all the time, for they act more flexible, full of verve and persuasiveness. It is all very stimulating.

Klassieke Zaken [THE NETHERLANDS] May 2010

The candy that is the most mouth watering is actually the exquisite playing of the Matangi Quartet itself. Their performance has no added artificial flavoring and coloring and ranges from the raspy sounds in the festive music of Silvestre Revueltas to the meditative cantabile from Vladimir Godárs *Concerto grosso*.

Parool [THE NETHERLANDS] April 2010

Matangi defends all pieces with fire and an appealing slender flexibility, for which the quartet has won great admiration from everywhere over the past ten years.

Opus Klassiek [THE NETHERLANDS] April 2010

It is good to hear how the musicians have become one, with one of the most complex sorts of music of all, that of the string quartet. What happens here in this adventurous and exciting program is just phenomenal. The fine texture, the flawless intonation, the perfect balance and the firm grip on the sometimes unruly structure of the music reflect absolute world class, in every piece. The way Matangi has managed to develop itself in the past ten years is given only a few.

Le Temps [TUNISIA]

October 2009

Accuracy and strength are the two words that come to mind of the viewer at the end of the concert of the Matangi Quartet. However, it is too simplistic to describe the performance with these two terms, because besides the accuracy and precision emotion took a big part in the concert as well. The latter manifested itself in the first works by the four companions on stage. Indeed, movements of the fingers on the strings, lifting and lowering of the bow, playing the notes that were chained in a frantic race in which the tonalities alternated between slow and fast. A whirlwind of variations highlighted the exact measure and the adequate sensible touch within the mastery of the works by the musicians. The alert spirit followed the performance of the pieces. The attentive ear was rocked by the combination of the notes. The score displayed its sweetness and intensity, alternating in strength and serenity in a silent duel where the genius of the composers was met in the mastery of the instrument by the four acolytes.

Kwadratuur [BELGIUM]

August 2009

The first part of Mendelssohn's first quartet is sung wonderfully lyrical without losing a shred of its freshness. This is largely the work of the first violinist Maria Paula Majoor who's violin playing sings beautifully. The sound of it remains silky and smooth, even in the highest register, and only jumps out of balance when the music itself asks for it. All over she unites seamlessly with the sound of the other string players. The contrast between this first part, or the lyrical third part, and the fierce but restrained scherzo with its boisterous trio, is major. One hears how many different magical colors the Matangi Quartet can conjure. The finale shows a strong example of great balance, when in a turbulent swirling part each instrument may come forward in the appropriate moment. The brisk pace never blocks the road to a clear and intelligible recitation: the musicians take the time to apply Mendelssohn's rhetoric extremely precise and in a very natural way, despite the turbulent nature of this music.

Luister [THE NETHERLANDS]

June 2009

This wonderful CD is highly recommended. Only few young quartets play as flawless, as devoted, as balanced, as pure, as sophisticated and refined as the Matangi. Everything to the proper degree, for although they have thought about every note, this chamber music sounds spontaneous, expressive and thoroughly musical. On this CD the Matangi Quartet combines the Quartet No. 1 opus 12 in E flat with the Quintet No. 1 in A. It is the alternation between lamenting and singing, between introverted and extroverted, and the balance in the dosage of all ingredients that make this performance so beautiful. It is also the youthfulness of the string players that still echoes. Fresh, new, no restrictions or boundaries. Making music is a celebration, is what this CD tells us. The string players love the music and taking their own part in it. The beautiful spatial recording supports the performance in all respects.

Ensemble [GERMANY]

June 2009

The ensemble name of the four Dutch musicians is already intriguing. On the one hand, the name "Matangi" refers to an Indian Hindu goddess, who traditionally holds an instrument in her hand. She is devoted to music, and to language and poetry as well. On the other hand, the Maori term "Tiritiri Matangi" means so much as "going against the wind." Here though, the Matangi Quartet does not conquer the wind, but the first String Quartet op. 12 and the first String Quintet op. 18 by Mendelssohn, and they do it with an enchanting dedication. The gorgeous melodic arches are beautifully balanced and breathed through. There is not a single blemish in the intonation, the low register provides a rich foundation and the interpretation is full of life. These are just some of the many outstanding features of this performance.

Klassieke Zaken [THE NETHERLANDS]

May 2009

The Matangi Quartet has a beautiful, deep and full sound with a great balance. The ensemble shows the sunny, happy side of Mendelssohn on this CD, as well as the darker side of his music. The listener is carried along on the waves of changing moods and variable tempos and dynamics. The performance sounds natural all the time, never artificially intellectual. It seems like the four young string players, who are relatively speaking still newcomers in the world of chamber music, have been performing together for ages. Their musical playing is so very mature.