

Biography | September 2025

Johannes Marmen | violin
Laia Valentin Braun | violin
Bryony Gibson-Cornish | viola
Sinéad O'Halloran | violoncello

Perfection with soul

They come from four different countries and cultures: but what unites Johannes, Laia, Bryony and Sinéad are the musical conversations and stories they present to the audience. This fantastical world of string quartet music emerges from a constant musical dialogue that is able to create a deep and meaningful connection through trust, respect and joy. It is this personal touch, this musical honesty, coupled with freedom and the courage to take risks, that creates this unique moment with the audience in concert.

With the courage, vitality and intensity of its performances, the Marmen Quartet is fast establishing itself as one of the most impressive and engaging talents in chamber music, demonstrated by recent first prizes at the prestigious Bordeaux and Banff International String Quartet Competitions.

The quartet brings its energy and intelligence to an impressive range of repertoire, ranging from Haydn to music of today. Last season they gave the world premiere of Garth Knox's Secret Letters, written for them as a companion piece to Janáček's Intimate Letters. Previous commissions have included Salina Fisher's Heal, composed for them in the wake of the pandemic, and they made their Australian debut in 2023, playing a work written for them by Hannah Kendall as part of the Australian National Academy of Music's Quartet-haus project. They are currently working on a new project with composer Samuel Adams and percussionist DOMNIQ.

Their recording schedule for BIS also demonstrates their wide-ranging musical appetite. Their debut recording (released in January 2025) features works by Ligeti and Bartók, with future recordings including Debussy, Ravel and Takemitsu; Haydn quartets and Chausson's Concert and Franck's Piano Quintet with violinist Johan Dalene and pianist Can Çakmur.

The quartet has played in the UK's most prestigious halls and festivals, including Wigmore Hall and BBC Proms, and its reputation is spreading quickly across Europe, with performances including at Berlin Philharmonie, Boulez Saal, Frankfurt Alte Oper, Stockholm Konserthuset, Palladium Malmö and Muziekgebouw Eindhoven, as well as festival appearances at Lockenhaus, Mecklenburg Vorpommern, Rheingau, Heidelberg and Zeister Musiekdagen music festivals, as well as the Amsterdam, Barcelona and Gulbenkian Foundation string quartet festivals. Recent North American highlights have included performances in Calgary, Kelowna, Victoria and Capital Region Classical and the group recently completed its Peak Fellowship Ensemble-in-Residence at Meadows School of the Arts, Southern Methodist University, in partnership with the Banff International String Quartet Competition.

The quartet formed at the Royal College of Music in 2013, and has returned there as Quartet in Association, giving regular coaching to chamber music groups, playing in side-by-side projects, and mentoring young

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quartets through the RCM String Quartet Platform. They held a Guildhall School of Music String Quartet Fellowship (2018–20) and studied at the Hochschule für Musik in Hannover with Oliver Wille, as well as in London with Simon Rowland-Jones and John Myerscough (Doric Quartet). They were mentored by the late Peter Cropper and have received support from the Musicians Company/Concordia Foundation, Hattori Foundation, Help Musicians and Royal Philharmonic Society. The Marmen Quartet is an official Pirastro Artist.

Short version

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The quartet has commissioned works from composers such as Hannah Kendall, Salina Fishers and Garth Knox (Arditti Quartet).

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