

# Aris Quartett

With the world premiere recording of Gerald Resch's "attacca" String Quartet, composed in 2019, and Beethoven's legendary Razumovsky Quartet Op. 59, No. 1, the Aris Quartett presents an exciting program on its latest album.

Gabriele Luster spoke to Caspar Vinzens, the ensemble's violist, about the recording and the connection between the two works.



Photo: Sophie Wolter

*The Aris Quartett was set to make its debut with this program at the 'Wiener Musikverein' during the Beethoven Year 2020, on the anniversary of the composer's death. The coronavirus put an end to these plans ...*

**Vinzens:** Yes, we were really looking forward to this debut and

were working hard towards it. Everything fit together so well, the program, the place, the year, and even the day ... When it became clear that the concert could not take place, we decided to record a CD to pay tribute to this special program.

*Who came up with the idea*

*of asking Austrian composer Gerald Resch to engage with Beethoven's F-major Quartet?*

**Vinzens:** As part of the Beethoven Year, the 'Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Wien' had commissioned a string quartet from Resch, which we were then to premiere at the Musikverein.





Photo: Sophie Wolter

*How and when did you first meet Gerald Resch?*

**Vinzens:** In April 2019 we had a performance in the 'Wiener Konzerthaus'. Resch came to listen, we met afterwards and passed an inspiring evening together with many stimulating conversations. It was important to him to get to know us as musicians.

*The composer had the opportunity to "tailor" his Third String Quartet "attacca" to the Aris Quartett. Did he do so, and how?*

**Vinzens:** It's a great experience to play something that was written for and dedicated to us. Many elements we appreciate in a work are integrated into it, such as incisive rhythms, gripping energy, and strong communication between the indivi-



Gerald Resch © Maria Frodl

dual voices. I am certain the work will also bring a lot of joy to many other quartets in the future.

*Resch says that he drew inspiration from characteristic peculiarities in Beethoven's quartet. Can the listener recognize these and can you, as the interpreter, make them audible to him or her?*

**Vinzens:** One of Resch's central ideas is the attacca principle, i.e. the seamless connection between

individual sections and movements. Beethoven was one of the first to write works that are not just a series of movements, but whose parts combine together to form a larger whole. Resch succeeds in taking up this idea and telling a consistent story throughout the whole course of the piece. The connoisseur will also be able to discover a number of Beethovenian motifs.

*"attacca" is the first contemporary work that you are releasing on CD. What role does new music play in your repertoire on the whole?*

**Vinzens:** Music history is never finished, it is continually evolving. In this respect, we feel it is our responsibility to play new works and to inspire our audience's enthusiasm for them.

When contemporary works are integrated into a well-suited program, they challenge and encourage one to listen. We ourselves have a great deal of fun continually discovering new things.

*Which of the two works presents the greater challenge for you and your colleagues?*

**Vinzens:** Of course, Beethoven's First Razumovsky Quartet is an enormous challenge and one of the most difficult things ever written for string quartet, especially since we are also confronted with the countless magnificent recordings that already exist. So at first it seems easier to engage with a piece that has never been played before. But Resch also challenges us in many ways, for example with his extremely tricky rhythms and novel playing techniques. Technically difficult, but delightful. (laughs)

*With a playing time of 40 minutes, Beethoven's Razumovsky Quartet is a monumental opus that went beyond the conventions of the time. How is the quartet able to maintain the tension throughout the whole piece?*

**Vinzens:** Maintaining the tension is not much of a problem with this music because it is so varied and intense. The slow movement, for example, often seems to me the most beautiful thing ever compo-

sed, and not tiring in the least. With the three Op. 59 string quartets, Beethoven enters a new world; they are where he launches into the symphonic dimension, so to speak.


*How does the Aris Quartett work out an individual interpretation?*

**Vinzens:** In addition to the many rehearsals, by playing the piece frequently in concert ... The interpretation comes about during a joint process in which everyone brings in their own ideas and we try out many things. Of course we are also familiar with the many great recordings by other ensembles, but the more you play a work yourself, the more personal the interpretation becomes.

*Will your live concert – after all, Resch's work is still awaiting its debut at the 'Wiener Musikverein'*


*as planned – will be held there at some point?*

**Vinzens:** Unfortunately, this is uncertain at the moment – the backlog of concerts canceled due to the coronavirus is quite large. But we hope we will be invited again. Nonetheless, in the meantime we have been able to premiere Resch's "attacca" at

GENUIN 

**Attacca**

Gerald Resch: String Quartet No. 3 "attacca"  
 Ludwig van Beethoven: String Quartet No. 7 in F major, Op. 59 No. 1



**Aris Quartett**

**NEW CD!**

Attacca  
String quartets by  
Beethoven and Resch  
GENUIN classics,  
GEN21736  
Release date:  
May 7th 2021

the Paul Sacher Foundation in Basel, which is a very special place with its huge archive for contemporary music.

*During the coronavirus lockdowns, were you able to keep in touch with your audience apart from your CDs?*

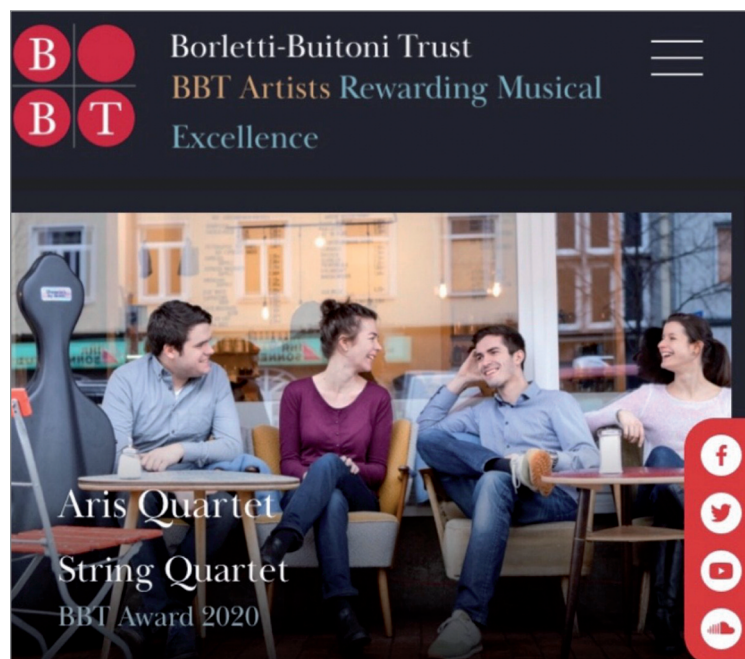
**Vinzens:** In summer 2020 we had a multi-day residency in Hamburg's Elbphilharmonie. There, as part of a film project, we had the opportunity to explore the sound of the building,



which was empty due to the pandemic, and record music by György Kurtág in various locations throughout the premises. In the Elbphilharmonie and some other concert halls, for example in Paris and Stockholm, we also had the opportunity to record live concerts as videos and stream them. In this way our audience was always able to hear and see something current from us. But this can only ever be a complement, and never a substitute for the live experience!

*In the past Covid year, many important debuts by the Aris Quartett went up in smoke ...*

**Vinzens:** That is true. For example, a major U.S. tour was planned for April 2021. We were set to make our debuts in Milan, Lisbon, Amsterdam, and many other important metropolises ... That was and is a bitter experience. But we are all the more loo-

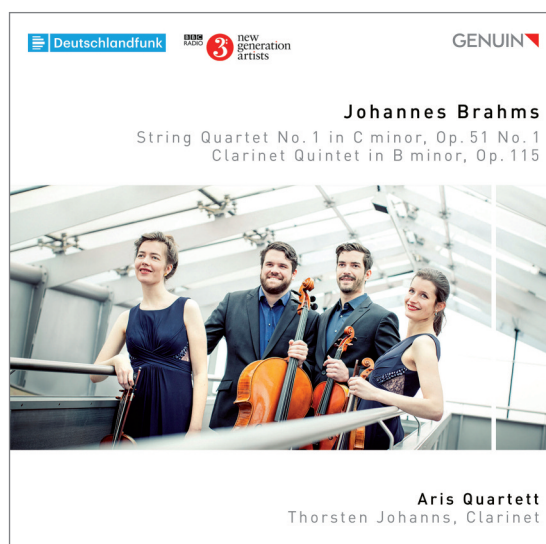


king forward to when things are able to resume again.

*What does the near future look like for the Quartet?*

**Vinzens:** Basically, we are optimistic that the situation will improve in the foreseeable future. But at the moment it is not really possible to plan. The important thing is that we have used the time well, rehearsed a lot, worked with composers, and made two CDs. But what we really miss is

the emotional interaction with our listeners. We are longing for the moment when we can step on stage again in front of an audience ...



Johannes Brahms:  
String quartet No. 1  
Clarinet quintet  
GENUIN classics,  
GEN20704  
Release: 2020



String quartets by  
Shostakovich and  
Schubert  
GENUIN classics,  
GEN18617  
Release: 2018