

Around the World with Forty Fingers: SALUT SALON

The success story of an extraordinary quartet

They were hailed by the arts section of German national newspaper DIE WELT in May 2008 as one of the most successful German “cultural exports” – and with good reason: founded in Hamburg in 2000 by Angelika Bachmann (violin) and Iris Siegfried (violin and voice) “Salut Salon” has taken the art of crossover to chamber music in a virtuoso manner and added to the brilliantly developed mix of classic, pop, chanson, and folk, an absolutely unique stage performance: musical perfection with magical charm.

Their classical competence did not just come out of nowhere. Angelika Bachmann’s special musical gift was noticed early and as a child the senate of the City of Hamburg released her from normal schooling so that she could devote herself entirely to playing the violin. At seven she performed solo with the Hamburg Symphonic, appeared on television, and consequently won numerous 1st prizes in the prestigious German competition for young musicians “Jugend Musiziert”. Roland Greutter, first concertmaster of the NDR Symphony Orchestra, Germany’s national radio orchestra, oversaw the musical education of the multitalented Angelika, who later proceeded with curricula in German studies and philosophy.

Iris Siegfried also earned her musical laurels at various young musician competitions, honed her singing talents in a number of Hamburg choirs and a-cappella groups and took, in addition to her musical education, a degree in law and a further study course at the Hamburg College of Music and Theatre to qualify as arts manager. When not on the road with SALUT SALON, she works as a lawyer in a Hamburg law office.

The quartet is completed by alternating line-ups: Sonja Lena Schmid or Anne-Christin Schwarz on cello, and Anne von Twardowski, Jennifer R uth or Valeria Stab on piano, all of whom are classically trained musicians with their own careers in the international concert business.

Thus the exquisite ensemble juggles masterfully with Bach and Ray Charles, Mozart and Piazzola, Brahms and the “Pink Panther”, transforms the concert podium, now into a variety stage, now into a puppet theatre, while proving time and again, that music which moves people needs no genre labelling.

As a sideline, in addition to their quartet concerts, Angelika Bachmann and Iris Siegfried also lead the “Cool Strings”, a children’s and youth orchestra, which they founded in 1996, and were subsequently awarded the “Inventio 2004” prize as the most innovative music projects in Germany by the German president Johannes Rau, and in addition with whom they have worked together with the music school of Achupallas, the poverty-stricken quarter of the Chilean city Vina del Mar.

In Hamburg, the Thalia Theater has become something of a second home for them. At Germany's renowned theatre of the spoken word they played in summer 2008 to a full house 9 times consecutively, in July 2009 11 times, and they are already booked for 3 weeks in 2010 (9.-25. July) for the premiere of their new programme "Klassisch Verf hrt 2010" ("Classic Seduction 2010"). Also world-wide the quartet is enjoying a steadily growing fan community. On their concert tours they gave guest performances not only all over Europe but also in Asia, the US and South America. Their next big tour in Germany starts in November 2009. Then in December it's off to Chile again.