



THE
BEST
IN
HERITAGE





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Enhancing Historic Houses and String Quartets in a Circular Economy

LE DIMORE DEL QUARTETTO
MILAN, ITALY
EUROPEAN HERITAGE AWARD / EUROPA NOSTRA AWARD
2019 – EDUCATION, TRAINING AND AWARENESS-RAISING

Francesca Moncada
FOUNDER, LE DIMORE DEL QUARTETTO

↗
WWW.LEDIMOREDELQUARTETTO.EUM

↗
INFO@LEDIMOREDELQUARTETTO.EUA

↗
LE DIMORE DEL QUARTETTO
CORSO MAGENTA 5
20123 MILANO
ITALIA

3.

A winning combination

Le Dimore del Quartetto [The Quartet's Residencies] is an organisation supporting young string quartets at the beginning of their careers and enhancing the heritage of historic houses in a circular economy.

«I became fascinated by the sound of the string quartet some twenty years ago, almost by

accident. I immediately understood that the basis of the creative and expressive tension that characterises this ensemble was teamwork. To be part of this electrifying field is a privilege that requires only the ability to listen. This is why I felt a need to disseminate this musical genre, with the certainty that anyone could fall in love with it under the right conditions» says Francesca Moncada di Paternò, Le Dimore del Quartetto's founder.

The answer is that chamber music, and especially the string quartet – which is formed by two violins, a viola and a cello – should be enjoyed in an intimate setting, because it is a full-immersion experience of listening, watching and participating. In this way alone can this type of music be appreciated and understood in its uniqueness. This is why it is called chamber music.

So where were the chambers, the rooms, where this music first appeared – this music that flourished so abundantly that thousands of concert societies were created for it across all of Europe? The answer is that aristocratic residences had great halls and music rooms; concerts were part of the life of the court; and the musicians who performed created a direct contact with the audience members and often knew them personally. Europe is sprinkled with historic residences that are part of our territories' identities, but today they are often empty, separated from

the life of their respective communities. These mostly privately owned monuments are a precious inheritance but, at the same time, hard to keep alive within a modern lifestyle.

Thus in 2016 Le Dimore del Quartetto emerged as the first network in Europe that combines historic houses and young quartets with a simple exchange. When the ensembles have artistic commitments far from their hometowns, houses host them for free, for up to a week, and receive a concert in return. This mutually beneficial relationship provides an adequate space for the ensemble to study and practice their arts and allows villas to become centres of culture, inviting people to appreciate not only classical music, but also the often hidden heritage of historic houses.

By connecting, or rather re-connecting, these two worlds the requirements of the musicians become resources for the historic residences, and vice-versa, in a circular structure within which civil society plays a fundamental role. It all began almost as a game, with telephone calls to a few friends who were willing to give the idea a try. The response was incredible: after having overcome some initial hesitation, the enthusiasm was passed by word of mouth from home to home, from quartet to quartet, and it brought together the first partners through whom the network began to develop organically.

What DQ is doing nowadays

Le Dimore del Quartetto today numbers 258 houses in 16 countries in Europe and beyond, and it includes 79 ensembles (string quartets and trios, and trios with piano), among the finest on the world's stages, with musicians from 33 different countries. The network of houses has been created in partnership with



Associazione Dimore Storiche Italiane, Fondo Ambiente Italiano (the Italian National Trust), European Historic Houses, Casas Históricas y Singulares, Historic Houses UK, Embassies and Cultural Institutes, but it is open to all houses that have the possibility to host and belong to dynamic and passionate people. On the musical side, the artistic director Simone Gramaglia (Quartetto di Cremona) selects the best emerging ensembles coming from all over the world. The organisation has been awarded the Europa Nostra Award/European Heritage Award 2019 for "Education, Training and Awareness-Raising".

Beginning with an exchange of hospitality and concerts, various projects have been created in collaboration with numerous residence proprietors, who have found an opportunity to create shared values. Concert societies, academies, competitions, embassies, institutions, foundations and instrument collections have given their support to this plan, which continues to grow at great speed. Thanks to this network system, Le Dimore del Quartetto manages to bring high-level

cultural content even into areas that have no cultural institutions, thereby enhancing and enlivening even small communities.

Thus, many different festivals have emerged, and their itineraries are leading to discoveries of music and of spaces, and are activating social and productive systems in areas where this would otherwise be hard to achieve. The perfect example is Archillum, a widespread series of concerts hosted by historic houses scattered all over a specific region, aimed at enhancing the heritage of less-known territories and the string quartet repertoire played by outstanding young ensembles. The audience of Archillum is given a map gathering itineraries and points of cultural interest nearby the historic houses, and the discovery of the territory is enacted through activities such as walks, local product and wine tastings, guided tours of the historic houses, the gardens and other cultural landmarks. This is a replicable format intended to reach out to new and diverse audiences. All the concerts are for free, last 50 minutes and are introduced by the house



owner and the musicians. The atmosphere is indeed intimate and unique and overcomes the usual distance between the musicians and the audience in a concert hall.

To this are added educational projects and company training programs, by presenting the string quartet as a metaphor of shared leadership, diversity and inclusion – artistic collaborations that favour the circulation of young European professionals. And the evolution is continuing, bypassing all borders.

A glimpse into the future

Le Dimore del Quartetto combines two fundamental assets in European cultural and social

history. On the one hand, there are the historical residences, often private or little known, yet with strong ties to local and European history, as evidenced by the stylistic influences that affect each other in architecture, landscapes and gardens. On the oth-

er, there is chamber music, which is at the heart of the history of Western music. From the Renaissance courts to nineteenth-century salons, it never ceased to be heard in the European most beautiful homes, and it knew no borders.

The result of this winning combination is the creation of a scalable model, based on the values of a circular structure that has allowed – and that continues to favour – European development in various activities, with the possibility of involving diverse communities and places. In such a new scenario that the cultural sector has to face in this very critical moment, conceiving heritage as a core set of shared values that has been transmitted from one generation to another and has evolved in response to the historical, social and cultural development of Europe is the common pillar that we can use to state solidarity and cohesion. Heritage is the proof of our deeply interconnected identities and the power of creating networks and trans-disciplinary collaborations can be a strategic model within the cultural sector and beyond.



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based in Zagreb is a non-governmental, non-profit organisation, member of Europa Nostra, dedicated to promoting every aspect of professional excellence in heritage professions and doing it "by power of example". The Association is tiny and will grow only through its own programme and those who assist it. "The Best in Heritage -Excellence Club" (Exponatec), "Global Love Museum" and the website www.mnemosophy.com being our foremost activities.

SECRETARIAT:

org.secretary@thebestinheritage.com
European Heritage Association /
The Best In Heritage
Trg kralja Petra Krešimira IV, No.7
HR - 10000 Zagreb, Croatia
M +385 91 525 04 77

DIRECTOR:

Professor Tomislav Šola
director@thebestinheritage.com

PROJECT MANAGER:

Mr Luka Čipek
pm@thebestinheritage.com

www.thebestinheritage.com



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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Professor Tomislav S. Šola

EDITOR

Luka Čipek

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Jen Walklate

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