



# Classicus Trio

## Ensemble Biography

The Classicus Trio is a leading voice in contemporary chamber music, acclaimed for its broad repertoire, artistic focus, and innovative programming. Their concerts balance works from different musical eras, often curated around a unifying theme.

Contemporary music is a key part of their mission: they regularly perform works by living composers and have premiered numerous new pieces. A central artistic influence is György Kurtág, with whom the Trio works closely. His support is regarded as a significant artistic recognition, and the members of the ensemble were honored to perform at the memorial concert for Márta Kurtág at his invitation.

The Trio has performed extensively across Hungary, Germany, Switzerland, Turkey, and made their U.S. debut at Bard College's Kurtág Festival in 2024, where they also led a week-long masterclass for students.

Known for their collaborative spirit, the Classicus Trio frequently works with guest artists on piano, flute, oboe, percussion, and guitar, with new projects planned for the 2025–2026 season.

## Special Highlight: Péter Tornyai's Adaptation of *Musica Ricercata*

Péter Tornyai, violist of the Trio has created a string trio adaptation of György Ligeti's renowned composition, *Musica Ricercata*. This highly anticipated work will have its world premiere in December 2025 at the Franz Liszt Academy in Budapest.

## **Classicus Quartet – Previous Successes**

Before the founding of the Classicus Trio, the ensemble's members achieved significant success as the Classicus Quartet. They gained widespread recognition in Hungary, notably for their Wohltemperiertes Streichquartett series at the Budapest Music Center, where they performed over 70 works over six years.

This series featured string quartets based on twelve-tone techniques, including significant Hungarian works by Bartók, Kodály, Ligeti, Seiber, and Kurtág, alongside contemporary compositions. The Quartet regularly premiered new works, including pieces by composers such as Zoltán Jeney, and presented over two dozen compositions by young Hungarian composers.

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## **Member Bios**

### **Eszter Kökény – Violinist**

Eszter Kökény began her violin studies at the age of six in her hometown, Kecskemét, Hungary. In 2010, she was admitted to the Special Talents' Class at the Franz Liszt Academy of Music in Budapest.

A rising star in the classical music world, Eszter made a recording for the 'Young Talents' CD of the New Europe Foundation of MOL Rt in 2013. She went on to win the first prize at the Ede Zathureczky Memorial Competition in 2014, and in 2016, she claimed both the Grand Prix and Special Prize at the Balys Dvarionas International Violin Competition.

In 2018, Eszter was awarded a scholarship from the Bank of China and became an artist at the International Bach Festival Gran Canaria. She has had the privilege of performing as a soloist with esteemed orchestras, including the Anima Musicae Chamber Orchestra, Aarhus Youth Symphonic Orchestra, Lithuanian National Philharmonic Orchestra, and IBF Gran Canaria Chamber Orchestra.

Eszter completed her Master's Diploma at the Franz Liszt Academy of Music in 2020, studying under Eszter Perényi and Ádám Banda. In addition to her studies, she spent a year in Cologne as an Erasmus Scholarship holder, learning from Barnabás Kelemen.

Since January 2022, Eszter has been a member of the Hungarian National Philharmonic Orchestra's first violin section. She also frequently performs as a substitute violinist

with the Budapest Festival Orchestra and regularly participates in various chamber and contemporary music ensembles. In 2022, she was awarded the Junior Prima Prize.

Eszter currently performs on a Rugeri violin, generously loaned by the Ede Zathureczky Foundation.

### **Péter Tornyai – Composer, Violist, Violinist, Educator**

Péter Tornyai is a Hungarian composer, chamber musician, and violist/violinist. He earned his DLA degree at the Ferenc Liszt Academy of Music, where he currently teaches composition, orchestration, and contemporary music.

Tornyai's compositions have been awarded in numerous national and international competitions. His works have been performed by distinguished ensembles and orchestras, including the JACK Quartet, Stadler Quartet, Benyounes Quartet, Kelemen Quartet, Hungarian National Philharmonic, Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen, and Wiener Kammerorchester, across Europe, the USA, and New Zealand.

A founding member of several prominent contemporary music groups, Tornyai is active in the CentriFUGA, THReNSeMBle, Ludium Ensemble (specialized in György Kurtág's music), Dohnányi Quartet, Classicus Ensemble, and Hermina Artist Collective, and frequently performs with UMZE.

He has worked with composers such as György Kurtág and Péter Eötvös. In 2021, he completed his doctoral (DLA) program at the Liszt Academy, where he has taught since 2016. His academic work is complemented by his active performance schedule and role as a violist of the Classicus Trio, Classicus Quartet and Dohnányi Quartet.

### **Zétényi Tamás – Cellist, Educator, Composer**

Tamás Zétényi is an active member of the Hungarian music scene, both as the cellist of Classicus Quartet and an adjunct professor at Széchenyi István University, Győr. Celebrating the 2023 centenary of Ligeti, BMC Records released Zétényi's Kodály&Ligeti recording, including the world premiere of his transcription of Ligeti's Viola Sonata.

Tamás Zétényi plays dozens of concerts a year as a founding member of Classicus Ensemble, of Classicus Quartet and of Trio Passacaglia. Since 2020 Tamás has regularly appeared with jazz guitarist Gábor Gadó; he recorded an album as a member of the Gábor Gadó - Veronika Harcsa sextet at BMC Records.

Tamás Zétényi also regularly performs as a soloist. He has played solo concerts in several countries of Europe and in the USA. As a dedicated performer of new music he has collaborated with a number of composers, playing dozens of first performances each year. He considers György Kurtág as his most important source of inspiration, and Péter Tornyai's 70 minute long piece for solo cello and male choir, *Dixit*, as his most important commission.

A transcription for cello of J. S. Bach's BWV 997 Lute Suite by Marcell Dargay and Tamás Zétényi was published by EMB in 2022.

Tamás Zétényi studied in Budapest and at Bard College and defended his doctoral thesis on the late chamber music of Liszt at Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music, Budapest.