PRESS RELEASE

MERITA celebrates in Paris three years of innovation in chamber music and cultural heritage

Paris, July 2025 – After three intense and transformative years, **MERITA**, the European platform for emerging string quartets, has reached its conclusion with a final **Transnational Project Meeting in Paris**, organized by **ProQuartet** in collaboration with **Le Dimore del Quartetto**. This final event celebrated the impressive achievements of a visionary initiative that has **redefined** the connection between music, cultural heritage, and European cooperation.

MERITA (acronym for *where chamber Music, cultural hERItage and TAlent meet*), winner of the **Creative Europe – European Platform 2021** call, operates under the leadership of **Le Dimore del Quartetto** in collaboration with **16 partner organizations from 12 countries**. Since its launch in 2022, the platform has offered fertile ground for experimentation, growth, and cross-cultural exchange, designed to enhance visibility, mobility, and professional sustainability of young European chamber ensembles.

From its inception, **MERITA has created** a dynamic ecosystem where young string quartets **grow** artistically and professionally, in close dialogue with historic locations, cultural institutions, and diverse audiences. The strength of its transnational network has pushed the project far beyond its original objectives.

Thanks to this spirit of collaboration, **MERITA has expanded** its activities significantly, enriching the experience for both artists and communities. The platform currently **supports 38 string quartets**, involving **152 exceptional musicians from 28 different nationalities**, and **welcomes interdisciplinary collaborations** with more than **20 dancers, singers, actors, and multimedia artists**, reflecting an increasingly inclusive and cross-sectoral approach.

At the heart of **MERITA are its artistic residencies**, which **have reached 39 in total**, accumulating **176 days of residency** in **26 historic houses**, exceeding initial plans.

The concert program has far **exceeded initial expectations**, thanks to the strong commitment of our partners and the valuable synergies developed across all territories. A total of **192 concerts** have been performed by the quartets in **136 venues** across **26 countries**. **More than 6,000 people** attended concerts between **March 2024 and June 2025**, demonstrating the project's ability to broaden access to chamber music for diverse audiences. The topics explored during the residencies, which inspired the

quartets' projects and concert formats, have made it possible to reach an unusually wide and heterogeneous public, far beyond the traditional chamber music circle. MERITA has engaged **children, individuals in vulnerable situations, and people unfamiliar with classical music**, offering them inclusive and innovative ways to experience the richness of this repertoire.

Beyond residencies and concerts, MERITA **has fostered professional development** through a wide range of initiatives: **4 international masterclasses**, **1 study visit**, and **32 dissemination events** focused on promoting the Creative Europe Programme.

The project also has established **33 new international partnerships**, operating **across 16 European and non-European countries**, underlining MERITA's role as a catalyst for long-term cooperation and innovation in the cultural sector.

Through digital innovation, mentorship, and performance opportunities, **MERITA has built a vibrant platform for exchange, growth, and artistic excellence**. Many MERITA ensembles, benefiting from the visibility offered by the platform, **achieved significant international awards and recognitions**, further establishing their presence on the global chamber music stage.

The final event took place just after the **Fête de la Musique** (June 21), resonating with **MERITA's** inclusive and celebratory spirit. In the setting of **Institut National des Jeunes Aveugles**, participants have reflected on a shared journey that has merged classical music with heritage, innovation, and cooperation.

After a welcome by **Benoit Bezin**, President of ProQuartet, and a brief introduction of the MERITA Platform by **Francesca Moncada**, President of Le Dimore del Quartetto and project manager of MERITA, the evening continued with a concert by the **Wassily Quartet**, featuring their interactive ***Concert à la carte*** format. This participatory experience invited the audience to shape the music program in real time, encouraging deeper connections between musicians and listeners.

"*MERITA represents a journey of mutual support, creativity, and cultural connection*," **says Francesca Moncada**, President of **Le Dimore del Quartetto** and Project Manager of **MERITA**. "*We witness how shared values and artistic excellence shape a more inclusive and sustainable cultural landscape across Europe*."

Though this moment marks the conclusion of MERITA's first edition, its legacy continues to evolve. MERITA activities will continue until August 2025 all over Europe with more than 25 concerts.
Furthermore, in **October 2025**, the platform will launch its next chapter:

MERITAcubed, a second edition of the project co-funded by Creative Europe, running through **October 2029**.

MERITAcubed will support **56 new ensembles**, including string quartets and piano trios, **by offering** concerts, residencies, showcases, training, and tailored career development tools. With 19 partner organizations from 16 countries, **the new program will aim to deepen MERITA's impact** by exploring innovative economic models, enhancing digital tools, and strengthening the resilience of the chamber music sector in a changing Europe.

The final meeting in Paris stood as more than a celebration, it marked a milestone for the hundreds of artists, institutions, and communities who give life to MERITA. The project demonstrated that chamber music thrives beyond traditional concert halls when nurtured in dialogue with heritage, technology, and people.

For more information and discover more about MERITA, visit www.meritaplatform.eu

MERITA PLATFORM MEMBERS

Le Dimore del Quartetto is a creative cultural enterprise that, from 2015, supports international young string quartets and chamber music ensembles at the beginning of their career and enhances the European cultural heritage, in a circular economy. With a consolidated network of houses, ensembles and partners in the fields of music and of the cultural heritage, it is specialized in planning and in the management of festivals and travel itineraries, masterclasses and training programs for musicians, educational projects for primary and secondary schools and universities, team-building activities for companies, and residencies and concerts in historic houses and other places of cultural interest. www.ledimoredelquartetto.eu

The **Comitato AMUR** was born to bring together the most important Italian chamber music institutions into a single, operative network promoting common projects. The 18 entities from North to South have on average 100 years of history: Società Filarmonica Trento, founded in 1795, Società del Quartetto di Milano, Associazione Alessandro Scarlatti Napoli and Fondazione Perugia Musica Classica ONLUS - organizing Sagra Musicale Umbra, one of the oldest music festivals in Italy - are just some of them. As a spread-out concert societies network, AMUR has been promoting the circulation of projects and the involvement of different actors for the economic, cultural and social enhancement of a territory. Pioneering this experience through the Festival Musica con Vista, each member will contribute to build a chamber music, European ecosystem in which the resources of every participant are mobilized in order to benefit the others through the engagement of the best emerging string ensembles. www.comitatoamur.it

The **B & M Theocharakis Foundation** is a non-profit, public benefit foundation for the Fine Arts and Music, situated opposite the Hellenic Parliament and right in the cultural and commercial heart of Athens. The Foundation focuses on the emergence of the Modern and its continued development over the 20th and the 21st century; it aims to promote the work of Greek artists abroad, to educate audiences, develop networks of collaboration and exchange, and help advance the role of culture in society. To achieve its goals, the Foundation organizes periodical fine art exhibitions, concerts of chamber music (mainly string quartets and piano circles), lectures, poetry events, and educational programs. Amongst its international collaborations, the Foundation lists “The Accademia della Scala di Milano”, the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, the Picasso Museum Muenster, the Beijing Academy of Fine Arts, the Center Georges Pompidou and other prominent cultural institutions. It has also worked with artists such as Pretty Yende, Stephen Kovacevic, to name but a few.
www.thf.gr

Beogradska Umetnička Nova Teritorija (Belgrade Artistic New Territory - BUNT) is the only independent, non-profit, initiative, established in 2014, with the aim of enhancing classical music culture, performance and education in Serbia. So far, BUNT has organized 10 festivals which encompassed more than 120 concerts with the participation of more than 1000 artists from Serbia and abroad (among app. 100 musicians from abroad were Pierre Laurent Aimard, Edin Karamazov, Quartet Molinari, Gordan Nikolic, Tamara Stefanovic); hosted dozens of expert and general debates related to classical music; published 2 books on BUNT festivals and launched 8 books related to classical music; recorded and published 4 CDs of live concerts held within BUNT festivals and additionally launched 10 other CDs; produced a number of videos and provided emerging talents with 6 master classes. BUNT is also a socially responsible initiative and believes in engaged art. Therefore, it is particularly proud of organizing a humanitarian event – opera for refugees in 2016, and for enabling children and young people suffering from autism to hold concerts, i.e. perform solo and in choir with prominent Serbian artists during each BUNT festival.
www.bunt.rs/bt/

Cadenza Arts Management Ltd. was founded in 2011, with the purpose of managing concerts and providing management services for different artists and groups. Currently CAM represents soloists and ensembles in Hungary and abroad as well. In addition to this, the agency is the organizer of the New Millennium International Chamber Music Festival and Academy, and the artistic advisor of the Balaton Summer Music Festival. The agency's projects with violinist Miranda Liu have been awarded by the Visegrad Fund in 2021, and by Erasmus+ in 2022.
In Merita CAM will participate in the meetings and in the management and communication of the project in Hungary. CAM will present string quartets in Hungary at 9 special concerts.
www.cadenza.hu

EuAbout Lab ASBL – European Association for Research, Educational, Cultural and Social Innovation is a non-profit association under Belgian law based in Brussels, at the center of the European Institutions, but with its roots in the heart of Italian cultural heritage.
EuAbout Lab aims to promote, support, represent the Italian cultural organizations and cultural and creative industries in the European Union. The association was born from the awareness that the Italian cultural heritage, in its uniqueness and relevance, is an "unicum", and, at the same time, it is a pillar of European identity. However, this relevance is still unexpressed in the context of the European Union with regards financial access, transnational and international projects, exchanges and networking. The main scope of EuAbout Lab is to be a response to this gap, becoming a concrete and real reference point for all Italian cultural and creative organizations in Europe. The staff is expert in project management, financial management, monitoring and evaluation of European cultural projects.

Europa Nostra is the European voice of civil society committed to safeguarding and promoting cultural and natural heritage. It is a pan-European federation of heritage NGOs, supported by a wide network of public bodies, private companies and individuals, covering over 40 countries. Europa Nostra maintains close relations with the European Union, the Council of Europe, UNESCO and other international bodies. Europa Nostra campaigns to save Europe's endangered heritage, in particular through the 7 Most Endangered Programme. It celebrates excellence through the European Heritage Awards / Europa Nostra Award, and contributes to the definition and implementation of European strategies and policies related to heritage. We are an official partner of the New European Bauhaus initiative and act as the Regional Co-Chair of the Climate Heritage Network for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States.
www.europanostra.org

European Historic Houses (EHH) is a non-profit association standing for the private owners of historic buildings, their gardens and parks. EHH represents 26 national associations of privately-owned historic houses around Europe. The association defends the preservation, conservation and transmission of private-owned heritage houses and represents 50.000 of them throughout Europe. EHH is advocating at the European level and actively participating in different cultural heritage and tourism groups. Its main objective is to act as the voice of privately-owned heritage houses towards the European institutions and provide tools for its members to network and share the best practices to develop most sustainably. Moreover, EHH focuses on valorising cultural interests and practices by engaging emerging artists and connecting them to cultural territories.
www.europeanhistorichouse

experimentadesign is a Portugal-based and internationally recognized knowledge production unit acting as an active communication platform for design, architecture and project culture. experimentadesign's field of action is contemporary cultural production, practiced from an inclusive, multidisciplinary and transversal perspective. experimentadesign's activity combines critical thinking, concept development and contemporary creativity, resulting in a consistent and incisive intervention in the social, cultural and economic contexts it engages. Also known for its flagship project—the EXD Biennale — experimentadesign has built an important network of national and international renowned creative practitioners as well as an indisputable know-how in strategic design. With a truly international scope and vision, since its inception, experimentadesign has worked with over 50 countries, encompassing a total of 53 projects apart from the EXD Biennale.
www.experimentadesign.pt/

The **Julian Cochran Foundation** is an NGO that has been continuously developing new audiences open to classical music since December 2017. The weekly concerts at the Hala Koszyki in Warsaw, which the foundation has held for over 5 years, break stereotypes and prove that "classics" can accompany anyone, anytime, anywhere. The foundation supports, promotes, and helps young artists, holds events for children and adults and the world's first online piano competition (created in 2014). The educational aspect is of key significance in the foundation's everyday work, activities and ideas. It is with this particular aim in mind that many projects have been developed. Each of the foundation's activities broadens the audience's knowledge of classical music.
www.juliancochranfoundation.com

The Ilija M. Kolarac Endowment (Kolarac) is dedicated to promoting culture, science, and the arts, fostering lifelong learning, and enhancing cultural and educational values. Its vision is to be a modern, well-equipped institution with a concert hall of significance for Belgrade and Serbia, making a strong contribution to the development of music, culture, and education. The Kolarac Music Center promotes artistic music to a wide audience, welcoming both young and older music enthusiasts. The concert hall hosts over 250 concerts annually, with one-third organized by the Music Center itself. Educational programs for children, such as *How to Listen to Concerts*, help build future audiences. The long-standing concert series *Kolarac's Podium of Chamber Music – Belgrade Promenade* (every Sunday at 11 a.m.), running since 1934, is a hallmark of the institution.
.www.kolarac.

Lofoten Internasjonale Kammermusikkfest (Lofoten International Chamber Music Festival) saw its light in 2004 as Norway's northernmost chamber music festival. The festival has established itself as an institution in northern Norway with its annual events. With its high artistic level, the festival has also made a name for itself internationally.
With the initiators Knut Kirkesæther and Arvid Engegård at the helm, the Lofoten International Chamber Music Festival was held for the first time in 2004. In 2005, the festival was organized as a foundation with Knut Kirkesæther, Arvid Engegård and Vågan Municipality as founders. The festival is still run with Knut Kirkesæther as general manager and Arvid Engegård as artistic director. In 2019, the festival celebrated its first 15 years. Her Majesty Queen Sonja was in charge of the official opening of the anniversary. The Queen has previously visited the festival several times.
www.lofotenfestival.com/en

Since 1987, **ProQuartet – Centre Européen de Musique de Chambre** has played a key role in promoting the chamber music repertoire and fostering musical creation. It is dedicated to supporting the professional development of emerging European ensembles and expanding public engagement with chamber music. ProQuartet's activities are structured around four core areas:

- Support for emerging professional ensemble, particularly through its residency and professional training program;
- Research into the string quartet repertoire, alongside a strong commitment to contemporary creation through commissions and support for new works;
- Production and distribution of more than 60 concerts each season across France and Europe, and the organization of two festivals;
- Public engagement through outreach projects, mediation and the encouragement of amateur practices.;

https://proquartet.fr/

Qendra "EVENT" is a non for profit organization funded in July 2016 which mission is to organize events of national, regional and international profile in favor of education, culture, sport, cultural tourism, environment protection, agro-tourism, public relation, community development and social support of the groups in needs: Organize the realization, documentation and promotion in digital formats through the use of the information and communication technologies of the audio-visual productions in favor of education, culture, sport, cultural tourism, environment protection, agro-tourism, public relation, community development and social support of the groups in needs: Offer the service of technical assistance, consultancy and professional expertise for the public institutions in central or local level and for their agencies.
www.facebook.com/qendra.event

Stichting Strijkkwartet Biënnale Amsterdam (String Quartet Biennale Amsterdam, SQBA) was launched in January 2018 as the world's biggest string quartet festival. Every two years SQBA brings together string quartets, composers and artists from around the globe. Their rich and diverse backgrounds help mould this dynamic and innovative festival consisting of eight days in the Muziekgebouw, packed with over sixty concerts, talks, masterclasses and a lively fringe programme featuring 30 string quartets, soloists, composers and speakers. Through the centuries stunningly beautiful music has been written for string quartet; no other musical genre can boast such an extensive and solid repertoire. SQBA aims to showcase the string quartet as a contemporary and relevant art form; to create opportunities for cutting edge encounters in a vibrant festival atmosphere.
www.sqba.nl

Traces&Dreams AB is a Swedish company specializing in narration, storytelling, content, and visual communication and distribution. Stories are how we have always learned, forged an identity, made sense of the world, and understood our place within it. Traces&Dreams was born in 2015 with the aim of using the power of storytelling to bring cultural, scientific, and humanistic knowledge out of the closed spaces of academia and to educate and empower people and communities in order to foster a more equal and sustainable future.
www.tracesdreams.com

The **University of Arts of Tirana** is a Public Higher Education Institution with an artistic, academic and scientific profile. Its mission is to offer high professional education and creative activities in the field of arts and culture; to progressively enhance the level of high specialists of arts and culture with professional and scientific expertise; to facilitate the realization of research and scientific studies focusing processes of the development and progress of arts and culture. The University of Arts of Tirana is considered as one of cultural and creative sectors' whose activities are based on cultural values and/or artistic expressions; its activities include the development, the creation, the production, the dissemination and the preservation of goods and services which embody cultural, artistic or other creative expressions, as well as related functions such as education. Apart from the teaching process, the live artistic performances, art exhibitions and career development are concentrated in the UART premises, welcoming and involving students in musical productions, in theater and choreography performances, visual arts exhibitions and film screenings every semester.
www.uart.edu.al