

Danae & Kiveli Dörken – Piano Duo

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BIOGRAPHY 2023/2024

Danae and Kiveli Dörken's success as a piano duo, their obvious artistic consensus, their pianistic coalescence and even the way they physically intertwine at the instrument all attest to the fact that they are predestined to perform as a duo. *Fono Forum* considers them “worthy candidates as successors to the Labèques or the Pekinels”, while the *Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger* praises the duo as “a miracle of lightness, charm and feeling”.

The sisters have both been pursuing successful careers as soloists and chamber musicians for several years already, but independently of one another, instead performing with other well-known instrumentalists. “We used to think that playing four hands or as a duo would be too self-evident a choice, so we first wanted to discover our own paths and develop independently, both musically and personally.” Their separate tracks eventually merged: “It’s fascinating to hear how they have imbibed the cooperative spirit of real chamber music,” enthuses the magazine *PianoNews*. “The piano duet is the most intimate form of chamber music and such a revealing art form, being physically so close at the same instrument,” says Danae.

Their early musical routes were independent, yet parallel: both sisters were moulded by the same teachers. When they were 11 and 7 years old, they started lessons with the renowned piano pedagogue Prof. Karl-Heinz Kämmerling. Later they continued their studies with pianist and conductor Lars Vogt, with whom they formed a close friendship that lasted until his death in September 2022.

In the 2023/24 season their engagements include concerts with the Symphony Orchestra in Helsingborg, the Bruch Concerto for two pianos with the Baden-Baden Philharmonic and four-hand recitals in Fürth, Finsterwalde, Koblenz and at the festival *Sommerliche Musiktage Hitzacker*. Recently their first CD containing four-handed piano compositions, *Apollo & Dionysus*, was released on the Berlin Classics label. “The mysteries of the selected pieces mostly gleam from within, never obtrusively, but with poetic intensity,” writes the reviewer of the magazine *concerti*.

The CD title alludes to one half of the Greek-German origins of the sisters, who were born and raised in Germany. “As children, we spent our summer holidays on the island of Lesbos with our grandmother, who told us tales from Greek mythology,” remembers Kiveli. “In Germany we are regarded as Greek and in Greece we are seen as Germans. In Germany we might stick out, because we are both quite loud and passionate, whereas in Greece the German side – punctuality and neatness – is more noticeable,” says Danae. “But we consider it a great privilege to have both these aspects. It makes us more cosmopolitan and provides us with added opportunities for further growth, having the possibility of blending two such important, yet very different cultures within one’s personality.” Diversity

GRUNAU & PAULUS MUSIC MANAGEMENT GMBH

Almsstraße 32 · D 31134 Hildesheim

+49 (0)5121 7558458 · contact@grunau-paulus.com · www.grunau-paulus.com



is a common thread in the lives and work of Danae and Kiveli Dörken. It is also reflected in the originality of both their repertoire choices and in the way they compile their programmes, combining as they do new works with fresh interpretations of familiar works.

In 2015, Danae and Kiveli Dörken founded the Molyvos International Music Festival on the island of Lesbos, where they jointly serve as artistic directors. By inviting talented young musicians to the island, their aim is to bring classical music to the island and to involve the local population in these events. Since the founding of the festival, thousands of refugees have also arrived on the island. By means of music the sisters want to give them hope, too. “We saw people who had probably never heard classical music before and they were sitting there with tears in their eyes,” Danae remembers. “Touching people emotionally is ultimately the most important thing we can do.”

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