

FERHAN and FERZAN ÖNDER, piano duo

"Their subtle, searching ensemble playing, their temperament and their virtuoso dexterity are proof of the extraordinary pianistic qualities of the Önders. This is truly fiery music making!"

[Michael Stenger/*Fono Forum*]

There is always a special bond between twins – and Ferhan & Ferzan Önder bring that bond onto the concert platform. They are two individual artists but together they create a new musical identity.

Born in Tokat (Turkey), they moved to Ankara at the age of seven. When they were still only ten, Ferhan & Ferzan Önder began playing the piano. Just four years later, they won the 'Jury Special Award' at the Concorso Pianistico Internazionale Alessandro Casagrande in Terni (Italy). After a series of further prizes, Ferhan & Ferzan Önder won First Prize at the International Piano Duo Competition in Hamburg. Their great talent, combined with a high degree of discipline and support from their family, soon bore fruit. They studied at the Universität für Musik und Darstellende Kunst in Vienna with Noel Flores and Paul Badura-Skoda and got friends with Alfons Kontarsky.

Ferhan & Ferzan Önder both describe their Turkish roots as of crucial importance for their trenchantly rhythmic playing style, since they have been familiar with the irregular rhythms of traditional music from their earliest childhood.

Extensive concert tours have taken the pianists throughout Europe, the Far East and America. They have performed among others at the Guggenheim Museum in New York, the Wigmore Hall in London, the Semperoper in Dresden, the Berliner Philharmonie, the Leipzig Gewandhaus, the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, the Elbphilharmonie in Hamburg and the Vienna Musikverein and Konzerthaus, as well as in Zurich, Barcelona, Istanbul, Rio de Janeiro, Tokyo, Taipei, Belgrade, Montpellier and Salzburg.

They appear regularly with major orchestras like the Sächsische Staatskapelle Dresden, the Mozarteum Orchester Salzburg and the Stuttgarter Philharmoniker under such conductors as John Axelrod, Howard Griffiths, Adam Fischer, Muhai Tang, Markus Poschner, Christian Arming, Max Pommer, Stefan Vladar and Hugh Wolff. In 2003, they performed with Sir Peter Ustinov at the Voestival in Linz. Similar musical/literary projects have led to collaborations with Cornelia Froboess, Armin Mueller-Stahl, Friedrich von Thun, Günther Jauch and Roger Willemssen.

In 2016, their project “Anonymous Was a Woman” was premiered, a literal-musical performance that focuses on women’s rights. The idea behind it is to help women gain more recognition in today’s world and to highlight the injustices that still exist. Ferzan & Ferzan Önder commissioned six female composers of different nationalities, including Rachel Grimes, Anna Dubrich and Amritha Vaz.

In 2001, they made a breakthrough with their CD “Vivaldi Reflections”, which was released on EMI. This disc also won the coveted ECHO KLASSIK Prize of the German record Academy. Their next CD was “1001 Nights” (EMI, 2003) with arrangements of works by Rimsky-Korsakov, Borodin, Balakirev and Mozart.

In May 2019, their new production “Ferhan & Ferzan Önder Play Fazil Say” with the Radio Symphony Orchestra of Berlin conducted by Markus Poschner has been released on the record label “Winter & Winter”. The album was followed by the release of Camille Saint-Saëns’ „The Carnival of the Animals” in November 2019 on Sony Classical with Barbara Schöneberger as narrator and the Radio Symphony Orchestra of Berlin conducted by Johannes Zurl.

Ferhan & Ferzan Önder impressed international audiences in performances of music by Bartók, Reich, Say, and Tan Dun with the Austrian multi-percussionist Martin Grubinger.

The twins appeared on stage with the internationally renowned Turkish author Orhan Pamuk at the Vienna Konzerthaus in March 2022 for the first time.

Together with Monika Hosp (soprano) and Simon Mayer (choreography and dance), Ferhan & Ferzan Önder combine instrumental music, singing and contemporary dance in their new program “Bach Tanzt”.

Ferhan & Ferzan Önder present works by Steve Reich, Avner Dorman, Fazil Say and Büsra Kayıkçı with the ALFA Percussion Duo in their new programs “Arabian Nights” and “Mirrors from the East”. The ensemble combines powerful and virtuoso sounds with subtle musical finesse. Oriental and Eastern music meets powerful sounds and rhythms.

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