

CHANNEL
CLASSICS

They Have Waited Long Enough

**RAGAZZE QUARTET
KATHARINE DAIN**





MENU

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Aftab Darvishi (b.1987)

- | | | |
|---|-----------------------|------|
| 1 | NEVER BELONGED (2021) | 9'47 |
|---|-----------------------|------|

Annelies Van Parys (b.1975)

- | | | |
|---|--------------|-------|
| 2 | MEDEA (2021) | 15'52 |
|---|--------------|-------|

Calliope Tsoupaki (b.1963)

- | | | |
|---|-----------------|-------|
| 3 | PENELOPE (2021) | 18'44 |
|---|-----------------|-------|

Aida Shirazi (b.1987)

- | | | |
|---|------------------------------|-------|
| 4 | MY WORDS ARE SWALLOWS (2023) | 11'07 |
|---|------------------------------|-------|

Saskia Venegas Aernouts (b.1983)

- | | | |
|---|--|------|
| 5 | SORTZAIN, MARIA SAN JUAN DE GARONDA (2025) | 9'52 |
|---|--|------|

TOTAL TIME: 66'06

RAGAZZE QUARTET
KATHARINE DAIN Soprano

Raphaëla Danksagmüller, Duduk (1)
Anna voor de Wind, Clarinet (2)
Osama Abdulrasol, Qanun (3)
Elif Canfezâ Gündüz, Kemenche (4)
Marianna Soroka, Percussions (5)
Agata Kruszevska, Percussions (5)

Stories of women are embedded in the DNA of the Ragazze Quartet. We ourselves began the quartet as four teenage girls (we were 16 and 17 years old), hence the name “Ragazze” – Italian for “girls”, chosen by our beloved teacher Coosje Wijzenbeek.

Since our founding, the Ragazze stories have continued to evolve. We share intimate moments, celebrate milestones and support one another. Along the way, we met countless inspiring women whose stories connect with and enrich our own.

We have been very fortunate in our career. Yet from time to time, we find ourselves wondering: what would our path have been like if we had been four men or a mixed quartet? Unfortunately, we live in a world in which gender inequality remains a harsh reality. As an all-female ensemble, we feel deeply connected to women who face these challenges. We therefore consider it of great importance to use our platform – the stage – to let their stories be heard.

When Tamar Brüggemann, artistic director of Wonderfeel Festival, approached us with the idea for a new song cycle in which oppressed women from history would tell their side of the story – and in which all material would be created and performed by women – we immediately said yes.

In soprano Katharine Dain, we found a true kindred spirit. With her beautiful voice, full of emotion and expressive power, she is the ideal partner to bring these stories to life in song. A remarkable group of female composers and librettists also joined the project, each contributing in their own unique and personal way.

The result is a rich and diverse collage of songs. What unites them is the urgency that resonates throughout: it is important – if not essential – that these stories are recorded and heard. The fact that these stories are historical does not make them any less relevant today. The female perspective carries just as much weight as the male one – and deserves to be remembered.

Ragazze Quartet

They Have Waited Long Enough

BY TAMAR BRÜGGEMANN

Stories remain stories. The past remains the past. But anyone who questions the canon soon runs into a number of essential questions: how do we look at these old stories today? Who tells them? And from whose perspective? Since 2021, festival Wonderfeel, Ragazze Quartet and soprano Katharine Dain have been asking precisely that in *They Have Waited Long Enough*: what if women – so often silent in history and mythology – were to speak for themselves? So far, nine figures have been given their own musical and textual identities in song, five of which are recorded on this album by Ragazze Quartet. Five voices that – finally – sing themselves free from centuries of imposed silence.

The first cycle (2021) centres on Circe, Medea and Penelope, three iconic figures from Greek mythology. While author Gaea Schoeters rewrites their stories from within, the composers each create a distinct sound world, for soprano, string quartet, and a solo instrument acting as an alter ego.

In *Never Belonged*, Aftab Darvishi presents Circe as an outsider: a rootless figure who draws strength from her exclusion. As the daughter of the sun god and a nymph, she belongs nowhere; neither among the gods, nor among mortals, as she herself cannot die. The sound of the duduk, an ancient instrument from Armenia, deepens this sense of timelessness and estrangement. Each register of the instrument carries a different colour, giving voice to the contradictions within Circe: strength and vulnerability, distance and longing.

In *Medea*, Annelies Van Parys reveals not a monster, but a mother. The work unfolds as a tender lullaby for her young sons, gradually revealing its true meaning. Only as the music returns do we realise that their sleep is final. The clarinet becomes a second voice, a sonic body through which Medea's inner fracture and pain are made audible. A text can explain where that pain comes from; music makes us feel it.

Calliope Tsoupaki's *Penelope* reveals another kind of strength: that of waiting. While Odysseus wanders the seas for years, Penelope remains at home in Ithaca, besieged by suitors who press her to remarry. She keeps them at bay with a ruse: by day she weaves a burial shroud, by night she unravels it. With fragments from the *Odyssey* (in Emily Wilson's translation, adapted by Schoeters), a Penelope emerges who is anything but passive – she

shapes time and remains firmly in control. The qanun evokes a space of memory and motion: like waves of the sea, like the endless weaving and unweaving of her cloth.

The second cycle (2023) shifts the focus to women from the history of Anatolia and Byzantium. In *My Words Are Swallows*, composer Aida Shirazi gives voice to the ninth-century poet and composer Kassia, to a text by Ece Temelkuran. According to tradition, Kassia was once presented to Emperor Theophilos as a potential bride. When he remarked that “through woman came evil into the world,” she is said to have replied, “but through woman came also the best.” Perhaps embellished, but the anecdote captures her wit and independence. At the heart of this song lies precisely that refusal to conform. Kassia chooses her own voice: “No, my king, is my answer to you. / A yes would kill all my unborn poetry.” Her words cannot be contained; they circle freely, like swallows, carried by the kemençe.

The third cycle (2025) turns to women branded as ‘witches’, a label that often says more about the fears of their society than about the women themselves. In *Sortzain, Maria San Juan de Garonda*, composer Saskia Venegas brings to life a sixteenth-century Basque midwife, in a text by Natalie Haynes. “There is no one men hate more than a woman who does not fear them,” and it is precisely this fear that echoes in Maria’s condemnation. Ironically, the Basque words *sortzain* (midwife) and *sorgina* (witch) share the same root: to make, to create. Venegas chooses not to portray Maria as a victim, but as a powerful maker. Her history – her interrogation and her death – is not sung live, but heard on tape: a male voice representing the authority that condemned her. Set against this is a collective, wordless female presence. The combination of soprano and string quartet with the Basque percussion instrument txalaparta, waterphone and crystal bowls forms a musical sisterhood in which Maria’s strength becomes tangible.

What connects these five songs is not only their subject matter, but also their way of looking: away from fixed interpretations, towards complexity and the power to act. These women are no longer waiting for their turn in the story. They take that place themselves – each with her own language, her own music, her own truth.

RAGAZZE QUARTET

With unconventional yet compelling programmes, the all-female Ragazze Quartet belongs to the top Dutch string quartets. As great supporters of the contemporary music practice, they are known for opening up the string quartet genre, rooted in Western tradition, to new sounds and approaches. Ragazze thus provides a stage for underexposed composers and contributes to opening new perspectives.

As artists on the Channel Classics label, they are releasing their tenth album, *They Have Waited Long Enough*. The previous nine – *Vivere*, *Cesko*, *FourFourThree*, *Spiegel*, *Bartók Bound* Vol. 1 and Vol. 2, *Winterreise*, *Open Spaces* and *But Not My Soul* – were invariably met with good reviews.

Founded in 2001, the Ragazze Quartet consists of Rosa Arnold (violin), Jeanita Vriens (violin), Annemijn Bergkotte (viola) and Nathalie Flintrop (cello). They curate festival *September Me*, an annual festival with adventurous programming, featuring young Dutch and international musicians and makers.

The Ragazze Quartet receives multi-year funding from Performing Arts Fund NL and the Amsterdam Fund for the Arts. Jeanita's violin, Nathalie's cello and Annemijn's bow were made available by the Dutch Musical Instruments Foundation. Furthermore, the Ragazze own a quartet of classical bows made by Andreas Grütter, made possible by the Foundation Own Musical Instrument.

www.ragazzequartet.nl

KATHARINE DAIN Soprano

Soprano Katharine Dain performs opera, chamber music, orchestral repertoire, song, and oratorio on international stages. She is also a curator of unusual programs, a writer, and a probing collaborator on artistic projects of many kinds. Her 2020 album *Regards sur l'Infini* with pianist Sam Armstrong, featuring works of Messiaen, Debussy, and others, won the 2021 Edison Klassiek for Best Debut: “fearless... beautifully controlled... exquisite” (*Gramophone*). The duo’s second album together, *Forget This Night* (2023) featuring works of Lili Boulanger, Szymanowski and Bacewicz was just as highly praised and was named *BBC Music Magazine*’s CD of the month in its category.

Katharine has sung Countess (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Konstanze (*Die Entführung aus dem Serail*), Fiordiligi (*Così fan tutte*) and Donna Anna (*Don Giovanni*) and has been named Artist-in-Residence with Finland’s Tapiola Sinfonietta, with whom she performed works of Barber, Beethoven, Copland and Saariaho. Other highlights include solo appearances with the Orchestra of the 18th Century, Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, Dutch Chamber Orchestra and Asko|Schönberg; residencies at numerous chamber music festivals; and the premiere of a new work for soprano by Bram Kortekaas with the Concertgebouw Orchestra, later released on their Horizon premieres series. She lives in Rotterdam, The Netherlands.

www.katharinedain.com



KATHARINE DAIN

1. NEVER BELONGED

Text by Gaea Schoeters, inspired by Madeline Miller's *Circe*

A god with a mortal's voice
Such a one am I
Never belonged
There was no word
For what I was
The word was made
For me Pharmakis
Witch
Never belonged
Life must be a torment to mortal men
Like Odysseus – your father
Fate blew his ship to my shores
I saw him and thought
This is something torn that I can mend
I have a taste for transformation
When he had to leave, I let him go
Your father wanted a child
But that is not why you live, Telegonus, my son
Never belonged
Never belonged
From the moment you were born into my arms
You wanted to flee from them
You looked at the sea and whispered horizon
Now that you have to go, I let you leave
One of us must suffer
One of us must suffer
I will not let it be you
Life is a torment to those who can't die
My immortality
A cold eternity of endless grief
And there is grief
And there is grief
Never belonged
To be a God is not the opposite of death but death itself –
To be forever unchanging

The word made me what I am
Now let it set me free
We are not our blood
I have a mortal's voice Now let me have the rest
I have a mortal's voice Now let me have the rest
I have a mortal's voice Now let me have the rest
Never belonged

2. MEDEA

Text by Gaea Schoeters, translated by Rona Kennedy

Sleep, my boys, sleep
Drift away slowly
In this deepening darkness
That holds you softly,
Go now and sleep tight.
Jason
Jason, my love
Do you remember the bed
Where your sons were conceived?
The passion consummated there
My body my sacrifice
To you
One of many
Love demands sacrifices
Blinded by love
I made them
For you, I betrayed my country
For you, I left my home
For you, I steeped my hands
In blood
You owe me my innocence
You owe me a brother
You owe me, my beloved Jason
On all counts
I would be queen / I would be a heroine / I would be your spouse / I would be beloved /
My wealth the key to our happiness

How blind could I be?
I was simply
A means
Just like the Fleece
Love demands sacrifices
Blinded by love
I made them
One more or one less
What does it matter?
What is stained,
Even when washed,
Can never be clean
Blood demands blood
What started badly
Cannot be made good
No throne / No power / The Fleece turned sour /
Time to find a girl / to make your royal plans unfurl
Less strange / more seemly and decent / a pearl
Quieter / well behaved / her waistline thin / and she also has lighter skin
You think of yourself
You think of your own fortune
You crunch numbers and collate
You add up and calculate
Rational
Purpose
In all that accounting
I am the surplus
And if she gives you sons
Our offspring will be
Second rate
No longer useful
Just like me
You leave me no choice
What else can I do
Than to continue down the path
You led me?
A path of blood
And passion?

Don't get me wrong,
My darling,
How gruesome my deed may be
It is no more than the consequence
Of your betrayal
It is not anger that drives me
It is mercy
I want to spare
My children
My cruel fate
What began with passion
Has become a bargaining chip
Found wanting
A strange currency
With no value
In this country
Love demands sacrifices
Blinded by love
I made them
For you, I betrayed my country
For you, I left my country
For you, I steeped my hands
In blood
You owe me my innocence
You owe me a brother
You owe me a home
I gave you everything
So it is my right
To take from you
And I mean
To take
It all
Sleep, my boys, sleep
Find peace
In this darkness
From which
You will never wake

3. PENELOPE

Excerpts from Homer's Odyssey, translated by Emily Wilson
Text/dramaturgy by Gaea Schoeters
Text adaptations from Ancient Greek by Mando Malamou

περίφρων Πηνελόπεια
άντίον ἴξε παρὰ σταθμόν μεγάραιο
κλισμῷ κεκλιμένη, λεπτά ἡλάκατα στρωφῶσα.
τὴν δὲ ἄχος θυμοφθόρον ἀμφεχύθη, οὐδέ ἔτλη
δίφρῳ ἐφέζεσθαι ἔτι πολλῶν κατ'οἶκον ἐόντων,
ἀλλὰ ἐπ' οὐδοῦ ἴξε πολυκμήτου θαλάμοιο
οἰκτρά ὀλοφυρομένη·
περίφρων Πηνελόπεια ὑπερώϊω ἄσιτος, κείται

Wise Penelope
Was leaning on a chair,
Beside the door, and spinning fine strands of wool.
Grief wrapped around her, eating at her heart.
The house was full of chairs but she could not
Bear to sit upshot. In her bedroom doorway
Collapsing on the floor, she wept and cried.
Wise Penelope lay in her bedroom, refusing food,
Consuming nothing

θεὰ γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη·
Ἰκαρίοιο κούρη κατὰ γλυκὺν ὕπνον ἔχευεν,
ἀνακλινθεῖσα, δὲ εὖδε
λύθεν δὲ οἱ ἄψα πάντα.
τέως δια θεάων
ἄμβροτα δῶρα δίδου,
περίφρων Πηνελόπεια
ἐκ θαλάμοιο ἵεν,
Ἀρτέμιδι ἱκέλη ἢ χρυσῇ Ἀφροδίτῃ,
κατέβαιν' ὑπερώϊα σιγαλόνετα,
ὥς δὲ χιὼν κατατήκετ' ἐν ἀκροπόλοισιν ὄρεσιν
ὥς τῆς τήκετο καλὰ παρήϊα δάκρυ χεοῦσης
κλαιούσης ἐὼν ἄνδρα

Athena's eyes were bright with plans.
She poured sweet sleep onto Penelope,
Who lay down on her coach;
Her joints relaxed; she slept.
Athena gave her gifts and godlike power,
She put ambrosial beauty on her face
Wise Penelope
Came out her bedroom
Beautiful as Artemis, golden as Aphrodite.
And went down from her sunny chambers upstairs
Thaws it, and as it melts, the rivers swell
And flow again. So were her lovely cheeks
Dissolved with tears. She wept for her own husband.

4. MY WORDS ARE SWALLOWS

Text by Ece Temelkuran

No, my king
No is my answer to you
A yes will kill my unborn poetry
Don't ask me to be your Sheherazade
My words are swallows

No, they cannot live in your maze
My king, send me your men with blades
Kill me with your gaze
But I am the one that time will celebrate
All that is solid will melt
Rubies and the swords
All that is words will stay
No, my king
I know this
As your kingdom will devastate
The women who know
They know
For them, my song will be no waste
When the time comes you will hate me
For you know this
Because you know power is the weakest place
In your palace
The words mean gold and blood
There my swallows are not allowed
A woman with a pen cannot be contained
Let me be
Let me carry off my gift to a monastery
I instead gift you with a song of
Let me be
I know you will break me
Take the bride with no words
For women like me
Only make mad kings

5. SORTZAIN, MARIA SAN JUAN DE GARONDA

Text by Nathalie Haynes

There is no one men hate more
Than a woman who does not fear them.
The church brought its flames, its barbs,
Its suspicions and its hatred,
And it turned them on Maria,

For what?
For the rage it felt
At the women she helped,
Who should have died.
Their god demanded it.
Women punished for Eve
Who had eaten so lusciously
And never been sorry.
The price must be paid by all
The women who laboured in pain.
And if they died, they died.
Then Maria – even her name
A provocation – took pity
On the women she saw
In the throes of deepest agony.
Midwife, they called her.
But the men knew better:
Only a witch could save so many.
A witch, like her mother before her,
Who they had burned, but now they saw
They had been too late.
Sorcery passed down to her daughter,
Who must also now die.
So, they piled her high with rocks
Feigning desire for her repentance.
She did not give them what they wanted,
And they would not rest until
They warmed their hands on her fire.
Their hearts they kept warm with the thought
That every woman who Maria might save
Would die with her, and after her.

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Channel Classics Records

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Jared Sacks

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Ad van der Kouwe

Photos

Valentina Vos *Ragazze Quartet's photo*

Evelien van Rijn *Katharine Dain's photo*

Drawings

All Things Moving, Cristina Garcia Martin

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Cables*

Van den Hul

Microphone preamplifiers

Rens Heijnis, custom design

*Mastering Room***Speakers**

Grimm LS1

Cables*

Van den Hul

**exclusive use of Van den Hul 3T cables*

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