

The love for chamber music, especially for piano trio led to the creation of the SOTA Piano Trio which is based in Berlin and Leipzig. Sonia Achkar and Jonathan Weigle have been playing together intensively as a duo and in different chamber music formations since 2013. They were supported and inspired by members of the Artemis Quartett. Their appearance in festivals include Schleswig Holstein Musikfestival (Germany), Thy Chamber Music Festival (Denmark), ARD Preisträger&Friends on board of the MS Europa and Festival de Música Camara León (Spain). In 2018 they were joined by Julius Bekesch, associate concertmaster of the Gewandhausorchester Leipzig. Ever since, they are invited to international festivals and chamber music series. Highlights in 2019 are a concert at Nancyphonies (France) and a performance at the Gewandhaus Leipzig. The trio is praised for their elaborate interpretations that focus on the main statement and therefore renounce empty straining after effect. The State Of The Art Piano Trio is named after their first international festival appearance at the SOTA Resonance in Hyderabad (India) where they were invited in January 2019. The three accomplished and passionate chamber musicians are all laureates of international competitions and were supported by many foundations and trusts. Besides, the members of the SOTA Piano Trio worked together with well-known artists such as the Armida Quartett, Antje Weithaas and Kirill Troussov. One of their goals is also to pass on their passion for piano trio to younger generations and socially disadvantaged people. Therefore, they give masterclasses and organize childrens concerts. In 2020 their first CD album will be released.

### **Sonia Achkar, piano**

Hailed equally by audience and press for her profound musicality, refined sensitivity and wide colour palette, German born pianist Sonia Achkar has performed in concert halls worldwide such as Mannheimer Rosengarten, Stuttgarter Liederhalle, Gewandhaus zu Leipzig, Semperoper Dresden, Beethovenhalle Bonn, National Center for Performing Arts Beijing, Shanghai City Theater and His Majesty's Theater Perth. As a recitalist, soloist and accomplished chamber musician she has been invited to festivals including Schleswig Holstein Musik Festival, Bachfest Leipzig, Schwetzingen Festspiele, Thy Chamber Music Festival, Toronto Summer Music Festival, Val Tidone Music Festival and Festival de Música de Cámara León. The young Steinway Artist has been granted numerous awards at national and international competitions such as the Val Tidone International Music Competition and Deutscher Musikwettbewerb. In 2017 she was recipient of the Mozart Soloist Prize by the Mozart Society Mannheim, Germany. Born into an international family, Sonia Achkar studied with Rudolf Meister and Menahem Pressler. She currently teaches at the universities for music Stuttgart and Leipzig.

For more information please visit: [www.soniaachkar.com](http://www.soniaachkar.com)

### **Julius Bekesch, violin**

Julius Bekesch, associate concertmaster of the Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, studied with Kolja Blacher, Niklas Schmidt (Trio Fontenay) and the Oistrakh student Marc Lubotzky. Additionally, he received guidance from Ivry Gitlis, Mauricio Fuks, Menahem Pressler and Ana Chumachenco. Julius Bekesch won numerous awards, e.g. the 1st prize at the International Violin Competition Andrea Postacchini in Fermo (Italy). He appeared as a soloist as well as chamber musician in the Herkulessaal Munich, the Konzerthaus Berlin, Laiszhalle Hamburg and St. Petersburg Philharmony. He plays on a violin by Jean Baptiste Vuillaume.

### **Jonathan Weigle, violoncello**

Jonathan Weigle is a renowned soloist, chamber musician and orchestral player on the international stage. He has been solo cellist of Cologne Chamber Orchestra since 2015 and regularly leads the cello section of City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Ulster Orchestra Belfast, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra London and Orchestre de chambre de Paris. He also previously worked with Gewandhaus Orchestra Leipzig and Mahler Chamber Orchestra. He focuses simultaneously on chamber music, notably completing his studies in chamber music with Ralf Gothoni at Escuela Superior de Música Reina Sofía in Madrid parallel to his cello studies at Hochschule für Musik Hanns Eisler in Berlin with Josef Schwab and Troels Svane. Jonathan Weigle has established chamber music partnerships with musicians including Antje Weithaas, Kolja Blacher and the Armida Quartett. Additionally, he is a fixed member of the Giocosio Quartet and the Aperto Piano Quartet. At the 2010 Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy Hochschulwettbewerb he was awarded a prize in the category Cello-Piano duo. In 2013 he was also recognised in the Hanns-Eisler-Prize for the composition und interpretation of Contemporary Music. Soloistic highlights have included Brahms' Double Concerto at the SummerMusicAcademy Hundisburg Castle and with the Echo Ensemble for New Music. Jonathan grew up in a musical family in Berlin and started playing cello at the age of five. As a teenager he was already a member and soloist of Junge Philharmonie Brandenburg, an experience that most certainly informed his decision to become a professional musician. Contrastingly he now also mentors' young musicians; in 2019 he gave masterclasses and workshops in schools as part of the Sota Music Festival in Hyderabad (India) as well as in Shenzhen (China).