

Spark reinvents classical music by placing it in a modern, refreshed context. The quintet presents works by Bach, Vivaldi, Mozart, and other great names while creating connections with the sounds and spirit of the present. The ensemble also highlights the recorder, a controversial instrument, which it succeeds in rehabilitating through the virtuosic interpretation of its founders, Daniel Koschitzki and Andrea Ritter, both winners of international solo competitions in London and Montreal. Their expressive, rhythmic playing dispels the clichés associated with the instrument, often seen as a laughingstock, especially in primary school education. *Südwestpresse* has even praised their performance as "rarely so rhythmic, expressive, and stunning."

Alongside Koschitzki and Ritter, three other award-winning musicians complete the ensemble: violinist Stefan Balazsovics, cellist Victor Plumettaz, and pianist Christian Fritz. Together, they share the desire to redefine musical expression and embody Spark's vision. The group offers a rich instrumental palette, featuring more than 40 different recorders, violin, viola, cello, melodica, and piano. None of their compositions are alike, showcasing the diversity of their repertoire. Spark's music blends and merges different eras and genres in an obvious way, ranging from baroque music to contemporary electronic sounds, all while making classical music more accessible to a younger audience.

The group juxtaposes techno sounds with young Mozart's ballet music, transforms Handel's motifs into electronic sequences, reinterprets a Vivaldi finale with Dutch minimal music, and slows down Couperin's ambiance into a sonic collage. Mendelssohn takes on an avant-garde folk tone. This musical boldness and blending of influences make Spark a group firmly rooted in its time, while respecting and revisiting classical tradition.

In 2011, Spark won the prestigious ECHO Klassik award in the "Classical Without Borders" category for *Downtown Illusions*. The group has also been nominated multiple times for the German Critics' Choice Award and the OPUS Klassik, particularly in the "Classical Without Borders" (2018), "Video Clip of the Year" (2021), and "Ensemble of the Year" (2021) categories. The press, from *Süddeutsche Zeitung* to *L'Alsace*, highlights the richness of their performance and versatility. *De Volkskrant* writes that they have the potential to convincingly merge pop and dance influences with classical music, while *American Record Guide* compares them to classical music phenomena like Yo-Yo Ma or the Kronos Quartet, but with even more energy.

The personal compositions of the group members enrich Spark's repertoire and emphasize their unique position. They do not consider themselves solely as performers but as independent artists shaping their art in a creative way. In this sense, they embody the new self-perception of a generation of classical musicians who are reinventing tradition through their own vision.

The group is also particularly appreciated for its live performances, which radiate powerful energy, whether in chamber music concerts for five or as a solo ensemble with orchestra. Spark has performed on some of the world's most prestigious stages: Wiener Musikverein, Konzerthaus in Berlin, Philharmonie in Cologne, Alte Oper in Frankfurt, Gasteig in Munich, Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, Barbican Centre in London, Flagey in Brussels, Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona, National Concert Hall in Taipei, Shanghai Oriental Art Center, Schleswig-Holstein Festival, Rheingau Festival, Wonderfeel, La Folle Journée in Nantes, Tokyo, Warsaw, and many more festivals in France, Germany, and beyond.

Spark has also collaborated with renowned orchestras such as the London Symphony Orchestra, WDR Funkhausorchester Köln, Opern- und Museumsorchester in Frankfurt, Nederlands Kamerorkest, and conductors like Wayne Marshall, Sebastian Weigle, and Mark Mast. The group particularly focuses on modern music, collaborating with well-known composers such as Johannes Mutschmann, Chiel Meijering, Kenji Bunch, Kamran Ince, and Jonne Valtonen, among others. Additionally, Spark is unafraid to step outside the classical realm, working with musicians from other genres like beatboxer Robeat, singer Kitty Hoff, and DJ Emanuel Satie. They perform at jazz, rock, pop, and alternative music festivals such as the Reeperbahn Festival in Hamburg, Theaterhaus in Stuttgart, and the Berghain techno club in Berlin.

Spark's debut album, *Downtown Illusions* (2010), features an unprecedented fusion of styles and was hailed by critics as one of the biggest surprises of the year. *Audiophile Audition* described the album as a radically innovative expression of chamber music. This success translated into the album reaching the number one spot in the classical music charts on Amazon Germany. Subsequent albums include *Folk Tunes*, *Wild Territories*, *On the Dancefloor*, *Be Baroque*, and *Facets of Infinity*, the latter featuring a performance with the Frankfurter Opern- und Museumsorchester under Sebastian Weigle's direction. Each of these albums solidifies Spark's reputation as a trendsetter in classical music.

In the spring of 2022, *Closer to Paradise*, a collaboration with countertenor Valer Sabadus, was released to great success and was included in many year-end best-of lists. Their most recent album, *Vision of Venus* (2024), is a project with singer Wallis Bird. In addition to their studio albums, Spark has released numerous radio and TV recordings, with live performances broadcast on stations like Radio 4 Nederland, NPO, Radio Classique, ARD, ZDF, SWR, and NHK Tokyo.

The ensemble doesn't limit itself to concert halls but also visits schools and youth centers, often in collaboration with Rhapsody in School, with the goal of introducing the classical music audience of tomorrow to the genre.

"These artists maintain all the complexity of classical music" — *Süddeutsche Zeitung*
"Here express five musicians, who are, above all, great performers, accomplished artists

who master their instruments completely, allowing them to play all kinds of music without sticking to one genre" — *L'Alsace*

"They have the potential to convincingly blend pop and dance influences with classical music" — *De Volkskrant*

"A true phenomenon on the classical music scene, akin to Yo Yo Ma or the Kronos Quartet, but with more vivacity" — *American Record Guide*