

## The Israeli Mandolin Quartet

The Israeli Mandolin Quartet was established in September 1999, after an invitation of maestro Mstislav Rostropovich to play the work "Romeo and Juliet" by S. Prokofiev with the Israeli Philharmonic Orchestra.

The members of the quartet represent an exceptional school of artistic playing on a mandolin.

This school started when Mr. Nathansohn, a violin and mandolin teacher, emigrated from Russia in 1971 and arrived to the Beer-Sheva municipal music school, which is located in the southern part of Israel.

The fact that he was a violinist caused his students to be familiar with the major of the violin repertoire and method books of the greatest virtuoso violinists of the nineteenth century, together with original materials for mandolin.

Playing these works on mandolin is possible, because of the same tuning on both instruments.

A new playing technique on the mandolin began to shape, and was based on performing works, which were written originally for a violin.

One of the examples is the way we hold the plectrum: holding the plectrum between the thumb and the index finger, vertically to the string, as it is usual around the world, changed and became holding the plectrum between two fingers and the thumb in an angle to the string.

This method enables the plectrum to move freely and create a wider variety of colors in the tone, to play quick passages freely and to create a smooth "tremolo", which imitate the same effect as drawing a bow on the strings of a violin.

Alongside the development of playing technique and repertoire, new technical means were needed to our mandolins in order to have a rounder, fuller and stronger sound than that of the Neapolitan mandolin, (which has a bright and a kind of metal tone).

In that point a connection was made between Beer-Sheva school and the mandolin artist-builder Arik Kerman, who developed in the course of time, his building formula with attention to our needs and style of playing and even to the repertoire of the Beer-Sheva players.

Kerman's mandolins are known in their powerful and especially long tone resonance and in their sweet round sound.

With time, performing a violin repertoire on a mandolin became usual and popular on the stages around the country.

It was made legitimate by the quartet members to play in the same performing style as a string quartet.

The mandola and mandocello were built especially for performing a repertoire which is written, in origin, to string quartets, together with adaptations and original music for a mandolin quartet.

A new angle of performing is being created by the tone concept of this school.

The Israeli Mandolin Quartet is performing across the country in concerts and Festivals

In August 2003 they won the first prize in the international competition for performing original new music for plucked instruments, which took place in La Rioja-Spain

Their CD has been widely broadcast and acclaimed in Israel, Europe and the USA.