



Tilford Bach Society



Rivoli String Quartet

Amelia Jones - violin

Helen Tonge - violin

Amy Swain - viola

Helen Downham - cello

with Sophie Gledhill - cello

2 October 2015

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We especially thank an anonymous TBS member for very kindly sponsoring part of the cost of this concert

Programme

Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)

String Quartet in D major, Op 64 no.5 "The Lark"

Allegro Moderato; Adagio Cantabile; Menuetto - Allegretto; Finale: Vivace

By 1791, when Haydn's 'Lark' quartet was published, he was probably the most celebrated composer in Europe. His Opus 64 quartets were written for Johannes Tost, a violinist who had played in Haydn's orchestra at the court of Prince Esterhazy. The quartets provided Tost with technical challenges, but they were not simply virtuosic show pieces; the virtuosity was incorporated into his existing vision of the quartet as a conversation between equals.

The opening few bars are a perfect example of this conversation – the second violin and viola discuss an idea with the cello, then the first violin joins in with another idea while the others develop their original train of thought, which, as it happens, ties in rather nicely with that of the first violin. The high tessitura and ornamentation of the first violin melody give rise to the quartet's nickname.

The serene adagio is in ternary form. The middle section ventures into the minor before returning to its home key of A major. The melody is beautifully elaborated on its return by first violin decorations. The quirky minuet is set in motion by a first violin hiccup of an upbeat which proves to be an integral feature of the movement, and is nicely balanced by a light-footed fugal trio.

Virtuosity is brought to the fore again in the Vivace final - a breathless moto-perpetuo movement to give old Johannes Tost's fingers a good workout!

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

String quartet in F major, K.590

Allegro moderato; Andante; Menuetto - Allegretto; Allegro

This last of Mozart's string quartets, composed in 1790, a year before his death, is one of the three known as the 'Prussian' quartets. In 1789 Mozart's student and friend Prince Lichnowsky had introduced the composer to King Friedrich Wilhelm II of Prussia who was an enthusiastic cellist, and all three of the so-called Prussian quartets contain movements which feature the cello. In K.590 it is the opening Allegro moderato which especially stars the cello, although, unlike Haydn's 'Lark', Mozart's F major composition is remarkably democratic in its sharing-out of thematic material.

Quartet composition did not come easily to Mozart however. He described his later 'Prussian' quartets as 'that exhausting labour'; claims borne out by the many alterations and crossings-out in the scores. In addition to the difficulties of composing itself, by the time he wrote K.590, Mozart was struggling financially and having to sell off compositions quickly and cheaply to pay off debts. He famously died a pauper.

Interval

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

String Quintet in C major D.956

Allegro ma non troppo; Adagio; Scherzo - Presto; Allegretto

with Sophie Gledhill, cello

Schubert only lived to the age of 31 (five years less even than Mozart), so his 'late' works would be considered early in the lifespan of another composer - all achieved by an age at which Beethoven had just composed his 'early' Op.18 string quartets.

Composed in September of 1828, during the final weeks of Schubert's life, the Quintet in C for two violins, viola and two cellos was the composer's last instrumental work and ranks among his greatest accomplishments. Schubert's decision to use a second cello (rather than the second viola characteristic of Mozart's quintets) permits him to explore the string trio texture in the middle of the ensemble, while making embellishments with the "bookend" combination of first violin and second cello at the extremes of the quartet range. The second cello also adds to the overall richness of the piece, contributing to a darker sound. Schubert's writing for the strings is symphonic - he created sounds that no one had ever created before in a small string ensemble

The first movement (Allegro ma non troppo) opens with an introduction of astounding beauty. The introduction of the movement's second theme by the two cellos is sublime and the way Schubert juxtaposes the other three instruments around this theme in the rest of the movement is an example of a great master at the height of his powers.

The Adagio combines one of music's most sublime meditations with an outpouring of searing intensity. The contrast between the stillness of the outer parts and the turbulence and passion of the central section is extreme, as is the difference between the third movement's scherzo framework and its central Andante Sostenuto. The high-spirited exuberance of the Scherzo, with its energizing quavers and tug-of-war syncopations, gives way to an entirely different trio. The tempo is changed (Andante rather than Presto), and so is the metre (moving into 4/4 time rather than retaining the triple time common to all minuet/scherzo movements), the tonality shifts from C major to Db and the texture is reduced from full nine-part chords to bare octaves in the viola and second cello.

The final movement, Allegretto, is essentially a rondo, but the composer lavished an almost sonata-form development on his opening dance-like theme. During this final movement, Schubert again uses the cellos in duet, contrasting their solemn, broad musical line with sometimes scampering counterpoint from the higher instruments, as though reminding us of the work's earlier movements.

Saturday 31 October, 7-30pm St Andrew's, Farnham

Solem String Quartet

Shostakovich, Beethoven and Schubert

Saturday 21 November, 7-30pm St Thomas on the Bourne

Reinhart Trio with Anna Hashimoto (clarinet)

Beethoven, Reade and Glinka

Rivoli String Quartet

The Rivoli Quartet was formed in 1999 at Manchester University under the guidance of The Lindsays, and takes its name from the music department building, the converted Rivoli cinema. They completed a Masters degree in String Quartet Performance at the University of Sheffield, coached by Peter Cropper. They won the 2006 Prix Ravel at the Académie Internationale de Musique Maurice Ravel, and were finalists in the 2006 Royal Overseas League Competition.

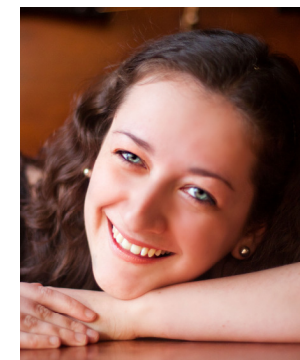
Amelia Jones (violin) is the co-leader of Orchestra of the Swan, and freelances with various orchestras including Philharmonia and Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra. She regularly performs in hospitals and care homes across the south of England as one half of violin and cello duo, Arco Duo, alongside Helen Downham.

Helen Tonge (violin) divides her time between performing and teaching. She is a violin tutor at Salford University and Yorkshire Young Musicians in Leeds, and also teaches privately and in schools. She performs with a variety of groups including Skipton Camerata, Manchester Camerata and RLPO.

Amy Swain (Viola) studied music at St Anne's College, Oxford, before completing a postgraduate viola diploma at the Royal Academy of Music. She has since worked as a freelance violist with orchestras such as the Bournemouth Symphony and Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestras, Britten Sinfonia and Orchestra of the Swan. Amy has held various string teaching positions including on the First String Experience Scheme at the Royal Academy of Music, and she particularly enjoys introducing children to chamber music.

Helen Downham (cello) has toured with Cameron Mackintosh's 'Oliver!' and most recently ATG's West Side Story, performing in many prestigious theatres throughout the U.K. Having performed for Stephen Sondheim's Assassins at the Menier Chocolate Factory she is now a regular performer for Charlie and the Chocolate Factory at Theatre Royal, Drury Lane. Alongside her theatre work Helen enjoys a variety of orchestral playing and teaching. In her spare time she enjoys walking her Border Collie Sophie, sewing and baking.

Sophie Gledhill (cello) is a freelance musician who performs and records with orchestras including the BBC Symphony Orchestra, BBC National Orchestra of Wales and the Aurora Orchestra. She studied at Clare College, Cambridge and the Eastman School of Music, USA and made her London concerto debut with the Lalo Cello Concerto at St John's, Smith Square. She is passionate about playing for opera, ballet and musical theatre. This year she has played with the Royal Ballet Sinfonia and the Rambert Orchestra, as well as appearing as guest sub-principal cello with Northern Ballet.



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