



Tilford Bach Society



Lipatti Piano Quartet

Amy Tress – violin
Jenny Lewisohn – viola
Auriol Evans – cello
Gamal Khamis – piano

27 October 2018

www.tilbach.org.uk

Programme

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Piano Quartet in E ♭ major, K.493

Allegro; Larghetto; Allegretto

"Write more popularly or I can neither print nor pay for any more of your piano quartets" so said Franz Anton Hoffmeister, Mozart's publisher, who was disappointed with the public response to the first of Mozart's piano quartets (in G minor). What the Viennese audience and performers found so disconcerting in the quartets, with their combination of the flamboyance of a concerto (particularly in the last movement of the E flat quartet) with the intimacy and balance of a chamber ensemble, is now taken as another example of Mozart's genius.

The opening confident chords of K.493 announce E flat major as a sunny piece. Its answering off beat phrase by the strings is immediately picked up and decorated by the piano which continues to dominate the ensemble with runs as it moves towards the second subject. Although this is also introduced by the piano (two graceful falling sixths linked by a turn), this motif supplies all the material for the development, already hinted at in the eagerness with which the first violin and then the viola take it up. Meanwhile the piano alternatively shoots off in runs and decoration or provides a calmer but constantly moving accompaniment, demonstrating Mozart's sensitivity to the need for balance in the chamber ensemble. Structurally the exposition is rounded off by the repetition of the piano's opening E flat octaves. The development extensively explores the second subject motif both in dynamics and in key progression as the strings' consecutive entries against broken chords in the piano, become increasingly overlapping. The whole movement culminates in an exuberant coda, in which the second subject motif makes a final round of appearances.

The Larghetto, also in sonata form, is a song in which all instruments take their turn in singing, decorating or accompanying; silence too plays its part. Its serenity is almost disturbed in the development by chromatic wanderings, giving an air of mystery before the music finds its way back to the home key for the recapitulation. The lovely coda simply repeats the opening phrase, decorated on its repetition by a gentle cascade of broken chords as the music moves to a tranquil end.

The final Allegretto, a rondo with an elegantly jaunty main subject, allows the piano more of a solo rôle, answering the strings with some virtuosic dashing about, but it's all quite light-hearted as the playful joking between the first violin and piano suggests when each tries to have the last word (actually an appoggiatura) before the first return of the main subject. A unison downward scale motif (first heard on the strings after the opening main subject) plays a significant part when used by the piano to introduce a more dramatic central episode in a succession of minor keys as the piano takes off in a series of runs and broken chords. A full repetition of the opening material (not quite in the order in which it was originally presented) allows for one more return of the rondo subject (preceded by a cadenza like piano trill, although accompanied by the strings playing fragments of the rondo theme). Then the downward scale gallops off for the coda, the rondo subject having almost the last word to bring the work to a happy conclusion.

Gustav Mahler (1860-1911)

Piano Quartet in A minor

This piano quartet movement is Mahler's earliest extant work. It was the composer's prize-winning composition at the end of his first year at the Vienna Conservatoire on 1 July 1876, when he was 16.

Many of Mahler's early works remained unfinished and it was probably intended that this should be the first movement of a complete quartet for there are also fragments of a Scherzo in existence. The movement is based on three principal themes, in turn portentous, rhapsodic, and simple as a nursery tune, and the spirit of Brahms is never far away.

Interval

(Drinks are free but donations to costs are much appreciated)

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

Piano Quartet in C minor, Opus 60

Allegro non troppo; Scherzo: Allegro; Andante; Allegro Comodo

The C minor Piano Quartet appeared in its final form in 1876 but it originated in the period 1854-6, the climax of Schumann's tragic illness and Brahms's unhappy love for Clara Schumann, and it has long been regarded as a declaration of his love. In a letter about this work Brahms suggests that it could be seen as an illustration of 'the last chapter of the man in the blue jacket and the yellow vest', an allusion to Goethe's tragic hero, Werther.

In the first movement the pithy first subject is notable for its mysterious modulations and in particular the strange pizzicato E natural at its end which foreshadows the key of the slow movement. The second subject in E flat consists uniquely of an eight bar open-ended melody with four variations, the last of which modulates freely. In the recapitulation the second subject is in G major and is only returned to C minor by its freely modulating final variation just in time for an audaciously abrupt end of the movement. The short and stormy scherzo in C minor, which follows thus, appears almost as a coda to the first movement.

The long opening theme of the second movement gives way to a gently syncopated middle section, returning after a marvellously beautiful series of dropping sequences (through C and A flat to E). Ideas from the middle section appear briefly in the coda. The finale unfolds inexorably the tragic and inevitable outcome of the earlier events. There is a brief hint of relaxation just before the end but as Ivor Keys has remarked, "The man in the blue jacket and yellow vest has the last word".

Notes edited from Making Music

Lipatti Piano Quartet

The Lipatti Piano Quartet was formed in 2013 by four young award-winning instrumentalists dedicated to exploring and sharing the piano quartet repertoire, from Viennese classics to works by contemporary composers. Winners of the Elias Fawcett Trust Award for an Outstanding Chamber Ensemble at the finals of the Royal Overseas League Competition 2016, they were also selected to perform on the final night of the PLG Young Artists Spring Series at St John's Smith Square, as part of the Park Lane Group's 60th anniversary season. In 2017 they made their Wigmore Hall debut as part of the Monday Platform series, in association with the Park Lane Group.

Since its inception, the group has been fortunate to work with many esteemed professors and performers including Maxim Rysanov, Simon Rowland-Jones, Garfield Jackson and the Maggini Quartet, having been awarded a scholarship to attend their chamber course at Wellington College. Since May 2015 they have been working with ChamberStudio at King's Place, where they have taken part in masterclasses with Krysia Osostowicz, Alasdair Beatson and Richard Ireland. Later that year the Lipattis undertook a residency at Le Brel, France, where they spent a week intensively rehearsing and performing. Other recent venues have included St Martin-in-the-Fields, Royal Albert Hall's Elgar Room, Bath Pump Room, Old Theatre Royal Bath, The Forge Camden, Windsor Castle, Blackheath Halls and Bedford School, where they were Ensemble in Residence for 2015/16.

Future Farnham Concerts

Saturday 24 November 2018: 7-30pm

Farnham Methodist Church, GU9 7RN (venue has changed)

Brook Street Band

Bach, Handel, Boismortier, Leclair

Future Godalming Concerts

Godalming Baptist Church GU7 1BA

Thursday 1 November 2018: 12-30pm

Ami Lodge Flute/Piano Duo

Saturday 17 November 2018: 6-30pm

Cello & Violin Duo

Saturday 24 November 2018: 6-30pm

Portuguese Music

Saturday 1 December 2018: 6-30pm

Susie Walsh, Urska Horvat

Flute, Cello and Piano Trio

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