

This Week at Kings Place

Mon 11 Jan Words on Monday
Hall One **The Annual WG Sebald Lecture - Absent Jews and Invisible Executioners: WG Sebald and the Holocaust**
7pm

Hall Two
8pm **OUT HEAR**
Blank Canvas

Wed 13 Jan London A Cappella Festival
Hall One **The Swingle Singers**
7.30pm

Thu 14 Jan London A Cappella Festival
Hall One **Stile Antico**
7.30pm

Hall Two
8pm **Off With Their Heads! - Comedy at Kings Place**
Jason Cook, Fergus Craig and
(Regular MC) Ray Peacock

Fri 15 Jan London A Cappella Festival
Hall One **Out of the Blue**
6.30pm

Hall One
8pm London A Cappella Festival
VOCES8

Exhibitions

Kings Place Gallery **Ørnulf Opdahl: Mood Paintings of the North**

Sophie Benson: Vanishing Points
FIRST DAY - Fri 15 Jan

Pangolin London **Burnt Offerings: Jason Wason.**
An exhibition of bronzes and ceramics
FIRST DAY - Wed 13 Jan

Next Sunday 17 January 2010
Hall One, 6.30pm
The Turner Ensemble

Ravel Introduction & Allegro for flute, clarinet & strings
Janaček Concertino for piano, two violins, viola, clarinet, harp & bassoon
Debussy *Danses Sacréé et Profane* for harp & strings
Fauré Piano Quartet No. 1 in C minor, Op. 15

Sunday evening concerts promoted by the
London Chamber Music Society
President: Levon Chilingirian OBE
Artistic Director: Peter Fribbins

London
Chamber Music
Society

The London Chamber Music Society is a registered charity No 1075787
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Our Cafe, Restaurant and Bar opening hours are:
Green & Fortune Café - 7.30am to 7.30pm
Rotunda Restaurant - 12pm to 11pm
Rotunda Bar - 11am to 11pm
Concert Bar - 6pm to end of interval

Please remember to order your Interval drinks prior to the concert,
at the Concert Bar located in the Music Foyer

Sunday 10 January

London Chamber Music Series

Dante Quartet

Presented in partnership with the
London Chamber Music Society

London Chamber Music Series

Dante Quartet Hall One, 6.30pm

Krysia Osostowicz	violin
Giles Francis	violin
Judith Busbridge	viola
Bernard Gregor-Smith	cello

Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)
String Quartet in C major, Op. 20 No. 2 [Hob III:32] (1772)

Jean Sibelius (1865-1957)
String Quartet in D minor, Op. 56 ***Voces Intimae*** (1908-09)

INTERVAL (20 minutes)

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937) String Quartet in F major (1903)

The **Dante Quartet**, winner of the prestigious Royal Philharmonic Society Award for Chamber Music in 2007 and the Chamber Music section of the BBC Music Magazine Awards in April 2009, is known for its imaginative programming and the emotional intensity of its performances. Founded in 1995, the group chose the name of Dante to reflect the idea of a great and challenging journey.

The Dante Quartet plays at major concert halls, music societies and festivals throughout the UK, and in the past two years has appeared at the Aldeburgh, Bath, Cheltenham, Spitalfields, Hay, Brighton, Presteigne and City of London Festivals as well as at Wigmore Hall and Kings Place in London. The Quartet broadcasts regularly on BBC Radio 3 and has also performed in France, Holland, Spain, Switzerland, Poland and Finland.

In August 2009 the Quartet was featured at the Paunat Festival in France. In the summer of 2008 the Dante Quartet released a highly acclaimed recording of the quartets of Fauré and Franck. Previous recordings include Janáček’s string quartets, song cycles by Gurney and Vaughan Williams with tenor Andrew Kennedy anmd Edmund Rubbra’s complete quartets.

The Quartet enjoys a special association with King’s College, Cambridge, including master-classes, collaborations with the renowned King’s College Choir and quartet concerts including poetry readings. It has taught at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, at Dartington and Cadenza Summer Schools and in Spain and worked in association with the pioneering Cavatina Chamber Music Trust. Concert engagements are often combined with open rehearsals or workshops for young people and the Dante Quartet also offers special programmes to children in schools who might otherwise never hear live classical music.

2008 was a busy year for the Quartet’s *Divine Comedy Project*, an invitation to composers to write music inspired by Dante’s epic trilogy. Premières of works by Roxanna Panufnik, Cheryl Frances-Hoad, Dmitri Smirnov and Elena and Alissa Firsova took place in Cambridge, Cheltenham and Liverpool, paired with quartets by Haydn and Beethoven.

In 2004 the quartet launched the Dante Summer Music Festival in Cornwall, offering an eclectic mix of quartet concerts, folk music, shared meals and walks, open workshops for children in beautiful barns and ancient churches in the Tamar Valley. The Festival attracts an enthusiastic audience of local residents and visitors from other parts of England. The 2010 Festival runs from 27 – 31 May.

Joseph Haydn – String Quartet in C major, Op. 20 No. 2 [Hob III:32]

I. Moderato
II. Capriccio: Adagio
III. Minuet: Allegretto
IV. Fuga a quattro soggetti

Various composers cultivated the string quartet in the mid-eighteenth century—Carl Ditters von Dittersdorf, Johann Vanhal, Franz Asplmayr and Christian Cannabich, to name but a few—but Joseph Haydn did most to define it as an independent musical genre. Four-part writing for strings had happened even earlier, for example in the *sonata a quattro* and *concerto a quattro*, but usually in an orchestral setting or with keyboard continuo; no immediate precursor for one-to-a-part, string-ensemble music is known. Rather, the string quartet grew from the divertimento, a title used to signify solo instrumental music genre but one as comparatively insignificant as its name implies and compatible with various styles and scoring. Only as this meaning gradually changed was the string quartet born. The ‘divertimento’ header under which Haydn’s Op. 9 was published instead designated a more serious work for solo ensemble with the cello voicing the bass, while the Op. 20 ‘string quartets’ were the first to bear that name.

Haydn’s first quartets were composed over three distinct periods: ten early works for Baron Fürnberg (c. late 1750s), Opp. 9, 17 and 20 (c. 1770), and Op. 33 (1781). Their cumulative effect was to drastically expand the string quartet’s dimensions while refining the so-called sonata style, as it was then known—as distinct from the ‘theatrical’ or ‘orchestral’ styles. As such, Haydn set forth a recognisable quartet aesthetic in terms of its resourcefulness and various technical aspects. The c. 1770 group, for example, to which this evening’s work belongs, established a four-movement form that would soon become familiar: two fast movements framing a slow movement and a minuet, albeit not yet always in this order. It is no coincidence that the same group is also an important example of Haydn’s *Sturm und Drang* manner, a phrase conventionally translated as ‘storm and stress’. This late eighteenth-century movement towards greater emotional expression in the arts is represented most famously in music by Haydn’s vocabulary of syncopations, leaps and articulated passages—in much the same way as in slightly earlier musical depictions of furies in Viennese stage works. New dramatic contrasts of key, texture, dynamics and range also became common: four of the Opp. 9, 17 and 20 quartets are in minor keys while, unusually, three of the six quartets that make up the Op. 20 set (including this evening’s) have fugal finales.

Haydn’s greater emotional range and mature Viennese style are evident virtually throughout this C-major quartet, the second of the ‘Sun’ quartets (nicknamed on account of the rising sun emblem that featured on the early editions). The opening *Moderato* is vivid in effect, with interplay between the instruments clearest in its more transitory passages, especially the vigorous accompaniment from the second violin in the development. In other words, after an opening theme entrusted to the cello, the movement does not divide interest between the parts as equally as it does elsewhere. The C-minor slow movement, for example, sees all four instruments coalesce and inspires a more elaborate texture thereafter. A drone characterises the *Allegretto* minuet, which frames a contrasting trio and leads to the finale, a movement described somewhat inaccurately as being ‘a quattro soggetti’ (with four subjects). In fact, the viola, second violin and cello, directed to play *sempre sotto voce* (literally, ‘always under voice’), follow the first violin in voicing the exposition subject, which reappears in modified form. Such inventiveness of texture, resources and form encapsulates Haydn’s new string quartet style.

Jean Sibelius – String Quartet in D minor, Op. 56

I. Andante – Allegro molto moderato
II. Vivace
III. Adagio di molto
IV. Allegretto (ma pesante)
V. Allegro

Hailing from Finland, Sibelius initially struggled to establish his reputation abroad. His fame spread gradually and he was received particularly well in Britain later in his career, but the early part of the century found him debt-ridden and plagued by ill health. Being ordered to give up drinking and smoking did not help his volatile character, which often relations with his Berlin publisher Robert Lienau. Neither of Sibelius’s final works for Lienau were especially successful at the time, though their respective fortunes in the longer term fared quite differently: the 1908 symphonic poem *Öinen ratsastus ja auringonnousu* (*Night Ride and Sunrise*) is performed rarely nowadays, but Sibelius’s return to chamber music—having long devoted himself to symphonies and symphonic poems—was the sombre but now lauded D-minor string quartet, subtitled ‘Voces intimae’ (‘Inner voices’).

This milestone in Sibelius’s development mirrored the introspection his sharply self-critical streak brought about. It also admitted into his compositional language a more modern (if bleaker) style that was to be the bedrock for most of his later works, including a breakthrough Fourth Symphony, composed two years later. The structure of the quartet is not particularly adventurous: the ‘first-and-a-half’ movements, as Sibelius described them, append a short *Vivace* to the opening movement, itself cast in two parts. The quartet’s introduction pits the outer parts, the first violin and cello, against each other in a fraught dialogue, though the texture soon becomes busier and more ‘orchestral’ with doublings between parts a common feature. Unlike many of his later critics, Sibelius regretted the quartet’s lack of ‘transparency’, apparently in reference to his design of such dense textures (belonging in a generalised sense to a more Romantic manner). Yet the spare design of the slow movement is much less compressed; the *Allegretto* and *Allegro* finale return us to a more intense soundscape in which pithy motives (fragments of melody) give the music its breathlessness.

Maurice Ravel – String Quartet in F major
I. Allegro moderato. Très doux
II. Assez vif – Scherzo: Très rythmé
III. Très lent
IV. Vif et agité

Dedicated to his teacher Gabriel Fauré, Ravel’s only string quartet caused quite a stir within French music in the first decade of the century. His work appeared to invite comparisons with the distinctive style of his compatriot Claude Debussy —especially his 1893 string quartet—and the influence is indeed obvious enough in places. (What riled Debussy were suggestions that the younger composer had influenced *him*.) Ironically, the first movement arguably exhibits Fauré’s influence more manifestly than Debussy’s, with a longing melody and nostalgic sensibility of which Ravel’s teacher was a master. The first violin and viola subsequently introduce an equally expressive second theme. The second movement, a scherzo, is full of rhythmic and articulative play, and it is here that the cyclic—that is, cross-referencing—links between the movements first surface. (Incidentally, the movement may also be recognisable from the BBC adaptation of *The Camomile Lawn*.) The third movement reprises the wistful mood of the opening but does so within a much slower-paced structure and features melodies that dovetail across the quartet. Its tonal uncertainty also corresponds with the final movement, in which probing rhythms and cyclic references are developed once more. By wrenching us back to F major, the final bars provide us with an entertaining harmonic resolution.