

This Week at Kings Place

Mon 22 Mar Words on Monday
St Pancras Rm **Carol Ann Duffy and Friends**
6.30pm

Hall Two OUT HEAR
8pm **Monotone Symphony - curated by *theatre nomad***

Thu 25 Mar Boston Musica Viva
Hall One **An American Kaleidoscope**
7.30pm

Hall Two Off With Their Heads! - Comedy at Kings Place
8pm **Simon Brodtkin, Nat Luurtsema and
(Regular MC) Ed Gamble**

Fri 26 Mar Boston Musica Viva
Hall One **All-American Grooves**
7.30pm

Sat 27 Mar Boston Musica Viva
Hall One **American Vignettes**
7.30pm

Sun 28 Mar London Chamber Music Series
Hall One **London Concertante**
6.30pm

Exhibitions

Kings Place Gallery **Norman Cornish: *A Shot Against Time,*
The Pit Road and Other Paintings**

Pangolin London **William Tucker: Sculpture & Drawing**

Next Sunday 28 March 2010
Hall One, 6.30pm
London Concertante
Richard Strauss *Till Eulenspiegel Einmal Anders!*, Op. 28
(arr. Franz Hassenöhr for viola, bass, clarinet, horn and bassoon)
Jean Francaix Octet (for wind & strings)
Schubert Octet in F, D803 (for wind & strings)

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
For information please contact:
Neil Johnson, Hon. Chairman
55 Beardsley Way
London W3 7YQ

neil@londonchambermusic.org.uk
www.londonchambermusic.org.uk

Our Café, 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

GREEN & FORTUNE

ROTUNDA
BAR - RESTAURANT - PRIVATE DINING

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

Sunday 21 March

London Chamber Music Series

Utrecht Quartet

Presented in partnership with the
London Chamber Music Society

London Chamber Music Series

Utrecht Quartet Hall One, 6.30pm

Eeva Koskinen	violin
Katherine Routley	violin
Joël Waterman	viola
Sebastian Koloski	cello

Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)
String Quartet in D major, Op. 33 No. 6 [Hob III:42] (1781)

Alexander Glazunov (1865-1936)
Five Novelettes, Op. 15 (1881)

INTERVAL (20 minutes)

Pyotr Ilich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)
String Quartet No. 2 in F major, Op. 22 (1873-74)

Supported by the Embassy of
the Kingdom of the Netherlands



Kingdom of the Netherlands

The **Utrecht String Quartet** (USQ) is one of the most renowned chamber music ensembles, known internationally for its versatile and dynamic approach. Resident in the Netherlands, the musical world of the Utrecht String Quartet is borderless and boundless, and whichever works its musicians choose to play in the genre of string-quartet music, it is their general policy to avoid any hint of treating them like museum exhibits. Even when it comes to traditional works the musicians succeed, time and again, in discovering elements that can be interpreted anew, or in finding unusual concert locations in which to perform them. However, it is mainly because of their search for lost or forgotten repertoire and for their collaboration with contemporary composers that the members of the Utrecht String Quartet have gained their excellent reputation in the music world. This versatility has featured strongly in the Quartet's international tours which have taken them to countries such as France, Germany, Australia and to the internationally famous Kuhmo Chamber Music Festival in Finland.

In April 200, the Utrecht String Quartet made its debut in England at the Conway Hall, London, followed, in 2003, by a concert at Wigmore Hall. The USQ has been a regular guest in London ever since. In the Netherlands the USQ takes part in all the important chamber music series; such as those at the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, at Vredenburg in Utrecht and at the Frits Phillips Music Centre in Eindhoven, to name just a few. In addition the four musicians have performed at the Palace on the Noordeinde in the Hague at the invitation of Queen Beatrix.

The Quartet is also active pedagogically. It is responsible for the chamber-music class of the Utrecht Conservatory and has established a successful collaborative relationship with other notable chamber music performers. In addition to its extensive concert programme, the USQ also performs for radio and television and for CD recordings. A sizeable collection of its CDs have appeared under the MDG label. There have been excellent reviews of these recordings in all the well-known music periodicals.

Joseph Haydn - String Quartet in D major, Op. 33 No. 6 [Hob III:42]

- I. Vivace assai
- II. Andante
- III. Scherzo: Allegretto
- IV. Finale: Allegretto

Haydn's early quartets were composed during three distinct periods: ten early works for Baron Fürnberg (c. late 1750s), Opp. 9, 17 and 20 (c. 1770) and Op. 33 (1781), the latter also known as the Russian Quartets on account of their performance before Grand Duke Paul (later Tsar Paul II). Op. 33 is arguably the most intimate of the collection, with fewer expressive extremes and a new sense of wit introduced (*cf.* the 'Joke' finale of No. 2). Whatever the biographical theories behind this—commentators often link Haydn's relationship with the singer Luigia Polzelli, wife of an Esterháza violinist, with his 'happier' approach—his more regularly phrased themes and more popular style are clear. More important, the set's publication is seen as a landmark because it came at the start of a decade in which Mozart and others joined Haydn to cultivate the string quartet *genre*.

The final quartet of the set opens stridently, with an unusual and fast 6/8 metre. A sensitive switch to the minor mode in the *Andante* properly exhibits Haydn's instrumental mastery: the first theme is introduced by the second violin but the yearning, imitative texture that unfolds across the ensemble is most captivating, and the first violin's sustained high notes, so-called 'inverted pedals', re-emerge beautifully. The *Scherzo* has a trio that first entrusts its melody to the cello, followed by the remaining instruments. The *Allegretto* finale employs 'double' variation, melodically and harmonically, with the D-major material framing a related D-minor passage; further imitative interplay steers the music thereafter.

Alexander Glazunov - Five Novelettes, Op. 15

1. Alla spagnuola: Allegretto
2. Orientale: Allegro con brio
3. Interludium in modo antico: Andante
4. Valse: Allegretto
5. All'ungherese: Allegretto

The music of Alexander Glazunov often suffers by comparison with his compatriots. This should, perhaps, be tempered by recognising his as an era in which successive generations of Russian composers began to thrive: while Glazunov would later criticise the likes of Stravinsky and Prokofiev, his own music was steeped in the tradition of Tchaikovsky. More relevant, then, is the fact that Glazunov hailed from a highly musical family whose contact with Balíkirev, who taught his mother and mentored various Russian nationalist composers, enabled him to meet Rimsky-Korsakov in 1879. The next most important figure in Glazunov's life was the rich timber-merchant Mitrofan Petrovich Belyayev, who granted him many commissions and gave an introduction to Liszt in 1884. Glazunov went on to teach at the St Petersburg Conservatory, though it was a position riven with factional difficulties that culminated after the political disturbances of

1905 in Rimsky-Korsakov's dismissal—and his subsequent reinstatement by Glazunov, who by then had been elected director of the institution. Glazunov remained abroad during his later years, finally settling in France until his death.

Written when Glazunov was just sixteen, the *Five Novelettes* are a suite of contrasting 'genre' pieces that reflect the composer's formative interests in, and experiments with, various national styles. (Obviously literary in origin, the term 'novelette' was first transported to music 43 years earlier by Robert Schumann.) *Alla spagnuola*—literally, in the Spanish style—opens with a dance pastiche with distinctive rhythms. *Orientale* has another *pizzicato* introduction from the accompanying cello, though the viola, followed in sequence by the upper strings, does most to convey the movement's eponymous character. The middle movement is another exercise in colour and style. Despite a Russian undertone, Glazunov's focus is more theoretical: *Interludium in modo antico* is, as the name suggests, an exploration of modal writing—neither major nor minor, traditionally understood, but with the characteristic minor third and major sixth of the Dorian mode. More characterful, the *Valse* again spotlights the cello and viola, whose classic accompanying rhythms set the scene. The final novelette is *All'ungherese*: in the Hungarian style. Customary gypsy flourishes pervade the central section before the opening material returns.

Pyotr Ilich Tchaikovsky - String Quartet No. 2 in F major, Op. 22

- I. Adagio, moderato assai (quasi andantino)
- II. Scherzo: Allegro giusto
- III. Andante ma non tanto
- IV. Finale: Allegro con moto

In writing three string quartets in the 1870s, Tchaikovsky embraced a tradition hallowed in Europe but regarded as almost trivial in Russia at the time. The claims of his quartets to 'high' culture and nationalism nevertheless invite comparison with others written during the era: Dvořák and Grieg also looked to Viennese traditions yet similarly saturated their music with folk-inspired material. Tchaikovsky's quartets were all the more successful during the composer's lifetime for the dearth of Russian precedents. At the same time, their popularity waned in the twentieth century, in part because it was clear, by then, that composers had found five- and six-part writing more in keeping with their late Romantic/early Modern tastes—as the popularity of Tchaikovsky's own 1890s sextet *Souvenir de Florence* attests. Relatedly, his later arrangements of certain quartet movements—the *Andante cantabile* from the First Quartet, for cello and string orchestra, and the Third Quartet's *Andante funebre*, for violin and piano—also proved conspicuously popular.

Tchaikovsky was fondest of his Second Quartet, whose subtext is argued to be Russian Christmastide (particularly *svyatki*, the traditionally fun-filled fortnight after New Year). Yet, the influence of Beethoven's late style is the more obvious, while the ultra-chromatic introduction to the first movement also evokes Mozart's 'Dissonance' quartet; a folkier second subject introduces some local colour. The scherzo, in D-flat major, contrasts with an A-major trio, later subjected to contrapuntal variation. Lyrically intense, the slow movement offers even greater harmonic adventure: its F minor key is shunted down a semitone (among other intervals) for an E-major passage, again drawing on Russian themes before the opening material is repeated. The quartet ends with a rondo: an energetic primary theme, now in the appropriate 'home' key of F major, frames the return of its secondary theme, contrasting episodes, and a resounding coda.

Christopher Dromey