

This Week at Kings Place

- Mon 12 Oct** Words on Monday
Hall One **Art: What's it Good for?**
7pm **curated by The London Centre for Arts and Cultural Exchange (LCACE)**
- Hall Two OUT HEAR
8pm **new music::new Ireland**
Solos & Duos for Violin & Piano - 1
curated by the Contemporary Music Centre, Ireland
- Wed 14 Oct** Schubert and Beyond
Hall One **Expansive and Concise -**
7.45pm **Schubert's Vienna & 100 Years on**
- Hall One Schubert and Beyond
9pm **The Long Journey**
- Thu 15 Oct** Schubert and Beyond
Hall One **Songs from Central, Southern and Northern Europe**
7.45pm
- Hall One Schubert and Beyond
9pm **A Quartet with Five**
- Fri 16 Oct** Schubert and Beyond
Hall One **Rare Duos**
6.30pm
- Hall One Schubert and Beyond
7.45pm **Day and Night**
- Hall One Schubert and Beyond
9pm **Swedish Folksong in Schubert**

Exhibitions

- Kings Place Gallery **Ian McKeever - Temple Paintings 2004-2006**
- Pangolin London **Lynn Chadwick - Out of the Shadows:
Unseen Sculptures from the 1960s**

Next Sunday 18 October 2009

Hall One, 6.30pm

Yuri Zhislin (violin) & Vicky Yannoula (piano)

Mozart Sonata for piano and violin in E minor, K. 304

Elgar Sonata for violin and piano in E minor, Op. 82

Beethoven Sonata for piano and violin in A major, Op. 47 'Kreutzer'

Schumann (arr. Kreisler) Fantasie for violin and piano in C major, Op. 131

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 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 11th October

London Chamber Music Series

Tippett String Quartet

Presented in partnership with the London Chamber Music Society

London Chamber Music Series

Pre-concert Talk St Pancras Room, 5.20pm

Dr Peter Fribbins discusses the string quartets of Michael Tippett.

Tippett String Quartet Hall One, 7pm

John Mills	violin
Jeremy Isaac	violin
Julia O’Riordan	viola
Bozidar Vukotic	cello

Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)
String Quartet in D minor, Op.103 [Hob. III/83] (1803)

Michael Tippett (1905-1998)
String Quartet No. 5 (1990-91)

INTERVAL (20 minutes)

John Adams (*b.* 1947)
Fellow Traveler (2007) (UK première)

Antonin Dvořák (1841-1904)
String Quartet No. 12 in F major, Op. 96 ‘American’ (1893)

The **Tippett Quartet** is one of Britain’s most exciting young string quartets. It is committed to combining mainstream repertoire with contemporary works. The Quartet formed in 1998, the year in which it made its Wigmore Hall debut. It has since performed at the BBC Proms, Purcell Room and the Cheltenham Festival. The Tippett Quartet has premiered works by composers including Cecilia Ore, Simon Holt, Robert Walker and Stephen Dodgson. The Quartet appears regularly on BBC Radio 3 and has broadcast live performances on Radio Novi Sad, Serbia and Sveriges Radio, Sweden. It has also collaborated with artists such as Laurence Power, David Owen Norris, Melvyn Tan and Craig Ogden. The Quartet pursues a keen interest in its educational work and regularly visits schools and Universities. The Tippett Quartet combines clarity of execution and total commitment in its performances; its interpretations are stylistically varied, informed by the breadth of its repertoire. 2007 saw the start of a two-year project to record the complete Tippett string quartets for Naxos. The Quartet’s artistic approach makes it highly suited to the virtuosic demands of this repertoire. Volume 1 was released in October 2008 to great critical acclaim and the second will be released in October 2009. In 2009, as well as tonight’s concert at Kings Place, the Tippett Quartet will be performing at The Three Choirs Festival and Barber concerts. It has also had invitations to perform in France and the USA.

Joseph Haydn – String Quartet in D minor, Op.103 [Hob. III/83]

I. Andante grazioso
II. Menuetto ma non troppo presto

Haydn never completed his final quartet, Op. 103, though its two movements were published within his lifetime (in 1806). It is a measure of the composer’s aged outlook and deteriorating health that he suggested a sad postscript to the score – “Gone is all my strength, old and weak am I (*Hin ist alle meine Kraft, alt und schwach bin ich*)” – set to the opening of his vocal quartet *Der Greis* (*The Old Man*)! The succession of a new generation of composers, led by

Haydn’s erstwhile pupil Beethoven, had already begun; indeed, Beethoven’s seminal Op. 18 set of quartets was published in 1801. Their dedicatee, Prince Lobkowitz, had also commissioned Haydn’s final three quartets. Haydn’s last and most innovative set of quartets, Op.76, was completed by 1797. Op.77 was supposed to contain six quartets, but only two were written (1799). Composition of a Thirteenth Mass (*Schöpfungsmesse*) took precedence, it seems.

Stylistically, the vogue of the time was for more expressively contrasted, theatrical writing for quartet – the effect of which was to make the quartet more popular than ever and to perpetuate its modernity and value. Yet, even at the turn of the century, Haydn was still an important father figure, and Op.103 remains impressive. Its melancholy opening movement, in B flat major, is simply more compactly phrased and more obviously structured than, say, most opening movements within Beethoven’s Op.18. Haydn’s *Andante grazioso* movement follows ternary form (to an ‘ABA’ model). Serene exchanges between the upper strings give way to a middle section clearly signalled by a ‘unison’ texture across the quartet, followed by an arpeggiated, harmonically driven passage. After a brief minor-mode variation, a pause divides this ‘B’ section from the return of ‘A’. The next movement begins with a D-minor minuet more rhythmically tense and unstable than what came before. Its *Affekt* is contrived from its series of short utterances and varied articulation, including recurring *staccato* motifs. An understated D-major trio follows, impelled on by subtle variation.

Michael Tippett – String Quartet No. 5

I. Medium Fast – Very Fast
II. Slow – Medium Fast

Tippett was a relatively late developer, turning to music only in his teens. He studied at the Royal College of Music but it was not until the First String Quartet (1934-35, rev. 1943) that his talents received proper recognition. Thereafter, his involvement in political activism inspired many of his best-known works, including his protest against tyranny, the oratorio *A Child of Our Time* (1939-41). A pacifist, Tippett’s conscientious objection also saw him imprisoned in 1943. He was appointed Musical Director of Morley College (1940-51), which also affected his music since the college became a focal point for revivals of older English music, especially Purcell’s. Interest in his work grew in the United States in the 1960s. (Indeed, the decade since Tippett’s death has been kinder to him there than in this country.) American commissions included the Fourth Symphony (1976-77) and *The Mask of Time* (1980-82), and he remained very active during his later years, following a fifth opera, *New Year* (1989), with a Fifth String Quartet, among other works.

Stylistically, the concision and serenity of Tippett’s music reach new heights in his Fifth String Quartet. Rejecting the rhythmic complexities and opaque textures of earlier works (relatively speaking), the form of its opening movement is nevertheless unfixed: unprepared areas of fantasia interrupt both sections mentioned in the movement’s title, while strident, rhythmic chords end each part. Therein, Tippett’s inventive use of the quartet as an ensemble is key, climaxing first in a duet for violins (to which viola and cello join), then in the partnership of violin and cello, playing three octaves apart—and then simultaneously varied by the second violin and viola. A telling quotation heads the score of the second movement: “Chante, rossignol, chante, toi / qui as le coeur gai” (“Sing, nightingale sing / you with the heart so gay”). Tippett’s interest in nightingale-song was lifelong. As the mesmeric first violin soars above introductory chords from the lower strings, the relevance of the text is clear. As with so many other composers’ works, the movement has invited comparisons with Beethoven, whose ‘Hymn to Thanksgiving’ movement (in the Op. 132 quartet) similarly alternates slow, reflective music with yearful episodes. The Tippett Quartet’s recording of the Fifth String Quartet is released on Naxos this month.

John Adams – *Fellow Traveler* (2007) (UK première)

Adams became one of America’s most celebrated composers by cultivating a style that blends minimalist rhythms with early modernist tonal colours. His best-known works include *Nixon in China* (1985-87) and *The Death of Klinghoffer* (1990-91)—both among the most performed operas in recent history—the orchestral *Short Ride in a Fast Machine* (1986), and the 9/11 commemorative piece *On the Transmigration of Souls* (2002). Adams has turned to chamber music less frequently: *String Quartet* (2008) is only his second full-sized work in the medium. His first, *John’s Book of Alleged Dances* (1994), was written for the Kronos Quartet and accompanied by pre-recorded CD; *Fellow Traveler* (2007) is his second. Just five minutes long, it was composed to mark the fiftieth birthday of Peter Sellars, the theatre director who mounted the premieres of Adams’s aforementioned operas and who directed and wrote the libretto for his third, *Doctor Atomic* (2004-05).

Antonín Dvořák – String Quartet No. 12 in F major, Op. 96 ‘American’

I. Allegro ma non troppo
II. Lento
III. Molto vivace
IV. Vivace ma non troppo

Composed in 1893, Dvořák’s ‘American’ quartet is the most famous of his fourteen quartets. Two years earlier Dvořák had been invited to become the director of the National Conservatory of Music in New York. Some of his best-remembered works were written in America: the Ninth Symphony ‘From the New World’ (B. 178), the *Sonatina* for violin and piano (B. 183), and the quartet heard this evening, Dvořák’s twelfth. The composer returned home to work in Prague in 1895, but it was while holidaying with his father in Spillville, an Iowan village with a large Czech population, that the ‘American’ quartet was written. The search for a national American style became an ambition of Dvořák’s; he consulted with Henry Thacker Burleigh, a black student of the Conservatory, on spirituals and plantation songs and searched out transcriptions of Amerindian melodies. Their manifestation in Dvořák’s musical style is not literal—yet ‘traditional’ elements such as pentatonic melodies, drone accompaniments and strongly syncopated rhythms permeate the musical fabric of this quartet and contemporaneous works.

With its pentatonicism and rhythmic ostinati, the first movement of the ‘American’ quartet begins with two such features. The viola has the theme first. Very quietly, the first violin introduces another theme in A major before the viola returns to the fore in the central development. The celebrated second movement is more melancholy. The cello mirrors the first violin, their longing melodies evoking, if not quoting, an African-American spiritual. The *Molto vivace* opens with a distinctive ‘unison’ texture and soon matches the rhythmic momentum of the first movement. Two contrasting trio sections frame a scherzo, though Dvořák’s loftier ambition here is to imitate birdsong, something which is clearest in his high writing for the upper strings. The *Vivace* finale, replete with another rhythmic ostinato, is cast as a rondo. An echo of the church music to which Dvořák and his family were exposed in Spillville is heard in its episodes.