

Next Sunday 26 October 6.30 pm

John York, Phillippe Graffin & Raphael Wallfisch

Mendelssohn – Piano Trio in D minor Op 49

Ravel – Sonata for violin and piano

Elgar – Piano Trio

Brahms – Piano Trio in C minor Op 101

**Sunday evening concerts promoted by the
London Chamber Music Society**

President: Levon Chilingirian OBE

Artistic Director: Peter Fribbins

**The London Chamber Music Society is a registered charity
No 1075787**

For information please contact:

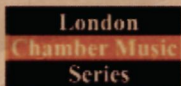
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Our Cafe, Bar and Restaurant opening times are:

Green and Fortune Cafe - 7am to 8pm

Concert Bar - 6pm to Interval

Rotunda Bar - 9am to 11pm

Rotunda Restaurant - 12pm to 11pm

**MOBILES, PAGERS AND WATCHES should be switched off
before the performance begins.**

Sunday 19 October

London Chamber Music Series

Primrose Piano Quartet

Curated by the
London Chamber Music Society

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London Chamber Music Series

Since 1999 the London Chamber Music Society has managed the celebrated London concert series which can trace its origins to the Sunday concerts at South Place from the 1880s and then Conway Hall from 1929. Their legacy is extraordinary, the concerts having been associated with many important premieres and numerous famous performers over the years, including Henry Wood, Frank Bridge, Albert Sammons, Eugene Ysaye and Percy Grainger. Now this much loved series finds a new home at Kings Place.

Hall One - 6.30pm

Primrose Piano Quartet

Susanne Stanzeleit *violin*
Robin Ireland *viola*
Bernard Gregor-Smith *cello*
John Thwaites *piano*

Frank Bridge (1879-1941)
Phantasy Quartet (1909-10)
Franz Schubert (1797-1828)
String Trio in B flat (unfinished) (1816)
Peter Maxwell Davies (born 1934)
Piano Quartet (2007) (London Première)
INTERVAL (20 minutes)
Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)
Piano Quartet in C minor Op 115 (1883)

The Primrose Piano Quartet

The Primrose Piano Quartet is named in honour of William Primrose CBE (1904-82), one of the finest violists of the twentieth century, and his piano quartet, the Festival Quartet. Formed in 2002, it unites two long-standing partnerships: Susanne Stanzeleit and John Thwaites met twenty years ago at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, and are members of the Audley Horn Trio; Robin Ireland and Bernard Gregor-Smith spent twenty years together in the Lindsays.

Together they have made a specialism of British repertoire, with a comprehensive survey of the twentieth century literature, and ongoing relationships with many composers. The group's first CD of works by Thomas Dunhill, William Hurlstone, Roger Quilter and Arnold Bax was released to wide critical acclaim in December 2004, and their second CD of works by Cyril Scott, William Alwyn, Herbert Howells and Frank Bridge, which followed in 2006, was a Five Star choice in the Classic FM Magazine. They celebrated William Hurlstone's Centenary (30th May 2006) live on BBC Radio Three and at the Wigmore Hall the following day. Commissions include a new twenty minute work by Sir Peter Maxwell Davies with premières for the July 2008 Cheltenham Festival (World), Paxton House Festival (Scottish) and Kings Place (London). The Quartet was selected for the Making Music Concert Promoters' Network in 2004/05. In 2004 the group was appointed Quartet-in-Residence at the London College of Music. In addition to annual concert cycles, they coach chamber music, work with composition students and present masterclasses. Future plans include a recording for the Meridian label of Richard Strauss's Piano Quartet, Violin Sonata and Cello Sonata for release in 2008.

Frank Bridge – Phantasy in F sharp Minor for Piano Quartet

The Phantasy for piano quartet is among the most highly regarded and best remembered of Bridge's chamber works. Composed during 1909-10 and premiered by the Henkel Piano Quartet in 1911, it epitomises the composer's early style, being refined and eloquent in its musical language and concise in its thematic procedures. Through his Cobbett Musical Competition, the amateur musician Walter Wilson Cobbett provided the stimulus for a new and wide-ranging repertoire of chamber music from young British composers. John Ireland, Vaughan Williams, Benjamin Dale, York Bowen and Thomas Dunhill were all beneficiaries, but Bridge's debt, in terms of his musical development and growth in reputation, was arguably the greatest. This was probably

because Bridge was the most enthusiastic of those to satisfy another of Cobbett's aspirations: to revive the single-movement fancy of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. An earlier Phantasy in 1907 (the Piano Trio No. 1) had won Bridge first prize in Cobbett's competition, establishing him as one of the leading composers of the younger generation. Stylistically, Bridge's studies with Stanford at the turn of the century offer some insight into the late nineteenth-century harmonic language employed in the quartet. The influence of Bridge's experience as a performer is also felt as the viola, his main instrument, often comes to the fore. Inevitably, though, the work's most significant aspect for the listener is its structure, in which several unrelated but varied sections form the basis of the extended work. Bridge's innovation here – and a preoccupation throughout his career – is his cohesive, symmetrical “arch” form: a sequence of introduction and slow movement; scherzo, trio (employing the opening theme), scherzo; slow movement and coda.

Franz Schubert – String Trio in B flat Major, D. 471 (unfinished)

Schubert began this incomplete and relatively unprepossessing string trio in September 1816. This was a significant time in the life of the only canonic Viennese composer native to Vienna. Refusing to return to his father's school, Schubert's enthusiasm for teaching had waned, and he had left his family home to lodge with his friend Franz von Schober. Schubert was also about to reach the apex of a remarkable period of creativity, although the first of two trios he wrote for violin, viola and cello – both in the key of B flat – would be among the many of his works to remain almost entirely unknown after his premature death in 1828. It was published only in 1890, and illustrates the type of light-hearted chamber music that Schubert wrote in his youth, largely for use in his circle of family and friends for whom music-making was a regular pastime. Yet, the work does seem to reach towards a more elevated style, a symptom perhaps of the aspirations of its teenage composer. Likewise, it is significant that the trio is almost contemporaneous with an overture (again in B flat), in which Schubert was consciously trying on Beethovenian wings (the trio and overture grow from similar themes). Lyrical throughout, the work exists as a single movement. A second movement was abandoned by the composer after only 39 bars – why Schubert left the work incomplete is unknown. The surviving 'Allegro' movement has a considerable charm and is in the expected sonata form, with a repeated exposition and short central development.

Peter Maxwell Davies – Piano Quartet (London premiere)

1. Entrance and Jig
2. Slow Air
3. Føroya Kvædi (Lullabye from Faroe)
4. Rebus Runarum
5. Hortus Conclusus
6. Tantum Ergo Sacramentum

The composer writes: 'The Piano Quartet was written in December 2007 for the Primrose Quartet, and is dedicated to Tam McPhail, in memory of his wife, Gunnie Moberg. Gunnie was Swedish, but settled with Tam and their four sons in Orkney, from which base she became internationally known as an artist and photographer, as well as being a close friend, and an inspiration in my own work. In this Quartet I have attempted to embrace as many of Gunnie's character traits and influences as I could, including her very Scandinavian rigour, her Scottish humour, and even her love of the Faroe Islands. It is plainsong based, with an eightfold magic square. The first three movements are played without a break, as are the last two.'

Gabriel Fauré – Piano Quartet No. 1 in C Minor, Op. 15

- I. Allegro molto moderato
- II. Scherzo: Allegro vivo
- III. Adagio
- IV. Allegro molto

Fauré lived and worked in France during an era of seismic musical change, from the Romantic style of Brahms and Schumann, through the revolutionary Wagnerian vogue, to the early twentieth-

century Modernism of Schoenberg, Debussy and Stravinsky. By many accounts, Fauré would often question the merit of his own works: only when his songs became popular in the Paris salons did he gain recognition for his compositions. He was much more confident in the chamber music medium; his interest spanned his entire career, from the First Violin Sonata to his string quartet, published posthumously in 1925. His music for piano and strings, especially, draws on his intuitive sense of songwriting and his approach to melodic interaction with accompaniment. Uncluttered and restrained, Fauré's style would never give way to showy uses of colour or "effects". Unlike the influential Saint-Saëns, Fauré was not a virtuoso pianist, yet his writing for the instrument is often extremely challenging: the unusual distribution of parts between the two hands and interesting finger substitutions are probably due to his skill as an (ambidextrous) organist. Written from 1876-79, with revisions in 1883, the First Piano Quartet belongs to a turbulent part of Fauré's early career. After a five-year romance, he was engaged to Marianne Viardot in mid 1877, but they were separated by October that year. It was at this time that he composed the three masterpieces of his youth: the First Violin Sonata, First Piano Quartet and the Ballade for piano. The quartet quickly reveals its debt to Brahms, opening with a romantic, rich statement of the main theme by unison strings, soon transforming into a beautifully yearning melody. The second movement begins with a light-hearted scherzo, the melody carried by the piano with pizzicato and dovetailing string accompaniment; the trio section has a similar feel, with muted strings and the piano characteristically outlining its melody in delicate arpeggios. The melancholic 'Adagio' shows Fauré's exquisite mastery of cello's range in an emotionally-charged light; the strings answer the piano to develop the moving theme, and the piano closes off the movement quietly. The final movement bursts into life with the racing, undulating piano echoed by strings, contrasted by a more song-like second theme. The reconciliation of these themes, climaxing in the piano, captures our attention until the same instrument restarts the coda with gentler material. Unlike the 'Adagio', the movement intensifies, sprinting towards its impassioned ending.



Applause for the Primrose Piano Quartet