

This Week at Kings Place

Mon 22 Feb Talking Art
St Pancras Rm **The Alchemy of Sculpture: The Art of Bronze Casting**
6.30pm *presented by Pangolin London*

Hall One Words on Monday
7pm **Seamus Heaney**

Hall Two Words on Monday
7pm **Seamus Heaney Event Relay**

Wed 24 Feb Arctic Circle - The Bubbly Blue and Green
Hall One **Philip Jeck / Janek Schaefer**
8pm

Thu 25 Feb Arctic Circle - The Bubbly Blue and Green
Hall One **HAUSCHKA with Hildur Gudnadottir / ISAN**
8pm

Fri 26 Feb Arctic Circle - The Bubbly Blue and Green
Hall One **Samphire Band / The Sleeping Years**
8pm

Exhibitions

Kings Place Gallery **Ørnulf Opdahl: Mood Paintings of the North**
[LAST CHANCE: Fri 26 Feb]

Sophie Benson: Vanishing Points
[LAST CHANCE: Fri 26 Feb]

Pangolin London **Burnt Offerings: Jason Wason.**
An exhibition of bronzes and ceramics

Next Sunday 28 February 2010
Hall One, 6.30pm
Allegri Quartet
Haydn String Quartet in C, Op. 54 No. 2
Thomas Hyde String Quartet (World Première)
Tchaikovsky String Quartet No. 3 in E flat minor, Op. 30



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

London
Chamber Music
Society

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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	

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

Sunday 21 February

London Chamber Music Series

Primrose Piano Quartet

**Presented in partnership with the
London Chamber Music Society**

London Chamber Music Series

Primrose Piano Quartet Hall One, 6.30pm

Suzanne Stanzeleit	violin
Robin Ireland	viola
Andrew Fuller	cello
John Thwaites	piano

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)
Piano Quartet in E flat major, Op. 16b (1796)

**Variations on the Burns Air “By yon Castle wa”
by Beamish, Casken, Cohen, Cutler, Fribbins, Goss,
Hellawell, Ireland, Jacobson, MacMillan, Martlew, Pott**
(London Première)

INTERVAL (20 minutes)

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)
Piano Quartet No. 1 in G minor, Op. 25 (c. 1857-61)

The **Primrose Piano Quartet** was formed in 2004 by pianist John Thwaites and three of the UK’s most renowned chamber musicians (from the Lindsay, Sorrel, Edinburgh Quartets). It is named after the great Scottish violinist, William Primrose, who himself played in the Festival Piano Quartet.

Alongside its performances of the major repertoire, the Primrose Quartet has researched widely the forgotten legacy of the 20th century English composers and has revived a number of remarkable and unjustly neglected piano quartets. The Quartet’s first CD featured works by Thomas Dunhill, William Hurlstone, Roger Quilter and Arnold Bax. It was released to wide acclaim and was followed by a disc presenting music by Cyril Scott, William Alwyn, Herbert Howells and Frank Bridge. The Primrose Quartet celebrated Hurlstone’s centenary live on BBC Radio 3 and at Wigmore Hall.

An exciting commission, born out of the Quartet’s strong Scottish connections, is the ‘Burns Air’ project, timed to celebrate Robert Burns’s 250th Anniversary. Having chosen an air with a haunting melody and text, the Primrose invited a number of their composer friends to write a short variation each. This will have its London première in tonight’s concert.

Another highlight has been the world première of Sir Peter Maxwell Davies’s Piano Quartet at the Cheltenham Festival in 2008. This twenty minute piece, commissioned by the Primrose, has proved very appealing and will be available on a new CD early this year, coupled with the *Burns Air* Variations and a previously unrecorded Piano Quintet by Dmitri Smirnov.

Having been selected for the Making Music Concert Promoters’ Network in 2004/05, the Quartet has toured throughout the UK as well as abroad. Alongside its rapidly growing concert schedule the Quartet offers innovative educational workshops for schools which are attracting a lot of interest, especially in connection with the Burns Air project. Other educational work includes a residency at the London College of Music.

Ludwig van Beethoven - Piano Quartet in E flat major, Op. 16b

I. Grave - Allegro ma non troppo
II. Andante cantabile
III. Rondo: Allegro ma non troppo

Beethoven’s Op. 16 unusually exists in two versions: the first a quintet for piano, oboe, clarinet, horn and bassoon, the second, as it is performed this evening, a straightforward piano quartet. Though both versions were published simultaneously, Beethoven was inspired by Mozart’s K452 quintet, with which Op. 16 shares a key and, in its quintet form, its instrumentation. Mozart wrote his piece in 1784 and proudly declared it to be the best work he had written; Beethoven’s progeny was published in 1801 and dedicated to Prince Joseph von Schwarzenberg. Just as Mozart went out of his way to ‘gel’ the mixed instruments available to him, Beethoven faced the same problems of instrumental balance. His composition of alternative string parts, which were naturally more homogenous than mixed winds, was one solution; his approach to the musical fabric of the work was another.

His lively, imitative textures in the opening movement—after a *Grave* introduction—show Beethoven’s care in blending his generally soloistic parts into a greater whole. At the same time, the piano takes a clear lead at several prominent points during the course of the piece, almost in the manner of a concerto. It introduces the opening movement’s principal and secondary themes, which are both taken up by the strings. It also introduces the B-flat major slow movement, marked *Andante cantabile*, though a more varied and episodic approach to form affects the instrumentation thereafter: the strings interweave in imitation of one another, while the piano’s theme becomes ever more ornate as the movement progresses. The piece ends with a rondo, in which a lively, ‘hunting’-style theme, led again by the piano, bubbles along and frames two contrasting episodes.

Various - Variations on the Burns Air “By yon Castle wa”

Robert Burns	Air: “By yon Castle wa”
John Casken	Variation on a Jacobite air
Joe Cutler	Grunge Variation
Sally Beamish	By Yon Castle Wa’
Piers Hellawell	Air Apparent
Peter Fribbins	There’ll never be peace till Jamie comes hame
Jacques Cohen	Castle Lament
Zoe Martlew	Variation Z, “Hame”
Robin Ireland	Air on a Stroud hill
Stephen Goss	Scherzo Variation
Francis Pott	By Yon Castle Wa’

*By yon Castle wa’, at the close of the day,
I heard a man sing, tho’ his head it was gray:
And as he was singing the tears doon came,-
There’ll never be peace till Jamie comes hame.
The Church is in ruins, the state is in jars,
Delusions, depressions and murderous wars,
We dar na weel say’t, but we ken wha’s to blame,-
There’ll never be peace till Jamie comes hame.
My seven braw sons for Jamie drew sword,
But now I greet round their green beds in the yerd;
It brak the sweet heart o’ my faithful and dame,-
There’ll never be peace till Jamie comes hame.
Now life is a burden that bows me down,
Sin’ I tint my bairns, and he tint his crown:
But till my last moments my words are the same,-
There’ll never be peace till Jamie comes hame.*

The ensemble writes: “Inspired by a wild boat-crossing to the Ayrshire Isle of Arran, we conceived the idea of multiple Variations on an Air to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the birth of Robert Burns, which fell in 2009. We were also planning the premiere recordings of the Piano Quartet by Peter Maxwell Davies (written for us in 2007) and the Piano Quintet by Dmitri Smirnov with double bass player Leon Bosch, and another contemporary premiere was needed to complete the CD programme. Having chosen a Jacobite air with a particularly haunting melody and text [a song from the 1790s, entitled ‘By yon Castle wa’ by Robert Burns to commemorate his 250th anniversary, we asked eleven different composers to write a variation on it. It has been truly inspiring to see how so many great composing figures of our time have enjoyed the Air, and have clearly been moved to write for us something very special, often substantial and extremely varied in style and character. The Air and its Variations will be a continually evolving project as we tour the country using it as part of our education project. In composers’ workshops for schools and colleges, student variations will be rehearsed by the Primrose, incorporated within the original professional composition and given a concert performance.”

Johannes Brahms - Piano Quartet No. 1 in G minor, Op. 25

I. Allegro
II. Intermezzo: Allegro ma non troppo – Trio. Animato
III. Andante con moto
IV. Rondo alla zingarese: Presto

Despite its number, the G-minor piano quartet was Brahms’s second such work. In the mid 1850s he drafted a piano quartet in C-sharp minor. While its key was discarded, the piece was reworked and completed some twenty years later (as Piano Quartet No. 3, Op. 60). Op. 25 also took Brahms several years to write, though its style is very different and we cannot say for certain when it was begun. In an age that increasingly defined musical progress in terms of the symphony orchestra, Brahms did most to revive the refined, intimate sphere of chamber music in the late nineteenth century. Yet the development and colour of the First Piano Quartet has a distinctly ‘orchestral’ feel. (Arnold Schoenberg noticed this, too, making an orchestral arrangement of it in 1937.)

Brahms’s *Allegro* is a typically ambitious, if sober, affair. Unusually, new material is introduced in the recapitulation, while the movement’s expansive structural sections are held together by the pithy motif that characterises the opening theme. The ‘symphonic’ architecture continues to be built in the introspective second movement, headed *Intermezzo*. Its understated scherzo symbolically conceals the composer’s love for Clara Schumann—hence Brahms’s variation of her late husband’s characteristic five-note ‘Clara’ motif, falling and rising. The E-flat major *Andante con moto* begins innocently enough, though its song-like form soon gives way to a C-major march. The *Rondo alla zingarese* finale is more extravagant still, with a gypsy idiom that looks to Brahms’s forebears, though there are shades of Liszt in its cadenza for piano.

London Chamber Music Series**Primrose Piano Quartet****Sunday 21 February****Hall One, 6.30pm****APPENDIX**

The short *Variation on a Jacobite Air* was conceived as a lamenting song, with the lines of the violin and cello characterised in this way and supported by the piano. The viola on the other hand chooses not to lament but to behave more independently, responding with music of a decidedly dance-like character, to which the piano is also tempted to join in. Even at the end of the brief agitated passage when the ideas are thrown into disarray, the viola refuses to abandon the dancing figuration. It is only in the brief coda that its tripping triplet figuration seems to take on the lamenting character of the other three instruments. **John Casken**

Grunge Variation takes the melodic material of the air and ornaments it with swoops, glissandi, pizzicati and edgy bass lines. **Joe Cutler**

By Yon Castle Wa' uses only the three string players, and follows the pitches of the song, displacing the octaves to open out the line into yearning phrases. A dual tonality is suggested, by harmonising in D minor and F against the original G major, with a guitar-like accompaniment. It comes with my best wishes, and is a gift of a few minutes respite to the silent pianist. **Sally Beamish**

Air Apparent is an intentional misnomer as well as a pun about derivation, since the parentage of the music is anything but apparent: there was no intention in my piece to treat the folk-song as a musical, much less a cultural, entity. Instead, the variation is a little instrumental fantasia based upon discrete shards of melody, fragments shaved from the phrases of the folksong and heavily refracted through my musical language. One of these opens the introduction; others are then found, disguised, in sustained strings, and in an ostinato cycle in the piano during the main section, which is marked *pesante*.

Piers Hellawell

"*There'll never be peace till Jamie comes hame*" interprets the darker themes of the text. Dwelling on the 'oppressions and murderous wars' of the second stanza, the theme, played in ghostly discordant harmonics and answered by falling phrases in the piano is first rhythmically compressed into a jig, then into a tense ostinato in the strings with violent syncopated piano interjections. Finally, as indicated in the score with the text 'my seven braw sons for Jamie drew sword', hammered fortissimo chords put the theme to death.

Peter Fribbins

Like at least two of the other variations, *Castle Lament* is inspired not only by the melody but also by the image of the man weeping by the castle. Whilst the three strings play an indistinct, moaning figure, the melody, slightly disguised by octave displacements, emerges in the piano. After a climax, the latter part of the theme appears more clearly before combining with Mussorgsky's *The Old Castle* which describes another miserable old sod singing by some ruins. This is followed by a reprise of the opening figure in high string harmonics. **Jacques Cohen**

The starting point for *Variation Z, "Hame"* was the text whose opening lines paint the unforgettable image of an old man singing and weeping outside a castle at sunset. This scene immediately plunged me into the gothic romantic Scotland of Macbeth, tragedy and the supernatural. We learn that the old man is grieving for his "seven braw sons" who have been killed in the bloody Jacobite wars, whose ghostly voices are distributed amongst the quartet who hum and sing the theme, partially hidden amidst open string and harmonic resonance. As if his sons are still living, the old man repeatedly muses that "There'll never be peace till Jamie comes hame", in other worlds, until James II of England and the Stuart monarchy are restored to the throne. His obsessive thought is reflected in a recurring treble piano theme that breaks the hocketed string tune. In 1793 Burns wrote (concerning this Air) that "the second, or high part of the tune is only for instrumental music and would be much better omitted in singing", an instruction I've faithfully obeyed in two-viol consort-like instrumental sections. For me, the Air's pivotal theme "Hame" represents a notion of peace irrevocably linked to an eternity beyond the grave, an idea echoed in the contrary-motion cycles of fifths and seconds given to the piano which end the piece in timeless, ever-expanding ripples over a hushed string tremolo glissando. **Zoë Martlew**

On a Stroud Hill was, indeed, composed on a Stroud hillside, one very hot and balmy summer afternoon in July 2008. It fulfils its intended role of being the one conventional variation in the set. The weather insinuated itself into the music, which is unashamedly influenced by Vaughan Williams, and in an English, rather than Scottish, landscape. I responded to the ambiguous harmonies suggested in the Air by taking each of its four phrases to an unexpected resolution. **Robin Ireland**

In the short, fast *Scherzo Variation*, the Burns Air has been transformed into a jig. Open strings and natural harmonics, suggesting bagpipe drones, create a haze around a busy piano solo. The variation depicts Jamie's imagined return journey home. **Stephen Goss**

On the final *Variation on 'By Yon Castle Wa'*: An interesting aspect of being asked to contribute to this compositional team effort was that I knew nothing in advance about what others might be up to, and thus wrote my music wondering whether the end result for the Primrose Quartet might be a bit like dispensing with a wedding list and ending up with thirty toast racks but no sheets. (I needn't have worried.) Unlike most of my fellow composers, I also overlooked the opportunity to inject any deft wordplay into the title, which remains dourly functional (a little like a castle wall, come to think of it). This variation, a free kind of scherzo, sets out by inverting the entire tune and giving it an irregular rhythm in which groups of three quavers regularly straddle main beats of a bar notated initially in 8/8 time. This is heard in the bass regions of the piano before generating material for the strings. Eventually the dotted rhythms of the opening give

rise to jig-like rhythmic patterns for the strings, beneath which the piano presents a chordally supported statement of the folk theme, this time the right way up but somewhat obliquely harmonized. Free development of these elements creates triple rhythms in both quavers and semiquavers and an occasional sense of things happening in two speeds at once. Eventually a romantically expansive but also short-lived climax leads to a headlong coda. The movement ends with a fleeting reference to the opening bars – and also, in the final cadence, to a hint of the conclusion to the Piano Quartet by Herbert Howells, a work much beloved of the Primrose Quartet. This music is unrepentantly retrospective, key influences being the splendid early Piano Trio on Irish Themes by the Swiss composer Frank Martin (1890-1974) and certain harmonic fingerprints from the music of Carl Nielsen. Although a flavour of more British pastoralism from the early twentieth century hangs over it too, the movement features a fair amount of contrapuntal thinking. The piano part is particularly virtuosic, perhaps reflecting my performing enthusiasm for the music of Medtner, Rachmaninov and their Russian pianist contemporaries. **Francis Pott**

John Casken studied with John Joubert, Peter Dickinson and Witold Lutoslawski. He was Professor of Music at the University of Manchester from 1992 to 2008. His first opera *Golem* (1989) won The First Britten award for Composition in 1990, and the Gramophone Award in the contemporary category in 1991.

Joe Cutler is Head of Composition at Birmingham Conservatoire. Commissions include BBC Radio 3, Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival, LSO and SCO, and his music has been performed by leading artists and orchestras worldwide.

Sally Beamish one of the foremost British composers of her generation has had her music programmed worldwide. She was featured composer at Cheltenham Festival (2006) and St Magnus Festival (2005). Her *Knotgrass Elegy* was premiered at the BBC Proms 2001

Piers Hellawell's work has been commissioned and performed around the world by leading artists. Recordings of his work are on the ECM (New Series), NMC and Metier labels. He is currently Professor of Composition at The Queen's University of Belfast. In 2007 his music was acquired by Peters Edition (London) Ltd.

Peter Fribbins is Director of Music at Middlesex University and Artistic Director of the celebrated and long-established series of Sunday London Chamber Music Society Concerts. Commissions include string quartets for the Chilingirian and Allegri Quartets and a cello sonata for Raphael Wallfisch.

Jacques Cohen is Music Director of the Isis Ensemble. His compositions include *Yigdal* (2006) and *Passion Fragment*, which was given a sensational premiere in April 2009.

Zoë Martlew performs around the world as soloist and with contemporary music ensembles, rock, pop, jazz, electronica and improvisation bands. As composer she has written for ballet, theatre, film and her own one-woman cabaret show. She is a regular presenter for BBC Radio 3.

Stephen Goss's music has been recorded on EMI, Decca, and Telarc. Xuefei Yang's recording of Goss's *The Chinese Garden* (2008) was nominated as Editor's Choice in *Gramophone Magazine* and won 'Best Instrumental CD' in the Canton Radio Classical CD Awards in China.

Francis Pott was awarded First Prize in the second Prokofiev International Composing Competition in Moscow. His oratorio *A Song on the End of the World* was written as the last pre-millennial Elgar Commission of the Three Choirs Festival at Worcester. In 2006 he was a nominated finalist in the National Composer Awards of the British Academy of Composers and Songwriters.