

London Chamber Music Series

Badke Quartet Hall One, 6.30pm

Heather Höhmann	violin
Emma Parker	violin
Jon Thorne	viola
Jonathan Byers	cello

Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)
String Quartet in D minor, Op. 76 No. 2 [Hob III:76] *Fifths* (1796-97)

James Francis Brown (b. 1969)
String Quartet (2010) [World première]

Commissioned for London Chamber Music Society by Susan and Walter Rudeloff

INTERVAL (20 minutes)

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)
String Quartet No. 2 in A minor, Op. 13 (1827)

LAST CONCERT OF THE SEASON

The **Badke Quartet**, formed in 2002, is widely recognised as one of Britain’s finest young string quartets and has received widespread acclaim for its energetic and vibrant performances. The Quartet has worked with some of the world’s greatest string quartets and all four musicians are graduates of London’s Royal Academy of Music and Royal College of Music. From 2005-2009 the Quartet held the Senior Leverhulme Chamber Music Fellowship at the Royal Academy of Music. It has performed in some of the UK’s most prestigious chamber music venues including Wigmore Hall, Bridgewater Hall, St John’s Smith Square and the Royal Festival Hall and regularly performs at festivals in the UK and abroad.

Last season the Quartet undertook a touring residency with Britten-Pears in Aldeburgh and returned to perform in the Verbier Festival, as well as being the main coaches in the Amateur Chamber Music Week. During the Summer, the Quartet performed at many festivals including the Lichfield Festival and the West Cork Chamber Music Festival in Ireland. Also in 2009 the Quartet made its Musikverein debut in Vienna, performed with Mark Padmore in France and returned to Ireland for a Music Network Tour. The Quartet also performed twice at Wigmore Hall and at Kings Place. The 2010 season sees the Badke Quartet make its debut at the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, return to Kings Place and record its first commercial release.

No strangers to the airwaves, the Quartet has broadcast live on BBC Radio 3, Classic FM, Lyric FM (Ireland), ABC Classic FM (Australia) and for the European Broadcasting Union. Later this year the Quartet will perform Mendelssohn’s Octet with the Brodsky Quartet on BBC Radio 3.

Believing strongly in the importance of education work, in building new audiences and making chamber music much more accessible, the Quartet performs across the UK, bringing chamber music to hundreds of children in conjunction with the Cavatina Chamber Music Trust.

The Quartet plays on a fine set of instruments on loan from the Royal Academy of Music’s collection including two Gagliano violins, a Grancino viola and the Segelman Stradivarius cello. The Badke Quartet is most grateful to the Hattori Foundation, Musicians Benevolent Fund, Nicholas Boas Charitable Trust, Fidelio Charitable Trust, Tillett Trust and several private sponsors for their continued support.

Joseph Haydn – String Quartet in D minor, Op. 76 No. 2 [Hob III:76] *Fifths*

- I. Allegro
- II. Andante o più tosto allegretto
- III. Menuetto: Allegro ma non troppo
- IV. Vivace assai

If the six quartets Mozart dedicated to Haydn in 1782-85 exhibited all the elements of Classical quartet style as it has since been understood, then the reciprocal influence they had on Haydn’s late quartets is no less important. The more serious tone of Haydn’s earlier quartets, broadly speaking, was reconciled later on with a more popular touch. Haydn retained his technical interest in equal-voice textures and upheld the cyclic integration of his quartets, i.e. with cross-references between movements—but his counterpoint now became more extended, his writing more soloistic and harmonically varied. Haydn was perhaps less subtle in style but, at the same time, he adhered to significant, new standards. For example, the minuet would almost always appear as the third movement, while the slow movements, in ternary, variation or double variation form, became more innovatively structured and melodious.

Op. 76 was the last set of quartets Haydn would complete. Its second number, the ‘Fifths’ quartet, is so called because of the introductory intervals around which the *Allegro* is tightly structured. Persistent yet nuanced development of this fifths-based motif renders a second subject unnecessary. (Haydn commonly wrote monothematic opening movements.) The gentler *Andante o più tosto allegretto* begins in the tonic major (D major) and follows ternary variation form—that is, with an innocent opening melody, a more contrasted middle section, the modestly decorated return of the opening material, which quickly inspires to a set of nifty variations. The third movement, sometimes labelled the *Hexenmenuett* (Witches’ Minuet), recalls the harsher tone of the opening movement. Its two-part canon pits the lower and upper strings against each other, each pair playing in octaves but separated by a bar; the relentless rhythms of the trio section offer little respite. The *Vivace assai* finale is a sonata rondo that once again seeks to resolve the tension between D minor and major. The former is the setting for the movement’s folk-tinged theme; the latter is used upon the return of this melody and endures as faster passages bring the work to a close.

James Francis Brown – String Quartet
[World première of London Chamber Music Society commission]

James Francis Brown first studied composition with Hans Heimler (a pupil of Alban Berg) under a scholarship granted when he was just eleven, and he went on to train at the Royal Academy of Music. His Piano Sonata (1994), Viola Sonata (1995) and String Trio (1996) have been heard on the South Bank and at the Wigmore Hall; Jack Liebeck and the English Chamber Orchestra premiered his *Fantasy* for violin and orchestra at the Barbican in 2001; the London Chamber Orchestra performed the *Sinfonietta*, commissioned by Faber, in 2002. More recent works include a Piano Quartet and music for the short award-winning film *The Clap* (2005). An accomplished arranger, he recently reconstructed and orchestrated sketches for Wagner’s projected opera *Männerlist größer als Frauenlist* for the Royal Opera House (performed in 2007); he also arranged Wagner’s *Siegfried Idyll* for the 2008 City of London Festival. Future projects include a recording of his chamber music, a work for Harrow Choral Society, and a piece for the cellist Steven Isserlis and soprano Lucy Crowe.

Of his String Quartet the composer writes: “It seems strange to me, now, that it has taken me so long to get round to writing a string quartet; I have always felt ‘born’ for the medium. The intimacy of chamber music, the homogeneity of timbre and the dynamic exchanges between players are all qualities which fire my imagination. So I was extremely pleased when the London Chamber Music Society, funded by Susan and Walter Rudeloff, commissioned this quartet from me. The structure of this quartet

is quite straightforward; ostensibly a single-movement work, it is, in fact, in three sections. The first is a vigorous *Allegro con brio* which sets out two contrasting subjects in a rather direct way. The first subject is more of a cluster of themes which continue to influence the rest of the work in one way or another. The second subject is more lyrical and remote and forms the basis for the character of the slow central movement (*Lento flessibile*). The latter is a somewhat moody affair which contrasts music of an impassioned nature with a quiet, impassive and distant music. The more austere tone of this movement is dispelled by the last movement (*Allegro vivace*) which, I like to think, has a spirit of optimism and is, perhaps, the most ‘classical’ in approach. Really, the classical spirit (which I might loosely define as thematic, organic, and concerned with proportion and balance along with a certain economy of means) pervades the entire quartet. I feel it is in the nature of classicism to ‘well up’ in succeeding generations and this is my contribution, which, I hope, has some freshness and gives pleasure. The string quartet is dedicated to Peter Fribbins in friendship and admiration for his own splendid examples of the genre.”

Felix Mendelssohn – String Quartet No. 2 in A minor, Op. 13

- I. Adagio – Allegro vivace
- II. Adagio non lento
- III. Intermezzo: Allegretto con moto – Allegro di molto
- IV. Presto – Adagio non lento

Once the 11-year-old *wunderkind* whose pianistic talents were praised by Goethe no less, Mendelssohn grew to become a celebrated conductor, pianist, organist and, of course, composer. Standing at the forefront of German music during the early-to-mid nineteenth century, he drew upon the chromatic counterpoint of JS Bach as much as Mozart’s grace and clarity and Beethoven’s dramaticism. But with a heightened sense of ‘symphonic’ momentum, Mendelssohn’s expressive emotion and controlled Romanticism surpass his forebears.

Nowhere is this claim better supported than in Mendelssohn’s six string quartets. The first two, Opp. 13 and 12 (written in that order), descend from the late quartets of Beethoven. The ‘Second’ Quartet marked Mendelssohn’s first attempt to write in the genre; it was published by Breitkopf und Härtel after the Op. 12 quartet, which had been sold to another publisher. Allusions to Beethoven abound in the A-minor quartet, which proceeds from an unhurried introduction to a sonata-form *Allegro vivace* (in the manner of Beethoven’s Op. 132 quartet, which is also in A minor) and includes a recurring motif from Mendelssohn’s own song, *Ist es wahr?* (‘Is it true?’), recalling the famous permutations of *Muss es sein?* (‘Must it be?’) in Beethoven’s final quartet, Op. 135. Where the teenage Mendelssohn differs is in his romantic, rather than philosophical, outlook: Op. 12 concludes by quoting the end of its ‘motto’ song— *Was ich fühle, das begreift nur, die es mitfühlt, und die treu mir ewig bleibt* (‘What I feel is only understood by her who feels it with me and who remains always true to me’)—to answer its opening question.

In between, the *Adagio non lento* unfurls another theme derived from the same motto; this leads to a fugal section that, in turn, inspires a series of intricate, sometimes witty, variations before the opening theme makes its due return. A much lighter theme, accompanied *pizzicato* by the lower strings, announces the third movement. This two-part Intermezzo continues with a signature-style *Allegro di molto* trio typical of Mendelssohn’s dazzling approach to instrumental writing. The wild, operatic rhetoric at the beginning of the last movement is a preface to further fugal writing—yet the return of the first movement’s *Adagio*, coupled with the aforesaid ‘answer’, reveals Mendelssohn’s more ambitious design. As such, his A-minor quartet also daringly ends, as it had begun, in the major mode.

This Week at Kings Place

Mon 17 May Talking Art
St Pancras Rm **Fallis in Wonderland**
6.30pm

Hall One
7pm Words on Monday
No Return to Realpolitik - British foreign policy that protects civilians from armed conflict is good for them - and good for Britain

Hall Two
8pm OUT HEAR
Disintegrate, Degenerate, Decompose

Thu 20 May Samuel Joseph presents... Jazz: Voice + Piano
Hall One **Norma Winstone & Glauco Venier**
7.30pm

Hall Two
8pm Off With Their Heads! - Comedy at Kings Place
Craig Campbell, Danielle Ward and Ed Gamble (Regular MC)

Fri 21 May Samuel Joseph presents... Jazz: Voice + Piano
Hall One **Lea Delaria & Janette Mason**
7.30pm

Sat 22 May Samuel Joseph presents... Jazz: Voice + Piano
Hall One **Claire Martin & Sir Richard Rodney Bennett**
7.30pm

Exhibitions

Kings Place Gallery **Stephen Chambers: The Four Corners, Paintings, Prints, Drawings and Books**

Pangolin London **Fallis In Wonderland**

First Concert of 2010-2011 Season
Sunday 3 October
Hall One 6.30 pm
Wihan Quartet
Schubert Quartettsatz in C minor
Schumann String Quartet in F, Op. 41 No. 2
Dvořak String Quartet in E flat, Op. 51 *Slavonic*

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

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 16 May

London Chamber Music Series

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Presented in partnership with the
London Chamber Music Society