

London Chamber Music Series

Mozart Piano Quartet Hall One, 6.30pm

Mark Gothoni	violin
Hartmut Rohde	viola
Peter Hörr	cello
Paul Rivinius	piano

Frank Bridge (1879-1941)
Phantasy in F sharp minor for Piano Quartet (1909-10)

Robert Schumann (1810-1856)
Piano Quartet in E flat major, Op. 47 (1842)

INTERVAL (20 minutes)

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) (arr. **Ferdinand Ries**)
Symphony No. 3 *Eroica*, Op. 55 (Original 1802-03)

Founded in 2000, the **Mozart Piano Quartet** has been establishing an impressive career and by now is one of the leading piano quarters in the world. Its members are internationally known as both soloists and chamber musicians and serve as professors at either the University of Arts, Berlin or the Hochschule ‘Mendelssohn-Bartholdy’ in Leipzig.

The Quartet has been ensemble in residence at the Festival for Romantic Chamber Music in Leipzig-Halle, Germany, with appearances at concerts and other festivals throughout Europe and Australia. It had its first tour of North America in April 2002 and has been invited to perform extensively in the USA and Canada.

Highlights of this season include live concerts for West German radio as well as the Quartet’s debut at the Concertgebouw, Amsterdam and Penderecki’s Beethoven Festival, Warsaw among others and tours to Brazil and Uruguay. In addition, the Quartet has been invited to be ensemble in residence at the Westfalen Classic and the Rauma Festivo music festivals.

In 2000, the Mozart Piano Quartet made the world premiere recording of the complete chamber music works by the Romantic composer, Uwe Gustav Jenner, a pupil of Brahms. Its recordings of works by Brahms, Dvorak and Richard Strauss among others, as well as the arrangement of Beethoven’s *Eroica* Symphony by Ferdinand Ries, have been extremely well received.

The ensemble is scheduled for extensive touring in 2010/11 with some of their musical friends, such as Janne Saksala (1st solo bass - Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra), Jorg Widmann (clarinet and world famous composer) and Marie Luise Neunecker (French horn).

Frank Bridge - Phantasy in F sharp minor for Piano Quartet

The *Phantasy* for piano quartet is among the most highly regarded of Bridge’s chamber works. Premiered by the Henkel Piano Quartet in 1911, it epitomises the composer’s early style: refined and eloquent in its musical language, 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 the greatest. This was probably the case 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 his generation. Bridge’s studies with Charles Villiers Stanford at the turn of the century also offer an insight into the late Romantic harmonies of the later *Phantasy* quartet. Bridge’s experience as a performer is also felt as the viola, his principal instrument, comes to the fore. Inevitably, though, the most significant aspect for the listener is the 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, unfurled in a sequence of introduction and slow movement, scherzo, trio (re-employing the opening theme) and scherzo again, and finally slow movement drawn to a close by a coda.

Robert Schumann - Piano Quartet in E flat major, Op. 47

I. Sostenuto assai – Allegro ma non troppo
II. Scherzo: Molto vivace – Trio I – [Tempo I] – Trio II – [Tempo I]
III. Andante cantabile
IV. Finale: Vivace

If fans of Schumann forever remember 1840 as the year in which his finest *Lieder* were written, then 1842 deserves special mention for the composer’s sudden outpouring of chamber music, including three string quartets (Op. 41), a piano quintet (Op. 44), and the piano quartet heard this evening (Op. 47). Commentators often attribute this sudden turn to writing in larger-scale forms to the advice of his wife, Clara, whom he belatedly married in 1840. Having engaged in secret three years earlier, they married only after petitioning court to be allowed to proceed without paternal consent. The opposition of Clara’s father, Friedrich Wieck, to her marrying his former pupil was partly on account of its potential to blight her career. To a degree, his fears were prophetic. Clara struggled to balance the demands of her career with those of her husband’s and to cope with his periods of depression—a condition that led to his attempted suicide in 1854 and confinement in the private asylum where, beset by psychotic dementia, he was to die.

Schumann studied the music of Haydn, Mozart and especially Beethoven at length in 1842 (Clara having left him ‘home alone’ in Leipzig while she toured). Perhaps the chief difference was that, by the time of Op. 47, the maturing piano quartet, and chamber music more generally, was as much an enterprise for private entertainment as for public exhibition.

Indeed, Schumann now uniquely coupled the stylistic imprint of these masters with his more youthful sense of inventiveness and poeticism. The opening movement of the Piano Quartet is duly Beethovenian in its approach to melody and structure: Schumann’s falling and rising tone idea emerges from a comparatively static *Sostenuto assai* introduction; scalic, *staccato* textures characterise the second subject; and the recapitulation is punctuated by further melodic development. Unusually, the Scherzo comes with *two* episodic trios. The second is a highlight as alternating third-beat emphases from the piano and strings disturb the time signature. The *Andante cantabile* is in ternary form, that is, following an A-B-A model, and makes use of another unconventional feature, *scordatura*, for which the cellist is instructed to tune down their C-string by a tone. The strings lead the outer passages of the movement; the middle section, in G flat major, shares material more evenly. The *Vivace* finale begins (though does not end) in the manner of a fugue, whose theme is first entrusted to the viola. Schumann’s predilection for development feeds the movement’s elaborate structure, which is cast in a loose rondo form.

Ludwig van Beethoven (arr. Ferdinand Ries) - Symphony No. 3 *Eroica*, Op. 55

I. Allegro con brio
II. Marcia funebre
III. Scherzo: Allegro vivace
IV. Allegro molto

Beethoven taught very few budding musicians, but Ferdinand Ries—pianist, composer and copyist—was the most famous of them. Ries moved to Vienna in 1801 but studied only the piano with Beethoven; for composition lessons he was sent to Johann Albrechtsberger. Ries enjoyed lucrative tours across Europe and Russia thereafter and settled for a time in London. But thanks to his earlier relationship with Beethoven, he was often placed in a false position of competition. No help was provided by the undermining suggestion alleged to have been made by Beethoven, though probably apocryphal, that Ries’s musical style too often imitated that of his erstwhile mentor.

Nevertheless, Ries, together with Beethoven, helped sate the great appetite for orchestral music reworked for domestic consumption that existed in the early nineteenth century—an era in which music was not so easily distributable, of course. The norm was to arrange works for solo piano or a chamber group, the most skilfully crafted of which were judged to be those that, naturally enough, were led by the piano, but without humbling the strings. Such is the case with Ries’s transcription for piano quartet of Beethoven’s famous *Eroica* Symphony, Op. 55. Its commission came from Beethoven, whose popularity made him an easy target for unauthorised arrangements backed by unprincipled publishers. In response, he is (said to have) said: “Arranging is so in vogue nowadays that it would be futile for a composer to try to prevent it; but one can at least rightly demand that the publisher indicate it on the title page, so the composer’s honour is not diminished and the public not deceived.”

This Week at Kings Place

Tue 4 May Guardian's Politics Weekly
Hall One **Podcast Live**
7pm

Wed 5 May PARTAGER: Paris / London / New York Jazz Festival
Hall One **DJ Ango / Emile Parisien Quartet**
7.30pm **Andy Emler Megaoctet with Marc Ducret**

Thu 6 May PARTAGER: Paris / London / New York Jazz Festival
Hall One **Matthieu Donarier Trio featuring Manu Codjia**
7.30pm **Sylvian Luc / Laika featuring Robert Mitchell**

Hall Two Off With Their Heads! - Comedy at Kings Place
8pm **Simon Munnery, Naz Osmanoglu and**
Ray Peacock (Regular MC)

Fri 7 May PARTAGER: Paris / London / New York Jazz Festival
Hall One **Stephan Oliva - Jean-Marc Foltz Duo**
7.30pm **Baptiste Trotignon - Mark Turner Duo / FLY**

Sat 8 May PARTAGER: Paris / London / New York Jazz Festival
Hall One **Donkey Monkey / Julia Sarr /**
7.30pm **Sophia Domancich, William Parker & Hamid Drake Trio**

Exhibitions

Kings Place Gallery **Stephen Chambers: The Four Corners**

Pangolin London **Fallis in Wonderland**

Next Sunday 9 May
Hall One 6.30 pm
Jamie Walton (cello) & Daniel Grimwood (piano)
Beethoven Sonata for cello and piano in G minor, Op. 5 No.2
Britten Cello Sonata in C major, Op. 65
Brahms Cello Sonata No. 1 in E minor, Op. 38
Prokofiev Sonata for cello and piano in C major, Op. 119

Sunday evening concerts promoted by the
London Chamber Music Society
President: Levon Chilingirian OBE
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London
Chamber Music
Society

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Concert Bar 6pm to end of interval

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

Sunday 2 May

London Chamber Music Series

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Presented in partnership with the
London Chamber Music Society