

Classical Music at Kings Place

- Sun 11 Dec**
Hall One, 7.30pm
London Chamber Music Series
Waley-Cohen, Rosefield and
Crawford-Phillips Trio
- Wed 14 Dec**
Hall One, 7pm
Charity Concert
The Mayor of London's Fund for
Young Musicians – Gala Concert
- Sun 18 Dec**
Hall One, 6.30pm
London Chamber Music Series
Turner Ensemble with
Robert Anthony Gardiner (tenor)
- Mon 19 Dec**
Hall One, 7pm
Hall One, 8.30pm
repeat performance
Mozart Unwrapped
Mozart's Requiem: Choir of King's College
Aurora Orchestra / Stephen Cleobury
- Tue 20 Dec**
Hall One, 7.30pm
Christmas at Kings Place
Ceremony of Carols
Ivor Setterfield conducts the
New London Singers
- Wed 21 Dec**
Hall One, 7.30pm
Christmas at Kings Place
The Year's Midnight with
Fretwork and Tom Courtenay
- Thu 22 Dec**
Hall One, 7.30pm
Christmas at Kings Place
Handel's *Messiah*
with Orchestra of St John's
- Fri 23 Dec**
Hall One, 7.30pm
Christmas at Kings Place
English Christmas Music
with Orchestra of St John's
- Sat 31 Dec**
Hall One, 6pm
Sun 1 Jan
Hall One, 1pm
repeat performance
New Year at Kings Place
Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment
plays Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*

Next Sunday 11 December 2011

Waley-Cohen, Rosefield, Crawford-Phillips Trio
Hall One 6.30pm

James Francis Brown *Prospero's Isle*
Beethoven Piano Trio in D, Op. 70 No. 1 *Ghost*
Janáček Sonata for violin and piano
Dvořák Piano Trio No. 3 in F minor, Op. 65

LONDON
CHAMBERMUSIC
SOCIETY

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

The London Chamber Music Society is a registered charity No 1075787. For information
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ROTUNDA

Every Sunday, **Rotunda** is
pleased to offer a great supper
deal for the LCMS concert.

For just **£9.95**, between 4pm
and 6.30pm you can enjoy a
staple of British cuisine before
the concert.

OPENING HOURS

Green & Fortune Café

7.30am to 7.30pm

Rotunda Restaurant

12pm to 11pm (last orders by 10.30pm)

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 4 December 2011

LONDON CHAMBER MUSIC SERIES

Allegri Quartet The Complete Beethoven Quartets 6

Presented in partnership with the
London Chamber Music Society

LONDON CHAMBER MUSIC SERIES

Pre-concert Talk:

Innocence and Experience

St Pancras Room 5pm

A talk by Dr Robert Hanson with live illustrations provided by the Allegri String Quartet.

Allegri Quartet

The Complete Beethoven Quartets 5

Hall One 6.30pm

Ofer Falk	violin
Rafael Todes	violin
Dorothea Vogel	viola
Vanessa Lucas-Smith	cello

PROGRAMME

Ludwig van Beethoven ^(1770–1827)

String Quartet in C minor, Op. 18 No. 4

Dmitri Shostakovich ^(1906–1975)

String Quartet No. 6 in G, Op. 101

INTERVAL (20 minutes)

Ludwig van Beethoven ^(1770–1827)

String Quartet in E flat, Op. 127

The **Allegri Quartet** is one of the oldest British chamber ensembles in existence, going back to its foundation in 1953 by Eli Goren, James Barton, Patrick Ireland and William Pleeth. With a packed schedule for the 2010/11 season, highlights include the première of a new commission by Anthony Payne and a complete cycle of Beethoven’s string quartets at Kings Place in London and the Holywell Music Room, Oxford, tonight’s concert being the fifth in the cycle.

The Allegri’s most recent recordings include the Mozart Quintets in G minor and C major with ex-Allegri Violist, Prunella Pacey, plus the re-release in 2009 of Peter Fribbins’s Clarinet Quintet with James Campbell and two works by Michael Stimpson: Robben Island (written to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the release of Nelson Mandela) and a piece for piano quintet and tenor based on *As I Walked Out One Midsummer Morning* by Laurie Lee. These recordings of new works reflect an ongoing commitment to contemporary music that has led the Quartet to première more than 60 works since 1964, including pieces by well-known composers such as Alexander Goehr, Jonathan Harvey, James Macmillan, Colin Matthews, Edmund Rubbra and John Woolrich.

The Allegri Quartet enjoys collaborating with other artists and has worked with a raft of outstanding performers including Jack Brymer, Clifford Curzon, Annie Fischer, Dame Thea King, John Ogden, Gervase de Peyer and Colin Carr. It has also appeared at numerous international festivals including Aldeburgh, Edinburgh, Prague Spring, Berlin, Hong Kong and Stavanger.

The members of the quartet are increasingly in demand for their teaching, with residencies at the universities of Durham, Middlesex, Nottingham, Bangor, East Anglia and Oxford with which the Quartet has enjoyed long-standing relationships thanks to the generous support of the Radcliffe Trust. The Quartet also has an interesting association with the Newark School of Violin Making, giving feedback to young luthiers on their work and performing on a selection of the finest instruments produced each year.

Ludwig van Beethoven – String Quartet in C minor,

Op. 18 No. 4 (1798–1800)

I. Allegro ma non tanto

II. Scherzo: Andante scherzoso quasi allegretto

III. Menuetto: Allegretto

IV. Allegro

Beethoven’s Op. 18 quartets were his first in the medium. Composed between 1798 and 1800, they explore the structural implications of the sonata principle, both in terms of the harmonies they employ and how each instrument is treated. In this first set of quartets alone, Beethoven’s achievements were immense, introducing new tonal areas and more complex work in counterpoint, and this went hand-in-hand with a new approach to part-writing that put the instruments on a more equal footing. Beethoven’s stature duly grew in competition with Haydn, whose Opp. 76/77 sets had been produced within the last three years, and Mozart, who had died only a few years earlier—not to overlook the influence of Stamitz, Haydn’s friend Dittersdorf, and other now obscure composers such as the Bohemian Rosetti and the Viennese Asplmayr. But it was Beethoven’s innovations that transformed the way in which the string quartet would be understood.

Of the six quartets which comprise Op. 18, No. 4 is the only minor-key quartet and was in fact the last—and arguably most popular—of the set to be written. (The sequence of a published opus was decided on commercial, not musicological, grounds.) Its impassioned first subject paves the way for an opening movement that reaches near-orchestral peaks: the shimmering repetitions that bridge the development and recapitulation, for example. The second violin is initially given the E flat major second subject, which clearly relates to the closing part of the first theme. The new melody reappears in each instrument, again in the development, and finally (in C major) in the recapitulation. Next, Beethoven fuses the slower pace one would expect of a second movement with a witty scherzo style. The second violin again plays a pivotal role, this time by announcing a dainty C major theme. There are three themes in all, each characterised by a repeated three-note motif in either the melody itself or the accompaniment. The third movement begins with a sombre minuet that rekindles the mood of the opening movement. A contrasting A flat major trio follows, in which a dialogue between the inner strings takes centre stage, supported by the cello and triplets from the first violin. With its pleasing melody and restrained virtuosity, the *Allegro* rondo finale is distinctly Haydnesque. Elements of the Turkish style so popular with Haydn and Mozart characterise the theme, which is punctuated by a pair of contrasting episodes and capped by a substantial coda.

Dmitri Shostakovich – String Quartet No. 6 in G, Op. 101 (1956)

I. Allegretto

II. Moderato con moto

III. Lento

IV. Lento – Allegretto

Shostakovich’s 15 string quartets were, and remain, the most significant additions to the genre in the last century. Yet quartet-writing is not necessarily foremost in our minds when we remember their composer, despite the genuine celebrity of the Eighth Quartet, Op. 110, the second of two quartets he wrote in 1960. One reason for this is that large-scale compositions such as opera, ballets and symphonies occupied Shostakovich in his earlier years. (Only when one of these works, *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* (1930-32), was lambasted in *Pravda* for its ‘quacks, grunts and growls’ and ‘decadent’ production, was a new course set.) Indeed, another reason is that the 15 quartets, each written in a different key, resist any attempt to be “sub-grouped” into appreciable chapters of composition. Shostakovich found solace in instrumental music after his brush with Soviet officialdom and avoided the stage for many years afterwards, but he had already written five (of 15) symphonies when he turned to the quartet. His pace of quartet-writing picked up from the mid 1960s: his last seven quartets were written in a single decade (1964–74).

The date of the Sixth Quartet (three years after Stalin’s death), coupled with its ironic tone, leads some critics to view it as a satirical work. The interjections of the cello in the *Allegretto*, beneath an upper-string line paired in thirds, support their case. Introduced by the first violin, the second subject is equally droll, and while the development ratchets up the drama, the movement’s irreverence is never threatened. The bass-heavy theme of the *Moderato con moto* undergoes two transformations—a sinuous, chromatic line and allusions to the waltz—that define the movement. The witty interplay of all three ideas gives the movement the character, if not the structure, of a set of variations. A moving third movement, marked *Lento*, is cast as a B flat minor passacaglia—the Baroque form typically in slow triple time with variations over a ground bass. Shostakovich’s modern realisation of the form was idiosyncratic but not without precedence: the third movement of his Second Piano Trio, Op. 67 is another celebrated example. Here, in Op. 101, the cello’s bass line duly anchors the music, followed by an aching theme in the viola and the violins, unfurled in turn. The effect of the final cadence is almost jarring in the shadow of such fervent music, but it serves as a bridge to the finale and re-establishes G major. The finale’s scheme contrasts the first violin’s triple-time *Allegretto* theme with an F sharp minor second subject in duple time. Heard consecutively at the beginning, they gradually lose their identity as the movement progresses; the reintroduction of ideas from earlier in the quartet—the first movement’s ostinato, the third movement’s passacaglia bass—comes to a head as the familiar closing cadence is heard one last time.

Ludwig van Beethoven – String Quartet in E flat, Op. 127 (1824–25)

I. Maestoso – Allegro teneramente

II. Adagio ma non troppo e molto cantabile

III. Scherzando vivace

IV. Finale: Alla breve

After a 13-year hiatus, Beethoven returned to the string quartet medium to pen a remarkable series of works that have been revered ever since their composition in 1823–26. The first three quartets, Opp. 127, 130 and 132 (Op. 131 came later), were commissioned by Prince Nikolai Galitzin. After completing the famous Ninth Symphony in 1824, Beethoven completed these works the following year. Taken together, Beethoven’s Late Quartets, as they are known collectively, push the structural implications of the sonata principle to new limits. Exploratory, often remote harmonies distinguish each work; their intensity would soon transform the way in which the genre was understood. Even then, Op. 127 is a peculiar case. Its premiere by the Schuppanzigh Quartet was poorly prepared and received, so Beethoven invited a quartet led by Joseph Böhm to give a second performance. By now completely deaf, the composer guided his players by sight of their bow and finger movements alone. A series of more successful performances duly began on 26 March 1825, just 20 days after the botched premiere.

In the context of the Late Quartets, Op. 127 is also unusual in retaining a four-movement plan, with a typical second-movement *Adagio* and third-movement scherzo to boot. Events *within* each movement tell a more interesting story. The opening movement subverts sonata form by recalling at the start and end of the development its broad, slow introduction. Around this, the exposition (with its grouped themes), development and recapitulation unfold. The slow movement is an exultant set of free variations—‘free’ in the sense that mere embellishment of melody, harmony and rhythm, as was conventional, gives way here to five more intricate and serene transformations of two themes over the course of the movement. Four *pizzicato* chords introduce the high-spirited *Scherzando vivace*, whose cello theme is developed, again to immense proportions. Intentionally or otherwise, the finale fails to indicate a tempo, though the movement is normally taken briskly. Its light-hearted opening theme is contrasted by an accented second subject. Again, Beethoven toys with the structure by appending a coda, one related to the movement’s opening theme but in an entirely different key, tempo and metre.