

Classical Music at Kings Place

- Thu 16 Feb**
Hall One, 7.30pm
Celebrating Debussy with Pascal & Ami Rogé
The Young Debussy
DEBUSSY *Danse bohémienne* | *Suite bergamasque*
(incl. *Clair de lune*) | *Ballade* | *Deux Arabesques*
Petite Suite (Piano four hands) | *Images Book II*
La Mer (Piano four hands)
- Fri 17 Feb**
Hall One, 7.30pm
Celebrating Debussy with Pascal & Ami Rogé
The Late Debussy
DEBUSSY *Élégie* | *Trois Études* | 6 *Preludes* from Book I
En blanc et noir (Two pianos) | *Estampes* | *L'Isle joyeuse*
Nocturnes (Two pianos and four female voices)
- Sun 19 Feb**
Hall One, 6.30pm
(Lasts ~60mins)
London Chamber Music Series
Shaham-Erez-Wallfisch Piano Trio
MENDELSSOHN | SHOSTAKOVICH
- Sun 26 Feb**
Hall One, 6.30pm
London Chamber Music Series
Sarah-Jane Bradley & Anthony Hewitt
MENDELSSOHN | JOACHIM | PETER FRIBBINS
- Thu 1 Mar**
Hall One, 7.30pm
Brahms Unwrapped
Philip Dukes (viola) & Charles Owen (piano)
Youth & Maturity
Four Ballades, Op. 10
Piano Sonata No. 2 in F sharp minor, Op. 2
Viola Sonata in F Minor, Op. 120, No. 1
- Fri 2 Mar**
Hall One, 7.30pm
Brahms Unwrapped
Academy of St Martin in the Fields
Chamber Ensemble: Brahms String Sextets
String Sextet No. 1 in B flat, Op. 18
String Sextet No. 2 in G, Op. 36
- Sat 3 Mar**
Hall One, 7.30pm
Brahms Unwrapped
Academy of St Martin in the Fields:
The Second Serenade
String Quintet No. 2 in G, Op. 111 (arr. Woehr for string orch.)
Serenade No. 2 in A, Op. 16
- Sun 4 Mar**
Hall One, 6.30pm
London Chamber Music Series
Rosamunde Trio
MOZART | ROUSSEL | BRAHMS
- Thu 8 Mar**
Hall One, 7.30pm
London Guitar Festival
Spanish Guitar Night with Duo Hermanos
Cuenca and Fernando Espí
- Fri 9 Mar**
Hall One, 7.30pm
London Guitar Festival
The Vida Guitar Quartet

Next Sunday 19 February 2012

Shaham-Erez-Wallfisch Piano Trio
Hall One 6.30pm
Concert lasts one hour with no interval

Mendelssohn Piano Trio No 2 in C minor Op 66
Shostakovich Piano Trio No 2 in E minor Op 67

LONDON
CHAMBER MUSIC
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 please contact: **Neil Johnson**, Executive Chairman – 55 Beardsley Way, London W3 7YQ
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Sunday 12 February 2012

LONDON CHAMBER MUSIC SERIES

Allegri Quartet
The Complete Beethoven Quartets
Concert 6

Presented in partnership with the
London Chamber Music Society

LONDON CHAMBER MUSIC SERIES

Pre-concert Talk: A Matter of Life or Death

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 – Concert 6

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 A, Op. 18 No. 5

Dmitri Shostakovich ^(1906–1975)
String Quartet No. 7 in F sharp minor, Op. 108

INTERVAL ^(20 minutes)

Ludwig van Beethoven
String Quartet in A minor, Op. 132

The Allegri Quartet performing at the Royal Albert Hall, London, 2011

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 2011/12 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 sixth in the cycle.

The Allegri Quartet performing at the Royal Albert Hall, London, 2011

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 Allegri 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 A, Op. 18, No. 5 (c. 1798–1800)

I. Allegro
II. Menuetto
III. Andante cantabile
IV. Allegro

Beethoven’s six 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. 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 Haydn’s friend Carl Ditters von Dittersdorf, Johann Stamitz, and other now obscure composers such as the Viennese Franz Asplmayr and the Bohemian Antonio Rosetti.

Op. 18, No. 5 was actually the fourth quartet Beethoven wrote, after—in order—Nos. 3, 1 and 2. (The sequence of a published opus was decided on commercial, not musicological, grounds.) Structurally, it is modelled on Mozart’s K464 quartet, the so-called ‘Drum’ quartet, also in A major. As such, the first *Allegro* is a more straightforward affair than other opening movements found within Op. 18: there is no typical transition between Beethoven’s opening theme (less a theme, more a rapid-fire set of lilting ideas, in fact) and the second subject proper, a forceful E-minor theme played in unison. The development seizes upon once incidental wisps of melody from the exposition; an almost literal recapitulation follows, the E-minor second subject relocating to A minor. After Mozart’s prototype, Beethoven’s second and third movements are a minuet and trio (rather than a slow movement) and a theme and variations respectively.

The *Menuetto* has a graceful, waltz-like theme; the trio section remains in A major, although its texture is thicker as the duet of second violin and viola come to the fore, again in unison. Beethoven described the opening of the *Andante cantabile* as ‘pastoral’. Its scalic theme is certainly plain, allowing for the characteristic contrast of the five inventive variations that follow. The transition between the fourth and fifth variations is particularly conspicuous, as a chorale-like rendering of the theme gives way to a rustic, full-bodied dance. Dominated by its animated four-note motif, the *Allegro* finale is in sonata form. A more sonorous and sustained second subject quietens the movement, though the motif returns, with much bustling imitation, to pervade the development, recapitulation and coda.

The Allegri Quartet performing at the Royal Albert Hall, London, 2011

Dmitri Shostakovich – String Quartet No. 7 in F sharp minor, Op. 108 (1960)

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, 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 Seventh Quartet was written in memory of his first wife, the physicist Nina Varzar, who died in 1954, reportedly from radiation exposure. The quartet is the shortest of the 15. The first movement is quintessential Shostakovich, with

thin, eccentric textures in which sparse harmonies support fragments of melody. The cello’s second theme is no less exotic, hinting at, though never quite reaching, E flat major. When the music’s repetitive strains rest on a pure chord of G flat major at the end of the movement, the effect remains transitory—for the second movement, marked *Lento*, enters after barely a breath. The second violin’s meandering quavers turn out to be an accompaniment for the first violin’s soaring theme, soon joined by *glissandi* from the muted lower strings. The cello and viola share in the theme before adding a new, quieter melody of their own against the insistent rhythms of the second violin. Unaccompanied, the viola dissolves this section (and the movement as a whole) with its hypnotic scalic ‘cell’, before a unison entry, *fortissimo* yet muted, follows without a break to launch the two-part finale. Its frenzied *Allegro* makes way for a viola-led fugue with distinct, overlapping entries of its subject, which is derived from the viola’s bridging cell heard earlier. Further references to the first two movements lead to the cello’s *pizzicato*, introducing the *Allegretto*, an F-sharp minor waltz that offers a very different character but relates melodically to the fugue. Shostakovich then varies the quartet’s original theme before allowing the work to resolve in G flat major.

Ludwig van Beethoven – String Quartet in A minor, Op. 132 (1825)

I. Assai sostenuto – Allegro
II. Allegro ma non tanto
III. Molto adagio – Andante – Heiliger Dankgesang eines Genesenden an die Gottheit, in der lydischen Tonart (Molto adagio) – Neue Kraft fühlend (Andante) – Molto adagio – Andante – Molto adagio (Mit innigster Empfindung)
IV. Alla marcia, assai vivace – Più allegro –
V. Allegro appassionato – Presto

The Allegri Quartet performing at the Royal Albert Hall, London, 2011

After a 13-year hiatus, Beethoven returned to the string quartet to write 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 overcame illness to write the quartets the following year. Taken together, the Late Quartets, as they are known collectively, push the structural implications of the sonata principle to new limits. The proliferation of movements, beyond the conventional four, has an almost implacable impulse—yet it comes with something of the effect of character pieces in a Baroque suite, say. Coupled with the type of exploratory, often remote harmonies that distinguish each work, the quartets would again soon transform the way in which the string quartet as a genre was understood.

In a highly modified sonata form, the first movement of Op. 132 relates the lower-string motif of its solemn introduction to the main body of the movement (*Allegro*), allowing it to support the first violin’s principal theme. The more lyrical second subject is fleeting, for the movement soon reintroduces the original melody (in place of a traditional development) in a lower-string canon. Variation of this same theme, harmonically and texturally, generates the remainder, including the recapitulation equivalent that follows. The *Allegro ma non tanto*, an A major minuet and trio, grows from its repeated three-note motif; the contrasting trio section evokes a musette, which explains its unusual accompanimental drone.

Beethoven himself is the ‘convalescent’ (*Genesender*) of the title of the epic third movement, which was written during his recovery. As such, the music is a song of thanksgiving (*Heiliger Dankgesang*) cast in double variation form—that is, with a *molto adagio* Lydian-mode theme and an D-major andante theme also marked *Neue Kraft fühlend* (with renewed strength). These contrasting tempi alternate, the slower section with its motivic play (rekindling the quartet’s introduction) and the chorale itself appearing three times in all. By its final presentation, marked *Mit innigster Empfindung* (with heartfelt feeling), the two elements almost coalesce in a web of intricate rhythms. By contrast, the fourth movement is a brief bridge to the finale, which is linked to further by a recitative-like interlude. The *Allegro appassionato*, then, is an introspective sonata rondo whose theme recurs between two episodes, the first of which is heard twice. Mostly dense and laden with contrapuntal figures, the texture makes greater use of unison writing to signal a more contented conclusion in A major.