

Classical Music at Kings Place

- Thu 27 Oct**
Hall One, 7.30pm
London Guitar Festival in the Fall
Spanish Night with Margarita Escarpa & Ricardo Gallén
- Sun 30 Oct**
Hall One, 6.30pm
London Chamber Music Series
Rosamunde Trio
- Sun 6 Nov**
Hall One, 1.30pm
Sunday Special
Polish Radio Choir: Polish Spirituals by Górecki
- Sun 6 Nov**
Hall One, 6.30pm
London Chamber Music Series
Barbirolli Quartet
- Wed 9 Nov**
Hall One, 7.30pm
Mozart Unwrapped
Choir of King's College, Cambridge
Orchestra of St John's / Lubbock
Mass in C minor *Great Mass*
- Thu 10 Nov**
Hall One, 7.30pm
Mozart Unwrapped
A Night at the Opera with
Orchestra of St John's / Lubbock
- Fri-Sat 11-12 Nov**
Hall One, 7.30pm
Mozart Unwrapped
Classical Opera Company
Il re pastore
- Sun 13 Nov**
Hall One, 11.30am
Mozart Unwrapped
Mozart's Songs with Roger Vignoles (piano)
Paula Sides (soprano) & Thomas Hobbs (tenor)
- Sun 13 Nov**
Hall One, 6.30pm
London Chamber Music Series
London Chamber Music Society Fundraising
Concert: Strings of the Royal Opera House
- Sun 20 Nov**
Hall One, 6.30pm
London Chamber Music Series
Raphael Wallfisch & John York
- Sun 27 Nov**
Hall One, 6.30pm
London Chamber Music Series
Orchestra of St John's / John Lubbock

Next Sunday 30 October 2011

Rosamunde Trio Hall One 6.30pm

Debussy Piano Trio No 1 in G
Peter Fribbins *Softly in the Dusk*
Brahms Piano Trio No. 1 in B, Op. 8

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 please contact: **Neil Johnson**, Executive Chairman – 55 Beardsley Way, London W3 7YQ
neil@londonchambermusic.org.uk / www.londonchambermusic.org.uk

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 23 October 2011

LONDON CHAMBER MUSIC SERIES

Allegri Quartet

The Complete Beethoven Quartets 4

Presented in partnership with the
London Chamber Music Society

LONDON CHAMBER MUSIC SERIES

Pre-concert Talk:

On the Cusp: Turmoil and Repose

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 4

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 D, Op. 18 No. 3

Dmitri Shostakovich ^(1906–1975)
String Quartet No. 5 in B flat, Op. 92

INTERVAL (20 minutes)

Ludwig van Beethoven ^(1770–1827)
String Quartet in E flat, Op. 74 *Harp*

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 second 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 D, Op. 18 No. 3

I. Allegro
II. Andante con moto
III. Allegro
IV. Presto

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, 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 Haydn’s friend Dittersdorf, Johann Stamitz and other now obscure composers such as the Bohemian Rosetti and the Viennese Asplmayr. But each of Beethoven’s innovations transformed the way in which the string quartet would be understood.

Op. 18, No. 3 was actually the first quartet Beethoven wrote, after Nos. 1 and 2. (The sequence of a published opus was decided on commercial, not musicological, grounds.) The rising interval of the minor seventh that introduces the quartet is a defining feature of the first movement, and one which is echoed by every instrument in the exposition. The same figure introduces the remaining sections of a tripartite sonata-allegro form (development, recapitulation and a short coda). A more agitated second subject, accompanied by a *staccato* bass, provides necessary contrast to the more pensive surrounding material. Unusually, the second violin presents the theme of the B-flat major *Andante con moto*. The theme, performed on the G string, is soon imitated by and shared with the first violin, though its elaborate development is again atypical, the movement as a whole falling somewhere between rondo and sonata form. The third movement, simply marked *Allegro*, adheres to the quartet’s general air of contemplation, while contrasting its D major opening with a D minor trio in which free-flowing passages and scalic fragments collide in the upper and lower strings respectively. A similar feeling characterises the *Presto* finale, its rhythmic drive punctuated by a lilting secondary theme and persistent changes in dynamics—hence the quartet’s gentle farewell.

Dmitri Shostakovich – String Quartet No. 5 in B flat, Op. 92

I. Allegro non troppo
II. Andante
III. Moderato – 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 8th Quartet, Op. 110—the second of two quartets he wrote in 1960—and to a lesser extent the quartet heard this evening. 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).

Politics, in particular the death of Joseph Stalin, also explains the year that passed between the completion and premiere of the 5th Quartet, Op. 92. The work had been held back on purpose, but in December 1953 the Beethoven Quartet gave its first performance in Leningrad. Cast in sonata form, the opening *Allegro non troppo* begins intensely, characterised by its warring motifs as the principal theme is quickly fragmented. A more lyrical, waltz-like theme, led by the second violin, provides some relief, albeit temporarily: a third theme enters in the development section, and the tensions between all three themes are played out over the remainder of the movement. The first violin’s high F is a bridge to the B minor *Andante*, which follows without a pause. The same instrument, joined by the viola, outlines a song-like theme Russian in character before a new tempo (*Allegretto*) and key (B major) heralds a tender second theme. Sustained pitches again cap the movement, a high F sharp segueing into the two-part finale. Its *Moderato* introduction gives way to a sonata-rondo *Allegretto* that revisits the conflicts of the opening movement. A contrasting pair of themes—the first viola-led, the second quieter and more expressive—join themes from earlier movements in the development. The flash of recitative from the first violin, then the viola, shows once again how the thinness of Shostakovich’s textures sets apart his quartets (as opposed to his symphonies, say) and leads in turn to a surprisingly peaceful conclusion.

Ludwig van Beethoven – String Quartet in E flat, Op. 74 *Harp*

I. Poco adagio – Allegro
II. Adagio ma non troppo
III. Presto
IV. Allegretto con variazioni

1809 was a particularly tumultuous year for Beethoven. On the upside, his financial future was secured when he began to receive an annual stipend from three noblemen: Prince Lobkowitz (to whom Op. 74, as well as the 5th Symphony, is dedicated), Archduke Rudolph and Prince Kinsky. Yet, his personal life was otherwise in turmoil, following the rejection of his marriage proposal to Therese Malfatti, his teenaged pupil. To compound matters, the objections of Malfatti’s family coincided with the French army’s attack and subsequent occupation of Vienna, which lasted until October and impeded Beethoven’s composition of Op. 74.

The quartet was labelled *The Harp* on account of the arpeggiated *pizzicato* passages in the opening movement. Its startling, introspective introduction leads to the *Allegro*, whose principal theme points towards the subdominant (A flat, also the key of the slow movement). The frenetic development section follows the celebrated *pizzicati*, which return to signal the return of the original theme. This itself is far from perfunctory, for a thrilling and quite unexpected coda pits soloistic semiquavers from the violin against the rest of the ensemble in a flicker of concerto-like bravura. The aforesaid slow movement is episodic in design, its innocent theme sandwiched between passages that are much calmer than before and modified on its return.

By contrast, the C minor scherzo (*Presto*) is forceful and, through its motivic play, strongly reminiscent of the famous 5th Symphony. The complementary C major trio section is faster still, though briefer, and leads as expected to a repeat of the scherzo. Less expected is a sudden, suspenseful passage that acts as a link to the finale, which follows without a break. A set of variations (*Allegretto con variazioni*), the movement unfurls a deceptively rhythmed theme before receding into a viola-led variation. The notable pairing of the second violin and cello in the third variation gives way to a simplified version of the theme from the first violin before the tempo is quickened, the rhythms complicated, and the key shifted towards D flat. As E flat is restored, the quartet draws to a close with rapid-fire semiquavers.