

The Lenthall Concerts

Season 2014-15

Vasara String Quartet

Burford School Strings

Wednesday, January 14th 2015

Burford School

The Lenthall Concerts

Artistic Director: Michael Bochmann

Coming next:

Wednesday, February 4th Burford School

Volodja Balzalorsky (violin)

John-Paul Gandy (piano)

Michael Bochmann (violin)

Sonata for violin and piano in D

Franck

Duos for two violins with piano

Shostakovich

Lyrical bagatelle

Lucijan Marija Škerjanc

Tune my Heart

Roger Briggs

Volodja Balzalorsky is a renowned Slovenian concert violinist. He is partnered by the extraordinarily talented John-Paul Gandy in Franck's luscious sonata. Michael joins them for Shostakovich and duos by the Slovenian Lucijan Škerjanc and the American Roger Briggs.

Tickets: £14 at the door; £12 in advance from:

— The Lenthall Concerts (01993 822279)

— Madhatter Bookshop, 122 Burford High Street (01993 822539)

— Music Stand, 62 High St Witney (01993-774890)

WITNEY WINTER CONCERTS

Friday, February 13th 7.30pm

**Wood Green School, Woodstock Road,
Witney**

Joseph Houston (piano)

Joseph's programme will include:

Barcarolle

Chopin

Sonata in F minor op.57
(Appassionata)

Beethoven

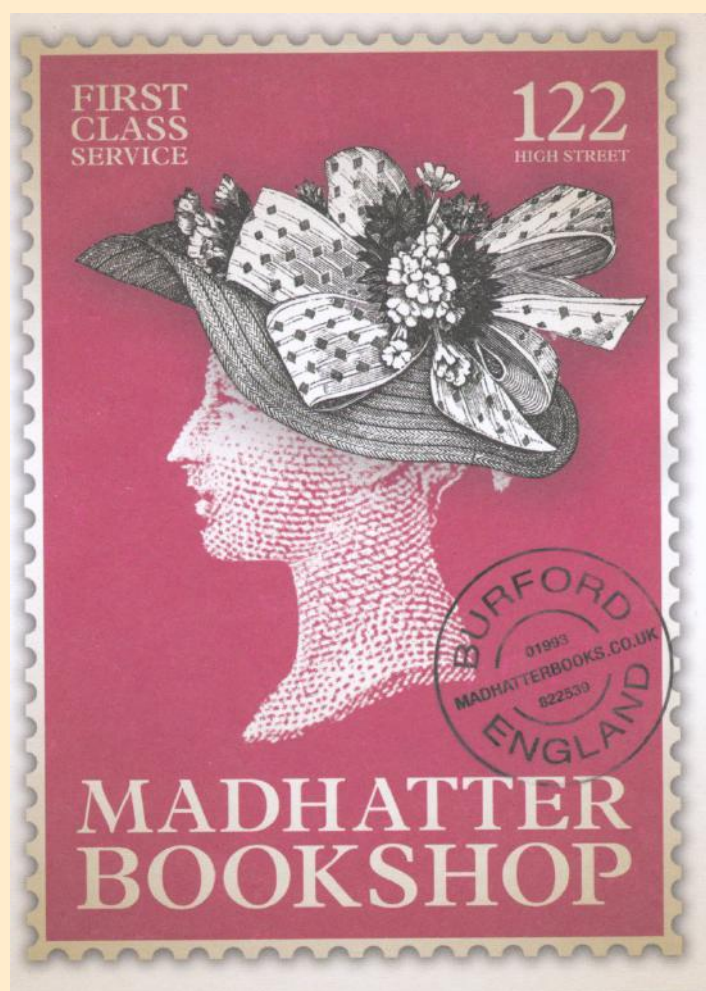
Images book 2

Debussy

Tickets £11/£10 (under 18 £1)

from Music Stand, High Street;

Greenway Antiques, Corn Street; or at the door



Swindon Recitals

Arts Centre, Devizes Road, Old Town,
Swindon

Sunday February 1st 3pm

The Nelsen Trio

Yamaha artist Lisa Nelsen is internationally recognised for her versatility as a soloist, chamber and orchestral musician and ensemble coach. Charismatic cellist

Juillain Metzger is often praised for his technically and musically exciting performances. Together they offer a programme including works by Bach, Beethoven and Fauré and, with Paul Turner, spectacular trios by Weber and Martinu.



Tickets £12 (concessions £10/students £2.50)
Box Office 01793 524481

Programme

String Quartet in F op.77 no.2

Joseph Haydn
(1732-1809)

Allegro moderato
Menuetto. Presto non troppo
Andante
Finale. Vivace assai

This, dating from 1800, is undoubtedly a late work of Haydn: almost too late, for although he was commissioned by his faithful patron Prince Lobkowitz to write a set of six quartets he only managed to complete two. Perhaps old age and the exertion of having just composed *The Creation* slowed him down, but it is more likely that the prospect of writing yet another oratorio, *The Seasons*, preoccupied him. Certainly he wrote *The Seasons* with all his old vigour, although this was rather unkindly attributed by some to Time's ever-rolling stream having carried away his wife and ended 40 years of a notoriously unhappy marriage.

But it is not entirely fanciful to suggest that op.77 represents a sort of passing of the baton of string quartet writing. Prince Lobkowitz was also the patron (and near contemporary) of Beethoven, and at this time Beethoven was on the brink of producing the first set of quartets that he was prepared to make known to the public, after years of hawking over the form. Haydn was 67, and the composer of 70 quartets; Beethoven, his ex-pupil, was 29 or so, and his op.18 contained the six with which he launched himself as a quartet composer. Whether either Haydn or Beethoven ever heard the other's quartets is not recorded, but the DNA is there for all to hear.

Whatever Beethoven's struggles with the form were, Haydn's assurance, after five decades of quartet writing, shows from the word go. The first movement may be marked *allegro moderato*, but it is full of sinewy movement which gives it a great urgency, and this persists even during the quieter passages. The *menuetto*, somewhat unconventionally placed second and not third in the order, starts with much made of choppy rhythms, especially from the cello, but the trio is in complete contrast: almost melting. The third movement may not be a minuet, but it gives the impression of a courtly dance, and a theme identified by the composer Robin Holloway as "Three Blind Mice with twiddles". The finale is as breezy as anything Haydn ever wrote for the string quartet, and sounds astonishingly youthful. This is not the writing of a 67-year-old, far less a ride into the sunset. It gives us old chaps quite a boost.

Holberg Suite op.40

Edvard Grieg
(1843-1907)

Prelude
Sarabande
Gavotte and Musette
Air
Rigaudon

By the time he came to write this suite (originally titled "In Holberg's Time") in 1884 Grieg had established himself not only nationally but throughout the Western world, by his immediately appealing incidental music for Peer Gynt, and his piano concerto. It was fitting, therefore, that as one of Bergen's favourite sons he should be asked to compose music to celebrate the bicentenary of another: the dramatist and man of letters Ludvig Holberg (1684-1754). The tribute was to be a cantata, to be sung at the unveiling of a statue of Holberg, but Grieg was not very enthusiastic at the prospect of conducting such a piece in the open, in December. He wrote to friends:

"I can see it now: snow, hail, storm, and thunder, a large male chorus with open mouths into which the rain pours, and me conducting with a rain coat, winter coat, galoshes, and umbrella! Then, of course, a cold or God knows what other kind of illness! Ah well, that is one way to die for one's country!"

The cantata was never finished. Instead Grieg turned to a set of piano pieces he had written as a tribute to Holberg the previous summer, before the cantata commission arose. The following March these appeared in an orchestral version, Grieg conducting the first performance in Bergen (indoors).

The suite follows the pattern of much baroque music: a type of French suite, in which formality mingles with the folk tradition that inspired so much of Grieg's music. The *Prelude* has a fine rhythmic pulse; a singing melody appears above it. In the *Sarabande* we begin the dance: a graceful tribute to Holberg's time with a long, lyrical line. The dance gets a bit more sprightly in the *Gavotte*, where we are in a court ballroom, but the *Musette* brings an earthier element, reminding us that the word *musette* also means bagpipe. The *Air* that follows is marked "*Andante Religioso*." Here, as in the *Sarabande*, Grieg puts more emphasis on the deeper strings. The *Rigaudon*, a dance as much at home at court as in the country, is perhaps Grieg paying tribute to yet another famous son of Bergen, the violinist Ole Bull, who was Grieg's famous forerunner in putting Norwegian music on the map.



Interval

Quartet in F

Maurice Ravel
(1875-1937)

Allegro moderato—très doux
Assez vif—très rythmé
Très lent
Vif et agité

Ravel's quartet had a rocky ride at its start, although its composer was anything but dissatisfied with it. Another of his pupils, the composer, critic and musicologist Roland Manuel, recalled in his biography Ravel saying that his String Quartet represented "a conception of musical construction, imperfectly realized no doubt, but set out much more precisely than in my earlier compositions." Roland-Manuel went on:

"All the same, though not to contradict the composer, it is noticeable how, if this work really represents so absolute a conception of structure, it does so with extraordinary vigour, rhythmical ease and melodic verve. The intense suavity of this grave, youthful music makes it appear the most spontaneous work Ravel has ever written. The outbursts of lyricism find forceful expression within the framework of an uncompromising classicism without breaking it; they move so freely within it that the composer sometimes used to doubt his success. The more the secret powers which governed him unawares attracted him, the more he mistrusted them. He was suspicious of the lure of spontaneity which had led him so easily from the arbitrary to the necessary, to borrow a happy phrase from Paul Valéry. Contrary to his practice, he submitted



Ravel in 1908

his work to the judgement of his friends, and the criticism of the master to whom it was dedicated. Faure did not mince matters. He found the fourth movement stunted, badly balanced, in fact, a failure. In the end, Debussy was asked for his opinion, and he reassured and congratulated the younger man, writing him a solemn injunction: 'In the name of the gods of music, and in mine, do not touch a single note of what you have written in your Quartet'."

Ravel's close friend, the violinist Hélène Jourdain-Morhange, slightly softens one's impression of Faure's reaction::

"All through his life Ravel used to tell a story about how he took his String Quartet into Faure's class and how Faure received it with less than his usual enthusiasm; indeed he pulled a face and thought it was no good. Some days later he asked Ravel to bring the manuscript back again

'Why do you want to see it, *cher maitre*,' said Ravel, 'since it's rubbish?'

'I could have been wrong,' Faure replied.

Ravel attached an enormous importance to this simple little story."

The Performers

The Vasara Quartet

1st violin - Emma Oldfield
2nd violin - Jessica Coleman

Viola - Emma Purslow
Cello - Jobine Siekman



The Vasara Quartet was formed in September 2012 at the Royal College of Music, London. It is made up of students in their second and third year of undergraduate study at the Royal College of Music in London.

In March 2013, the Vasara Quartet was selected to perform in the Wigmore Hall and shortly afterwards they received joint first prize in the Britten Intercollegiate String Quartet Competition. Other performance highlights include being invited to play as part of an exhibition on Benjamin Britten in Aldeburgh, performing for the Prince of Wales as part of the President's Visit at the RCM and giving recitals at the Albert Hall, Conway Hall, Kings Place and Cadogan Hall, London.

Burford School String Ensemble

"All instrumental lessons at Burford School are taught in a purpose-built building, consisting of five sound-proof practice rooms. Lessons are generally taught in 30-minute weekly slots, either by group, pair or on an individual basis. Lessons are taught during the school day and rotate on the hour throughout the term, thus reducing the time missed from curriculum lessons. Only sixth form students can have their times fixed, normally during one of their free periods. All students who learn orchestral instruments are expected to participate in one of the school's ensembles. We cater for all sorts of instruments but, if you have an unusual request, please do not hesitate in contacting the department by email on the following address: www.saf5222@burford.oxon.sch.uk"

(cont on page 7)

Burford School String Ensemble

Taking part in this evening's concert:

Alex Beatty
Bethany Brown
Jenny Digby
Herbie Frankcom
Lee Herd
Courtney Jones
Sam Kitto
Alice Landray
Heidi Leung
Tom Lunt
Emma Rednall
Sophie Tenison
Guy Walker

The Lenthall Concerts are supported by

The Burford Garden Company

The Cotswold Wildlife Park

Madhatter Bookshop, Burford

Music Stand, Witney

To these, and all our advertisers, the Lenthall Concert Society gives grateful thanks, as well as to the many members and other ticket buyers who support these concerts.

THE LENTHALL CONCERTS

Artistic Director: Michael Bochmann

President: Christopher Yapp

Chairman: vacant

Vice-Chairman: vacant

Treasurer: Nigel Barraclough

Secretary: Penny Barraclough

Concert Administrator: Christina Scherer

Publicity: Nicola Hillman


Member: Penelope Leaf



BURFORD
COTSWOLDS • ENGLAND
www.burford.co.uk

GARDEN • HOME • FOOD • ART

Burford Garden Company, Shilton Road, Burford, Oxfordshire OX18 4PA Telephone: 01993 823117




**Cotswold
Wildlife**
Park & Gardens

Closer to Wildlife!

- 260 Animal Species • Stunning Gardens
- Giraffe Walk Way • Walk with Lemurs
- Train • Playground • Café • Picnic Areas

Certificate of Excellence



2013 WINNER

www.cotswoldwildlifepark.co.uk
Burford, Oxon OX18 4JP
(Mid-way between Oxford & Cheltenham)

**OPEN
DAILY**
from 10am