

THE LENTHALL CONCERTS
SEASON 2003-2004

**The Bochmann
Quartet**

Tom Poster (piano)

Wednesday, November 19th 2003

WITNEY WINTER CONCERTS

Friday, December 12th 7.30pm
Wood Green School

Ellen Wiles (flute)

Thames Valley Young Musicians Platform
winner 2002

accompanied by David Swain

Ellen has recently graduated from Oxford University with a First in Music. She has been tutored by Michael Cox, Principal of the BBC Symphony Orchestra. She reached the finals of the Shell/LSO Competition and has played with the Berkshire Youth Orchestra and the Oxfordshire University Quintet.

Ellen's programme will include Sonatas by Poulenc and Copeland and pieces by Bach and Fauré

Tickets £8/£6.50

(Children/WOC students £1)

Lenthall Members receive a further concession of £1.00.

HANDEL'S highlights

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Programme

Quartet in G op.76 no.1

Allegro con spirito

Adagio sostenuto

Minuet: presto

Finale: Allegro ma non troppo

Joseph Haydn
(1732-1809)

When Haydn returned from London in 1795 it was to the service of the fourth member of the Esterházy family to employ him. Prince Nicholas II was an unsympathetic character but a generous patron of the arts. Haydn's main duty was to compose a yearly mass for the name-day of Nicholas's wife Maria, and this he did from 1796 to 1802 (except for 1798, when *The Creation* intervened). Otherwise he was free to take on commissions from others, amongst them Count Joseph Erdödy, for whom Haydn wrote his last set of six quartets, op.76.

The first movement is quintessential Haydn: a quiet, relaxed tune for the solo cello, then the viola, then two parts, then four; the whole balancing counterpoint and the sonorities of the quartet. The *adagio* takes the great theme of the slow movement of Haydn's previous quartet, known as "The Rider", and develops it further. The minuet is a scherzo in all but name, with a trio section that belongs to the family of Haydn's folk Ländler, and the finale again harks back to the "Rider" quartet with its hectic triplet rhythm.



Haydn in 1795

Quartet in E flat op.74 ("The Harp")

Ludwig van Beethoven

(1770-1827)

Poco Adagio - Allegro

Adagio ma non troppo

Presto - Più presto quasi prestissimo - Tempo 1 - Più presto quasi prestissimo - Tempo 1

Allegretto con Variazioni

The 'Harp' quartet was so called because of the brief pizzicato arpeggio which makes a brief appearance in the exposition of the first movement and a more sustained one later in the movement. It was written in 1809, at the end of Beethoven's middle period, and at a time when his mind was greatly troubled by Napoleon's bombardment of Vienna. He had written to Breitkopf, his publisher, "We have passed through a great deal of misery - when I tell you that since 4th May I have brought into the world little that is connected, only here and there a fragment". Nevertheless the year saw the appearance of both the Fifth Symphony and 'Les

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Adieux' sonata, and this lone quartet, dedicated to Prince Lobkowitz, in whose palace the first performance took place, and who had been the dedicatee of the early op.18 quartets, Beethoven's first works in quartet form.

And indeed there is something of the style of the early quartets in op.74, rather than the ground-breaking nature of the 'Rasumovsky' quartets of the previous year. After a dreamy introduction, punctuated by some wake-up chords, the first movement goes into a Haydnish allegro, which soon resolves into the true voice of Beethoven. The movement finishes with some virtuosic demands on the first violin. The *adagio* is spare but lyrical: a movement of great beauty followed by an exhilarating ride in one of the composer's sportiest *prestos*. The last movement is unique in Beethoven's quartets in being in the form of variations. After the statement of an almost banal little theme, there are five variations, followed by a throbbing coda which quite transforms the original.

Interval

Piano Quintet op.57

Prelude
Fugue
Scherzo
Intermezzo
Finale

Shostakovich's Piano Quintet was written in 1940, and received its first performance, by the composer with the Beethoven Quartet, in Moscow on November 23rd of that year. It was a time when Russian composers walked on eggs, conscious that if their music was deemed not to advance the cause of Soviet Realism they could expect nothing more than *purdah*. Shostakovich was doubly suspect, as his music was adored by the cognoscenti and he had received a standing ovation at the Composers' Union plenum the previous year - at a time when standing ovations were meant to be reserved for Stalin alone. At the Quintet's premiere another question loomed: could it reinstate chamber music, which had been sternly discouraged under both the Proletkult and the the reign of Socialist Realism as a bourgeois idiom?

Disaster! The Quintet received a reception so rapturous that Shostakovich might well have followed some other composers into the outer darkness had Stalin not considered his film music vital for propaganda purposes. Instead the work won a Stalin Prize.

What the audience saw, but the authorities did not, was the satire that lay in the work. True, there is noble thematic material, but it is continually undermined by witty interjections. The grandiloquent piano opening, echoed by the strings, gives way to anxious exchanges, and similar alternations continue throughout the movement. In

Dimitry Shostakovich (1905-1975)

the second movement, the least ambivalent of the five, the sorrowing fugue makes way for some declamatory effusions before sinking back into fugal melancholy. In the central *Scherzo* there are sarcastic allusions to the cruder aspects of Soviet culture: the movement is brief and full of rustic energy subverted by 'wrong notes' and the boisterous setting of the piano against the strings. The *Intermezzo* is calm, with the first violin and viola entwining above a pizzicato cello, but then the piano starts a sardonic commentary, and the mood becomes nervous, menaced. The last movement begins as if to restore the composure, but steadily becomes more urgent, until it fades away to end with a series of "there, there" chords



Prokofiev, Shostakovich and Khachaturian in 1945

The Lenthall Concerts: coming next

Wednesday, January 14th 2004

7.30pm

Michael Bochmann (violin) and David Watkins (harp)

<i>Sonata in C</i>	Vivaldi
<i>Petite Suite</i>	Watkins
<i>Fantasie op.124</i>	Saint-Saëns
<i>Meditation from Thais</i>	Massenet
<i>Zigeunerweisen</i>	Sarasate
<i>Two Caprices</i>	Paganini
<i>Sonata in C minor</i>	Spohr

The internationally renowned harpist David Watkins joins the Lenthall Concerts' Artistic Director in a programme unashamedly designed to delight.

Tickets £8 advance from stewards or 01993 860588; £3 students; 50p under-18s

The Bochmann String Quartet

Michael Bochmann - violin

Mark Messenger - violin

Helen Roberts - viola

Peter Adams - cello

Originally founded in 1977 and reformed in 1990, the Quartet is active throughout the country, both playing within the established music society circuit and starting new concert series, such as the Lenthall Concerts. Aside the classic chamber repertoire they have introduced new pieces, amongst them *Dreams* 42, specially written for them by John Dankworth; *Divertimento* by Francis Routh; and Stephen Robert's *Pantomime Suite*, commissioned by The Theatre, Chipping Norton. In 1997 *Dreams* 42 was specially written for them by John Dankworth and first performed at the opening of Kidderminster Library.

The Quartet has a committed involvement in music education, particularly for young people. This has led to a residency for several years at the Higher Education College in Worcester, the instigation of public masterclasses and workshops in various venues and intensive courses for postgraduate students and young professionals. The year 2001 included tours in Germany and Italy and 2002 will see the Quartet in Portugal, Scotland and Italy.

Brought up in Turkey and England, **Michael Bochmann** comes from a family of professional musicians. At 16, he entered the Royal Academy of Music on a scholarship to study the violin with Frederick Grinke. While still a student, he was the winner of the British Prize in the 1972 Carl Flesch International Violin Competition and a year later, prizewinner in the Jacques Thibaud Competition in Paris. He received lessons at this time also from Sandor Vegh and Henryk Szeryng. Shortly after he made his first solo broadcasts for the BBC. He was appointed concertmaster of the English String and Symphony Orchestras in 1988. Two years later he partnered Yehudi Menuhin in Bach's Double Violin Concerto in a tour of eighteen concerts in the USA and Britain. He frequently visits Germany to perform and teach and in other spare moments promotes 10 chamber music series through his new enterprise "Opus 2000". He holds courses for young professional ensembles and soloists at his home in Gloucestershire.

At the age of sixteen, **Mark Messenger** was awarded a scholarship to study at the Royal Academy of Music under David Martin and Sidney Griller. Two years later he was appointed violin professor at Goldsmith's College in London, and at the age of nineteen made his Wigmore Hall debut. He has since played as soloist and chamber musician in all of London's major concert halls and throughout the world, appearing in many national and international festivals. 1990 saw the launch of his immediately popular jazz/rock group, Mercury Jazz. For four years he was director of Chamber Music at the Aberystwyth International Summer Music Festival and was influential in the development of educational policies for orchestras through his work with the English Symphony Orchestra. He is currently a consultant on music education policies for Colchester Borough Council and the Brighton Philharmonic Orchestra. For eight years he was a member of the Bingham String Quartet which championed the cause of contemporary music through its adventurous commissioning and performance programme. Currently in addition to his work with the Bochmann Quartet, he is Head of Strings at the Royal College of Music.

Helen Roberts was born in Newport, Gwent and studied the viola with Walter Gerhardt. At the age of seventeen she joined the BBC Training Orchestra and two years later the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. She was then appointed principal viola with the BBC Midland Radio Orchestra and in 1980 became principal of the English String Orchestra, with whom she has made many recordings and solo appearances. In 1990 she became violist with the Bochmann String Quartet and has performed and recorded a wide repertoire to critical acclaim. Helen is also a regular guest principal with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales and Welsh National Opera Orchestra and frequently appears with the CBSO.

Peter Adams was born in London in 1963 and began his musical studies whilst still at school,

learning piano and later 'cello with Dennis Nesbitt and Maurice Zimber. At the age of sixteen he joined the orchestra of London Festival Ballet and in 1984 he was made principal 'cellist with the London String Orchestra and London City Ballet. At an early stage Peter became interested in the viola da gamba and this led to the forming of the early music group Musicos da Camera and his appointment in 1984 as the youngest ever professor at the Royal Academy of Music, teaching viol and baroque 'cello. In 1991 Peter became director of the Elizabethan Consort of Viols, and for five years he was senior lecturer at the London Guildhall University, and is currently visiting lecturer at Leicester University. Peter is a founder member of the Rogeri Piano Trio with whom he performed widely throughout the world with a constant schedule of concerts for music clubs and festivals, broadcasts on the BBC and Classic FM and recording for Meridian Records. Peter joined the Bochmann Quartet in 1996, and a year later he was appointed to the Principal Chair of the English String and Symphony Orchestras. He plays a 'cello by G.B. Rogeri dated 1697.

Tom Poster

Tom Poster was born in 1981 and has just completed a degree in music at King's College, Cambridge, graduating with a double First. In 2000, he won the keyboard sections of both the Royal Over-Seas League Annual Music Competition and the BBC Young Musicians Competition, as a result of which he performed Rachmaninov's Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini in the Bridgewater Hall, Manchester, accompanied by the BBC Philharmonic under Yan Pascal Tortelier. Previously Tom was a member of the Junior Department of the Guildhall School of Music and Drama for nine years, where in 1998 he was awarded the coveted Lutine Prize. He returns to the Guildhall this year to pursue postgraduate studies with Joan Havill, with whom he has studied for the past 12 years.

Tom has given numerous recitals and concerto performances in venues which include the Barbican Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall and Purcell Room in London, the Sheldonian Theatre and Holywell Room in Oxford, the National Concert Hall in Dublin and King's College Chapel, Cambridge, as well as at concert halls in continental Europe and the Middle East. His concerto experience to date has encompassed works by Bach, Faure, Finzi, Gershwin, Grieg, Mozart, Rachmaninov, Ravel, Schumann and Tchaikovsky. This season, Tom has given several concerto performances with the Orchestra of St John's, as the featured artist in their annual Dorchester Festival, as well as appearing at festivals in Aldeburgh (where he gave the world premiere of Alexander Goehr's Piano Quintet with the Brodsky Quartet), Devizes, Harrogate, King's Lynn and Newbury. Recent and forthcoming chamber music highlights include duo and trio recitals with Guy and Magnus Johnston throughout the UK and Ireland, and appearances with the Endellion and Bochmann Quartets and the Adderbury Ensemble. Over the past two years, a number of Tom's performances have been broadcast on BBC 2, BBC Radio 3 and Classic FM, including a guest appearance with Guy Johnston at the BBC Young Musicians Final 2002.

As a composer, Tom has had two chamber operas performed at the ADC Theatre, Cambridge, to critical acclaim, and his works have also been broadcast on BBC television and radio stations. He has composed incidental music for several plays, including Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* at the Arts Theatre, Cambridge, and Tom Stoppard's *Arcadia* at the Oxford Playhouse.

Tom is grateful to the Martin Musical Scholarship Fund and the Musicians Benevolent Fund for supporting his postgraduate studies.

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