

THE LENTHALL CONCERTS  
SEASON 2006-2007

**The Bochmann Quartet**

**The Harpham Quartet**

**Wednesday, March 7th 2007**



## Quartet in F minor op.95

Ludwig van Beethoven  
(1770-1827)

*Allegro con brio*  
*Allegretto ma non troppo*  
*Allegro assai vivace ma serioso*  
*Larghetto espressivo; Allegretto agitato; Allegro*

In 1809 Beethoven secured a guarantee of 4000 florins a year for life, underwritten by his devoted patrons, the Archduke Rudolph and the Princes Lobkowitz and Kinsky. A condition was that he should stay in his adopted city, Vienna, and it is perhaps a measure of how settled he felt that in the next year that he was apparently once more contemplating marriage, with Therese von Malfatti, the daughter of his physician. She was eighteen, he pushing forty, and the proposal was not only rejected but caused the breaking off of relations with the whole family. How her rejection of him affected Beethoven is not known, but he moved to Baden for two months, and on his return, in October 1810, finished this string quartet. It is possible to read too much autobiographical significance into a composer's works, but for some reason he did not submit the quartet for publication, but kept it to himself for six years, at which time he sent it to one of his closest friends, Baron von Zmeskall, with the words "Here, my dear Z, receive my affectionate dedication which I hope you will accept as a loving memento of our long friendship, and not consider it the end of what is now a long drawn-out thread (for you are one of my oldest friends in Vienna...". Later Beethoven explained to Sir George Smart, the Musical Director at Covent Garden, that the work was written for a small circle of connoisseurs and was never intended to be played in public.

Beethoven referred to the quartet as the *Quartetto Serioso*, under which name it was published; and, indeed, it starts with no-nonsense scurrying figure which alternates with an aspirational melody from the first violin. The slow movement is *serioso* in a quite different way, with a solemn grandeur which eventually subsides into quiet chords which lead without a break into the *scherzo*, itself no laughing matter. By the time one gets to the slow start to the last movement one is beginning to wonder whether one is endlessly into Beethoven's feelings of unrequited love, but the mood becomes lighter, if no less passionate, and when we reach the coda it is positively fizzing.

*Interval*



Therese Malfatti at the piano

## Octet in E flat op.20

Felix Mendelssohn  
(1809-1847)

*Allegro moderato ma con fuoco*  
*Andante*  
*Scherzo: Allegro leggierissimo*  
*Presto*

To call the young Mendelssohn precocious is an understatement. Born into a cultured family and an equally cultured society, he showed a ravenous appetite for musical (and for that matter artistic and literary) learning and a natural genius for playing and composition that rivalled Mozart's. Nothing if not ambitious, his early work embraced most musical genres: orchestral, chamber, choral. His *singspiel*, *Die Soldatenliebschaft*, was performed, with full orchestra, on his twelfth birthday.

By the time he came to write the Octet he had a substantial body of works to his credit, and plaudits from not only the elite of Berlin, who flocked to hear and marvel at his musical prowess (and that of his sister Fanny) but the musical establishment. Cherubini, the Director of the Paris Conservatoire noted for his unsparing opinions, said "Ce garçon est étrange. Il fera bien".

The Mendelssohn family moved in 1825 to a large, run-down house at 3, Leipzigerstrasse, and while it was being restored, camped in the summerhouse, where, it is thought, the 15-year-old Mendelssohn wrote the Octet, and where it was first performed.

There was not much by way of precedent for the piece. Spohr's octet, which predated it by a year or so, was very much for two quartets playing against each other, but Mendelssohn integrates all eight players into an ensemble which is all but orchestral. The first movement, much the most substantial, has an unflagging forward momentum, with rich ensemble passages. The andante has concerto-like snatches, solo strings against rich chordal writing for the remaining instruments. The famous scherzo, inspired by the Walpurgisnacht sequence in Goethe's Faust, in which Oberon, Titania and Puck appear, has dazzled audiences ever since it was written. Mendelssohn later arranged it for full orchestra as an alternative to the Minuet and Trio of his C minor symphony. Fragments of its dancing theme reappear in the breakneck fugato of the last movement.



Mendelssohn at 13

## THE LENTHALL CONCERTS

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## The Bochmann Quartet

**Michael Bochmann** - violin  
**Mark Messenger** - violin

**Helen Roberts** - viola  
**Peter Adams** - cello

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. 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. 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 Zimbler. 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 lead 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. He 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.Roger dated 1697.



## The Harpham Quartet

**Anna Harpham** - violin  
**Ciaran McCabe** - violin

**Laura Holt** - viola  
**Lawrence Durkin** - cello

The Harpham String Quartet won the Helen Just and Susan Connell String Quartet prize at the Royal College of Music and made their Wigmore Hall debut in June 2006. Recent performance highlights have included appearances at the Wigmore Hall and recitals for the Brantwood Young Artists' Platform, Lake District Summer Music, Victoria and Albert Museum and the Guildhall Theatre Royal, Bury St. Edmunds'. The Harpham Quartet has received coaching from the Arditti, Chilingirian, Takács, Endellion and Sorrel Quartets.

The founder of the group, **Anna Harpham**, is studying with Maciej Rakowski at the Royal College of Music on the MMus programme. She was previously a pupil at the Yehudi Menuhin School, studying with Natalia Boyarsky. Anna has performed extensively as both soloist and chamber musician, making her solo debut in the Purcell Room in November 2000. In July 2006, Anna toured Estonia as soloist with the Bromley Youth Chamber Orchestra, participating in the David Oistrakh Festival. Having formerly been a member of the National Youth Orchestra, Anna is currently a member of the European Union Youth Orchestra, and recently led the RCM Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Andrew Litton. She regularly plays with the London Mozart Players.

**Ciaran McCabe** comes from Newtwnabebey and is a postgraduate student at the Royal College of Music. In 2006 he was one of three winners in The Arts Council of Northern Ireland's Young Artist Platform Scheme. The award gives him £5000 and two professional engagements with the BBC, and will enable him to travel to New York to study with internationally-renowned Korean violinist, Chee-Yun.

**Laura Holt** graduated from the Royal Academy of Music in 2006 with the DipRAM Award and Maurice Loban Prize for Viola, having completed a two-year post-graduate diploma studying with Matthew Souter. During her time at the Academy she was principal viola of the RAM Concert Orchestra and Sinfonia, and took the position of co-principal viola with the RAM Soloists in 2005. Laura currently enjoys an active freelance career and has performed with the LSO, Philharmonia, BBC Symphony Orchestra and London Chamber Orchestra. In addition, she has been a member of the European Union Youth Orchestra since 2005. Highlights of 2006 included two performances at the Wigmore Hall and a much acclaimed performance of Lachenmann's 'Grido' at the Transcendent Festival.

**Lawrence Durkin** has recently completed his postgraduate studies with Leonid Gorokhov at the Royal College of Music. In 2004, he received First-Class Honours for his BMus studies, at the RCM, having studied with Melissa Phelps and Moray Welsh. He has performed in masterclasses with Alexander Baillie, Steven Doane, Johannes Goritzki, Louise Hopkins and Richard Lester. In June 2003 he made his concerto debut performing Haydn's Concerto in C with the London Pro Arte Orchestra. Since then he has performed across the UK as a soloist and chamber musician notably with the Carressi String Trio and the Prince Consort Ensemble with whom he has recently completed a tour of the USA. Since July 2004, he has been Artist-in-Residence at the Performing Arts Institute Summer Program at Wyoming Seminary, Pennsylvania USA.



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