

THE LENTHALL CONCERTS
SEASON 2007-2008

The Bochmann Quartet
David Ayre

Wednesday, October 15th, 2008

THE LENTHALL CONCERTS:
coming next

Wednesday, November 5th 2008 7.30pm

Klanglust
directed by Bernd Müller

Concerto Grosso op 6/12 or op 6/2 Handel
Double violin concerto in D minor J S Bach
St Paul's Suite Holst
Holberg Suite Grieg

A first visit to Burford by this young German group, playing classic pieces for string orchestra.

Tickets £10 in advance from: Red Lion Bookshop, 122 Burford High Street (01993 822539); Music Stand, 62 High St Witney (01993-724890); The Lenthall Concerts (01993 822412); or from a steward tonight.

Tickets at the door on the night £12. Students £3; under-18s 50p

THE LENTHALL CONCERTS

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Wood Green School, Witney

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Quentin Hayes

(baritone)

Lyndall Dawson

(piano)

A recital of operatic arias, concentrating on Quentin's many appearances at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden during the last eight years. Introduced with information not only about the context but also of his working with many of the great singers, conductors and composers of the past 25 years.

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The Burford Singers

Music for Advent & Christmas

Bach: *Wachet auf ruft uns die Stimme*
Finzi: *In Terra Pax* Haydn: *'St Nicolas' Mass*
Vaughan Williams: *Fantasia on Christmas Carols*
Peter Warlock: *Capriol Suite*

The Cotswold Chamber Orchestra

leader: Kate Bailey

Soloists: Mary Bevan soprano Cathy Bell mezzo

Ed Goble tenor William Berger bass

Conductor: Brian Kay

7.30pm Sunday 7th December 2008

Burford Parish Church

Tickets reserved @ £17, £14 and £10
(students half price);

from Burford Singers Box Office
The Red Lion Bookshop, 122 High Street,
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Programme

Quartet in A op.18 no.5

Ludwig von Beethoven
(1770-1827)

Allegro
Menuetto e Trio
Andante cantabile
Allegro

"It is easy to get on with the nobility", Beethoven once said, "if you have something to impress them with". There is no doubt that he had: pre-eminently his chamber music, which is festooned with dedications to his aristocratic patrons. One of these, Count Apponyi, approached the composer in 1795 to write a set of six string quartets - which would have nicely matched the six he had commissioned from Haydn two years previously, if Beethoven had actually written them. But Beethoven was still unsure of his command of the genre, and it was to be another three years before he was able to dedicate the set of six quartets, op.15, to another nobleman, Prince Lobkowitz. First performed at the Prince's Vienna home (on Friday mornings) they were published in 1801. In an ironical twist, the Prince commissioned Haydn, Beethoven's sometime tutor and undoubted major influence, to compose a similar set at about the same time, but Haydn, complaining that his powers had gone, completed only two. The torch, it seemed, was being handed over.

The quartets were almost certainly not written in the order in which they are numbered, and may have been worked on in parallel. No. 5 is an immensely assured example, with more than an echo of Mozart. Indeed the whole work shows Beethoven's cognisance of the earlier master, and in particular Mozart's own quartet in the same key, one of the six he dedicated to Haydn. Czerny remembered Beethoven coming across the work, open at the A major quartet, and exclaiming "That's what I call a work! In it Mozart was telling the world: Look what I could do if you were ready for it!"

The third movement is a set of variations on a very simple theme, over which Beethoven wrote the word "pastoral". It's serenity does not stop Beethoven from doing some wonderfully ingenious things with it. The bustling first subject of the finale gives way briefly to a creamy second theme, but the impetus is all with the first, and the second, though it makes appearances in the development, seems there merely to catch the breath before another dash through the quavers.

Quartet in G minor op.10

Claude Debussy
(1862-1918)

Animé et très décidé
Assez vif et bien rythmé
Andantino doucement expressif
Très moderé

Like Fauré and Ravel, Debussy wrote only one string quartet, although it was published as 'Premier Quatuor, op.10' (the only one of the composer's works to be dignified by an opus number) and he certainly contemplated a second, in which he was going to 'bring



Debussy on th Marne, 1893

more dignity to the form', in response to Chausson's criticism of the first. Debussy deferred greatly to Chausson, and in 1893, the year the Quartet appeared, he wrote to the older composer:

"Here I am, just turned thirty-one and unsure of my aesthetic. There are still things that I am not able to do—create masterpieces, for instance, or be really responsible—for I have the fault of thinking too much about myself and only seeing reality when it is forced upon me and then insurmountable". Chausson replied that in his opinion Debussy knew perfectly well what he was doing. And the next few years would certainly bring forth masterpieces: in particular *Pelléas et Mélissande*.

French music in the nineties was very much in the grip of two influences from abroad: the young Russian school of composers, like Rimsky-Korsakov, and the music of the Orient. It is the latter that one detects in the Quartet: in particular the sound of the *gamelan* in the second movement. The exotic flavour this gives the work sets it apart from practically every string quartet that had gone before, and arguably set the scene for much quartet writing in the twentieth

century.

It is easy—perhaps too easy—to see parallels between Debussy's music and what was going on in the world of art around him, but there is always the feeling in the quartet that what

we are being presented with are impressions rather than statements. The first movement has a clear enough opening subject, but the development of this is in tiny kaleidoscopic transformations. The scherzo-like second movement has the wealth of pizzicato writing, almost percussive in its effect, that set its first listeners in mind of the *gamelan*. In the third movement we are in what was to become part of Debussy's orchestral sound world: a dreamy, misty suspension of form. The mood extends to the start of the finale, but this is broken by a more energetic passing of fragmentary themes between the instruments, and there is a gradual building of dramatic tension to the closing chord.

Interval

String Quintet in G major

Antonín Dvořák
(1841-1904)

Allegro con fuoco
Scherzo
Poco andante
Allegro assai



Dvorak, ca 1877

Dvorak's publisher in Berlin, Fritz Simrock, was no great respecter of opus numbers as an indication of where in a composer's oeuvre a particular work stood, and when Dvorak submitted what he regarded as his op.18, with a few minor revisions, Simrock rebranded it as op.77, no doubt hoping to pass it off as the latest work of a by now well-established composer. In fact it had been written 13 years earlier, in 1875, not long after he had quit his career as a viola player in the orchestra of the Provisional Theatre, Prague. Buoyed up by his successful application for the Austrian State Stipendium, he was now more or less a full-time composer, and was gradually shrugging off the heavy influences of other composers, in particular Wagner, that characterised his earlier works.

So we may sense a breaking loose in the G major quintet, which unlike Dvorak's other string quintets, dispenses with a second viola in favour of a double bass. This gives a sound bordering on that of a chamber orchestra, which is soon apparent after a rather shy start. The movement is dominated by its propulsive rhythms, which one might fancy as being inspired by Dvorak's love of railways, if one knew what Czech railways sounded like in 1875.

The scherzo is a hearty, folk-tinged dance, which Dvorak gently reins in in the middle section. The slow movement is not the one Dvorak originally wrote, which he recycled in any case from one of his early string quartets, and then hijacked to become his *Notturmo* for string orchestra. It is actually quite animated, with a corker of a tune, wistful and winning. The finale drives along with great gusto, and exploits the relatively unusual instrumentation comprehensively.

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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 Zimmler. 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. 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.Rogeri dated 1697.

David Ayre

David Ayre began playing the double bass at the age of ten. He studied with Tony Hougham at the Colchester Institute, which gave him the Institute String Prize, and then with Peter Buckoke at the Royal College of Music where he was awarded the Geoffrey Tankard Recital Prize.

A freelance musician, David has experience of many genres from baroque to classical to modern contemporary and jazz. For many years he has been Principal in the Thames Chamber Orchestra, the Mid Wales Opera Company and is guest principal for Sinfonia Viva and the London Festival Orchestra. He was Principal with the Orchestra of the Swan for twelve years and also performed regularly with them as a soloist. More recently David has been offered regular work with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Welsh National Opera, the Hallé and Manchester Camerata.

He enjoys a busy schedule recording for the film industry and has worked with a number of popular artists including Joni Mitchell, Jarvis Cocker, Robbie Williams, Madonna, U2 and Sir Paul McCartney.

David's chamber music experience includes performances and recordings with the Bingham Quartet, Smith Quartet, Le Page Ensemble, Ivaldi Camerata, Camera Obscura, The Bochmann Ensemble, the Coull Quartet and the Psophos Quartet. He featured with the English String Orchestra as soloist in their recording of Nicholas Maw's Life Studies.

In collaboration with violinist David le Page and percussionist Graham Instrall, David brought together the contemporary eight-piece electro-acoustic ensemble Subway Piranhas which has played at a number of festivals and venues including a sell-out performance at the South Bank Centre. He has also recently formed a jazz group, the Dave Ayre Trio, which has met with acclaim.

David lives near Stroud in Gloucestershire with his wife and two sons and is actively involved in the promotion of musical activity in his local school and youth centre.

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