

TRURO 3 ARTS

Classical Music Society is pleased to continue in association with Truro College to promote professional music in the region.

Truro Three Arts is affiliated to the National Federation of Music Societies and is a registered charity, Number 283130.

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Truro 3 Arts Opera Trip

Correction – Tuesday 5th April 2016
Gioachino Rossini ~ The Barber of Seville
Welsh National Opera
Theatre Royal, Plymouth
Contact Liz Winterton for details:
01872 540354
Non-members welcome

A special Thank You to Susan Plant of the Twisted Currant Tearoom in Porthleven for our 70th anniversary celebration cake this evening.

The Twisted Currant is a traditional tea room with a shabby chic feel, a bright fresh space, and a cosy welcoming atmosphere. Susan produces her own cakes, pastries and bread on site, having honed her skills as a baker for over six years at Trevarno Gardens, near Helston.

Do pay them a visit if you're in the area.

Sponsorship

Truro 3 Arts is keen to encourage local organisations and businesses to become sponsors of the Society.

An attractive benefits package includes complimentary tickets and publicity via our web site, brochure and concert programmes.

Interested organisations requiring further details should contact Gil Patrick in the first instance at gilpatrickmail@yahoo.co.uk or on 01208 831041.

TRURO 3 ARTS

Classical Music Society



In association with

Mylor Theatre – Truro College

Friday 16th October 2015

Fitzwilliam String Quartet



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Fitzwilliam String Quartet



The founding members of the FSQ first played together as undergraduates during their inaugural term at Cambridge University in Autumn 1968, and went on to become Quartet in Residence at the University of York. It was only a year into their residency that the much documented association with Dmitri Shostakovich first catapulted the Quartet into the

public eye. The composer travelled to York to hear the British première of his thirteenth quartet and this musical friendship (the composer's own word!) prospered through correspondence, and the presentation of his final two quartets that he wrote in the years following. Benjamin Britten afterwards reported (just before his own death) that Shostakovich had told him the Fitzwilliam were his "preferred performers of my quartets". Having premiered his last three quartets in Britain, the group soon became the first ever to record and perform all fifteen quartets.

The Players:

Violin – Lucy Russell: Lucy was born in Germany of Scottish/Norwegian origin, but has lived mainly in London. She has been a member of the Fitzwilliam since 1988, becoming leader in 1995. Lucy likes to divide her time between performing on period instruments and their "modern" counterparts, exploring music from Monteverdi and Purcell to the present day.

Violin – Marcus Barcham-Stevens: Marcus first played with the Fitzwilliam in September 2012 and joined them as 2nd violin five months later. Marcus also performs in recital with his wife, pianist Christina Lawrie. As a composer his "Dhyana" for soprano and ensemble was described by George Hall (the Guardian) as "hugely impressive".

Viola – Alan George: Alan comes from Cornwall. In 1968 he became one of the founder members of the Fitzwilliam, remaining as its only viola player for all 45 years of its existence (so far...). Indeed, he is now the longest serving quartet player in Britain! His viola was made in Cremona (Italy) c.1740/41, possibly by one of the Guarneri family.

Cello – Heather Tuach: Heather is from Newfoundland, Canada and has been a member of the Fitzwilliam since 2008. She has made several recordings with the FSQ including Absolutely! for string quartet, saxophone and jazz violin! Heather has two cellos: one a copy of a 1705 Matteo Goffriller, made by Yorkshire luthier Roger Hansell in 1993; and the other a copy of a Stradivarius made by Filippo Protani of Corciano, Italy in 2011.

Friday 6th February 2015 Trio con Brio Copenhagen

Frank Bridge ~ Phantasy Trio in C minor

Felix Mendelssohn ~ Trio No.1 in D minor Op.49

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky ~ Piano Trio in A minor Op.50



Founded in Vienna in 1999 the two Korean sisters Soo-Jin and Soo-Kyung Hong and Jens Elvekjaer have since then been exploring the piano trio repertoire with freshness and curiosity as well as with respect and reflection, and they have been gaining a reputation for the freshness of their approach: "works by

Beethoven, Schubert and Brahms are transformed in their hands into the alive-and-kicking music of today" (Esben Tange, editor, DR P2).

Trio con Brio Copenhagen continues to play a central role in Scandinavia's vibrant contemporary music scene. Several of Denmark's most prominent composers such as Per Nørgård and Bent Sørensen, as well as Swedish composer Sven David Sandström, have composed and dedicated works to the trio. Trio con Brio Copenhagen was enormously honoured to be chosen by Per Nørgård to be the dedicatee of a work that was premiered at a festival in Stockholm celebrating his 80th birthday in 2012. Coming up in January 2016 is the world première of Bent Sørensen's Triple Concerto with the Danish National Orchestra.

As founders and artistic directors of the Copenhagen Chamber Music Festival, the Trio is searching for new and interesting paths and directions in chamber music as well as initiating concerts for the young generation.

The trio's 2011 Mendelssohn CD was chosen by Classic FM UK as Chamber Disc of 2011: "Every phrase soars and pulsates with the excitement of a fresh discovery as the Copenhagen players go the full distance with playing of skin-rippling sensitivity... sensational playing...".

summarise the essential nature of the music. The first movement, “*Calm unawareness of the future cataclysm*”, is initially light and easy, but sarcastically so. The music moves from an overzealous, fidgety merriment into a disturbed foreshadow with a chaotic fugue scrambling the initial themes into disarming complexity and conflict. It ends with a wild acceleration that is more panic than mirth, but the final cadence is an ironic smirk of complacency.

The second movement, “*Rumblings of unrest and anticipation*”, begins to steer the quartet into much darker waters. An edgy, off-kilter waltz draws each instrument into the fray of angular melody, restless tonality, menacing rhythms, and shrill intervals. Suddenly, without changing its time signature, the music shifts from a triple meter waltz into a duple meter march, a clear suggestion that the “rumblings” are those of war. The march has the same hollow brightness of the first movement’s mindless mirth.

The third movement is one side of Shostakovich at his best. With an allegro tempo, fortissimo dynamics, a propulsive rhythm and the full weight of the ensemble combined in huge double, triple and quadruple stopped chords, the music perfectly matches its original title, “*The forces of war unleashed*”. Still, in the midst of this severe drama, Shostakovich intersperses caricature and parody in the form of skittering dances, pompous, overblown marches and a sudden, perfectly resolved final cadence.

The fourth movement, the quartet’s centre of gravity, is the other side of Shostakovich at his best. With anguished solos within a diversity of shifting ensemble configurations that ultimately sink into a funeral dirge: “*Homage to the dead*” is desolate, haunting and elegiac.

The finale originally bore the title “*The eternal question: Why? and for what?*” With a moderate tempo and a 6/8 time signature, the music is episodic and ambiguous, mixing duple and triple meters in unsettling marches and ghostly dances. The tension escalates into one final climax that erupts with a recall of the fourth movement dirge, an outpouring of grief and yet another hybrid of windup march and languid dance. The quartet dies away with an eerie glow: a long, unison pedal-point hovers while a lonely violin sings a final, wan lament that evaporates into an ethereal, disembodied harmonic. The eternal question remains, unanswered.

earsense (adapted)

Programme

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky ~ *Quartet in B flat major*

Alexander Borodin ~ *Quartet no.2*

Dmitri Shostakovich ~ *Quartet No.3 in F major Op.73*

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893)

Quartet in B flat major (1865)

Adagio misterioso – Allegro con moto – Adagio misterioso

Of all the very greatest composers Tchaikovsky must be one of the least *comprehensively* known and understood: from his enormous output one could list about fifteen works – virtually all of them orchestral – which have since achieved a popularity which this tragically self-doubting man could only dream about. Thereafter comes an inexplicable gulf dividing fame from obscurity. Amongst all this relatively unknown music are the five full scale chamber works; only five, it is true, which suggests that Tchaikovsky felt far less at home in such constrained surroundings. He himself admitted as much, but in this sense he is no different from the majority of later nineteenth century composers. Indeed, his friend Herman Laroche writes of Tchaikovsky’s musical likes and dislikes – not only with regard to composers past and present but also to instrumental combinations: it would appear that he sported a particular contempt for solo piano with orchestra, and for chamber works with strings! And even though the piano trio must be regarded as one of his finest and most deeply personal creations, yet he himself said on more than one occasion that he found this particular combination of instruments “torture to listen to”! However, the established string quartet repertoire is a particularly exclusive company, and the quartets of Tchaikovsky – as with so many of his contemporaries – are only reluctantly admitted. But unlike most of those contemporaries Tchaikovsky is usually prepared to accept the strictures imposed by the medium and does not often strive for orchestral sonorities. Inevitably one can detect the occasional passage, particularly in the F major quartet, where his exuberance led him to overstep the boundaries of idiomatic quartet writing; yet at the same time much of his chamber music displays a lightness and elegance of

touch which at times recalls the assurance and effortless skill of Mozart or Mendelssohn.

The anecdotes recalled above emanate from four-hand piano sessions at the St. Petersburg Conservatoire, through which Tchaikovsky and Laroche acquainted themselves with a vast amount of musical literature. Tchaikovsky was already in his mid twenties, having enrolled in 1862; but it should be remembered that at this time he was still a civil servant by profession, having studied at the School of Jurisprudence since 1850 and not resigning his post at the Ministry of Justice until 1863. One of the compositions he produced as a student (no doubt a course requirement) was a string quartet in B flat, first performed by colleagues at the conservatoire. This despite his supposed anathema to the medium! Yet only the first movement survives, since the self critical composer must have destroyed however much else of the work he completed. But this (presumably) dismembered torso does make an eminently satisfying whole, with its main Allegro flanked by slow music which begins rather like a grave Orthodox chorale – but with none of the darker implications in those later examples obsessed by the minor mode (for example, in the Andante of the E flat minor quartet). This symmetrical type of first movement structure was also employed in Quartets 2 and 3, together with the second symphony – the “Little Russian”, which shares with this quartet the use of Ukrainian folk material. Here the first subject of the Allegro is based on such a melody, which was evidently a favourite of Tchaikovsky's: he arranged it for chorus, as well as incorporating it into his *Scherzo à la Russe* for piano (also in B flat). Its character certainly permeates the whole of this lively and resourceful piece, for which we therefore owe gratitude to a group of women singing at work on his sister's estate at Kamenka – so often a haven for Pyotr Ilyich during more troubled times ahead.

Alan George, Fitzwilliam String Quartet

Alexander Borodin (1833–1887)

Quartet no.2 (1881)

1. *Allegro moderato*
2. *Scherzo: Allegro*
3. *Notturmo: Andante*
4. *Finale: Andante – Vivace*

This quartet and his symphonic poem In the Steppes of Central Asia were composed in 1881, probably the same year that it was premièred. The first movement, which begins with a cello singing a lyrical melody

in high register, is one of the most perfect examples of Borodin's lyrical (as opposed to dramatic) treatment of the sonata form. Contrasts are achieved through the use of contrapuntal or colour contrasts, such as changes of keys.

The scherzo, usually the third movement, is Borodin's second movement, also in sonata form rather than the usual ABA form. Its principal theme uses a descending scale-based figure on the first violin, accompanied by a falling motif on the viola. When the movement reaches its subordinate theme, the viola becomes the tuneful "rising thirds" motif freely used in the musical *Kismet* as the song *Baubles, Bangles and Beads*.

An agitated middle section of the third movement interrupts what is otherwise a peaceful Nocturne whose performance in string orchestra arrangements also appears in the musical *Kismet*, as And This is My Beloved. After the middle section, the main theme is repeated in canon: cello and first violin, then two violins. The finale is the movement where Borodin's contrapuntal mastery is on full display, frequently with "question-answer" motifs given by pairs of instruments.

Wikipedia (adapted)

Dmitri Shostakovich (1906–1975)

Quartet No.3 in F Op.73 (1946)

1. *Allegretto*
2. *Moderato con moto*
3. *Allegro non troppo*
4. *Adagio*
5. *Moderato*

A favourite of the composer himself, Shostakovich's String Quartet No.3 in which he skilfully uses the form to express his distinctive musical personality, is considered by many to be among the best of his fifteen quartets. Like many of his later quartets, it features an astonishing range of textures, sonic effects and brilliant part writing making a startling emotional and psychological impact. The unspeakable hardships of life in the Soviet Union up through and to the end of World War Two took their toll on Shostakovich: nervous, bitter and depressed, he found his most profound outlet in the safe privacy and intimate expressive capability of chamber music of which String Quartet No.3 is a particularly powerful example.

Shostakovich originally gave titles to each of the five movements, which characterize the quartet as a reflection on the war and vividly