

# Seaford Music Society

Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> November 2018 at 3.00 pm

## Touchwood Piano Quartet

Fiona McCapra	<i>Violin</i>
Judith Busbridge	<i>Viola</i>
Adrian Bradbury	<i>Cello</i>
Andrew West	<i>Piano</i>

Touchwood Piano Quartet has performed all over the UK, Canada and Europe, including residencies at the International Chamber Music Festival in Nuremberg and at the Banff Centre for Arts (Canada), where they recorded a highly acclaimed CD of piano quartets by Chausson and Saint-Saëns.

**Fiona's** devotion to chamber music has seen her record and perform worldwide with groups such as the Nash Ensemble, McCapra Quartet, Endymion, Raphael Ensemble, Johannes Ensemble and her piano quartet 'Touchwood', with whom she makes regular appearances at Nuremberg International Chamber Music Festival. A former member of the Chamber Orchestra of Europe, Fiona is now an active member of both the Britten Sinfonia and the City of London Sinfonia, also enjoying guest appearances with the English Chamber Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and in the West End show band of Aladdin. She has played on many film and TV soundtracks, including a solo on the top-selling Classic FM CD "Songs without Words".

**Judith** graduated in Music from Birmingham University and completed her viola studies with Thomas Riebl in Salzburg, where she was solo violist in the Camerata Academica under the directorship of Sándor Végh for five years. She was a founder member of the Dante String Quartet, winning the prestigious Royal Philharmonic Society Award for Chamber Music in 2007, and subsequently joined Ensemble 360 with whom she won the same award in 2013.

Judith's varied freelance career also includes being principal viola in the London Mozart Players as well as playing solo viola in John Eliot Gardiner's Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique, which performs repertoire of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries on period instruments. Since September 2013 she is one of the principal violas with the Orchestra of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. She plays a wonderful Brothers Amati viola, dated 1593, loaned to her by a generous benefactor.

**Adrian** was principal cello in the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain before winning scholarships to Churchill College, Cambridge (where he read Veterinary Science and Music) and then to the Royal Academy of Music. After further study in Berlin he developed an international career in chamber music as the cellist in Composers Ensemble (winners of the Royal Philharmonic Society Chamber Award 2002), Jane's Minstrels, Trio Gemelli, Touchwood Piano Quartet and Chamber Domaine, giving world premieres of solos, duos, trios and quartets by Thomas Adès, Judith Bingham, Tansy Davies, Dai Fujikura, Hugh Wood and John Woolrich.



Seaford Music Society gratefully acknowledges the support of Newberry Tully Estate Agents.

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Adrian is a regular guest principal player with orchestras including London Sinfonietta, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Ulster Orchestra, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, English National Opera and Welsh National Opera, and is Cello Tutor to the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain. His research into ensemble synchronisation, in collaboration with Professor Alan Wing, was published by the Royal Society and led to invitations to curate the 'Music and Brain' series at the 2010 Aldeburgh Festival and to appear as speaker on BBC Radio 4's 'PM' and 'Today' programmes and as soloist on BBC Radio 3's 2015 'Why Music?' weekend. His two-volume CD of the Operatic Fantasies by Alfredo Piatti with pianist Oliver Davies is to be released by Meridian in the New Year.

**Andrew** has been Artistic Director of the Nuremberg Chamber Music Festival since 2005, and recently returned from Australia, where he was guest artist at the Sydney Chamber Music Festival. He works with many of today's leading singers, including Robert Murray, Mark Padmore, Hilary Summers and Roderick Williams. Next year he will give recitals with baritone Roderick Williams at the Barbican Centre, and at the Aldeburgh Festival with Mark Padmore. Recent recordings include Schubert's *Die schöne Müllerin* with Robert Murray; they appear at the Cambridge Song Festival in February, performing Schubert's *Winterreise* together with readings from the diaries of Captain R.F. Scott. Andrew is a professor at both the Royal Academy of Music and Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

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## **Johann Sebastian BACH (1685-1750) ( arr. Dmitry Sitkovetsky)**

from **Goldberg Variations, BWV 988**

The *Goldberg Variations* form the last part of J.S. Bach's great collection of works for the keyboard, his *Clavier-Übung*, or keyboard exercises. They were named after the 14 year old harpsichordist Johann Gottlieb Goldberg, who came to Dresden in about 1737 as a musician in the household of the Russian ambassador to the Saxon court, Count Hermann Carl von Keyserlingk. Although there is no evidence to support the story, it is said that Bach wrote the variations for Goldberg to play to his master during the night hours when he lay awake suffering from insomnia. Ever since, the name of the fortunate young man has remained with the greatest set of variations written before those of Beethoven.

Bach's own title for the work was *Aria with Divers Variations*. The theme is a sarabande which first appeared in 1725 in the second *Clavierbüchlein* for Anna Magdalena, Bach's second wife. Although no source is known, it may not be by Bach. In all, there are thirty variations, grouped in threes, with every third one a canon. Our artists will announce during the concert which variations they are going to play.

*Programme note courtesy of Making Music*

## **Ludwig van BEETHOVEN (1770-1827)**

**Piano Quartet in E flat major, Op. 16b**

- I *Grave; Allegro ma non troppo*
- II *Andante: Cantabile*
- III *Rondo: Allegro ma non troppo*

The string parts for the Op. 16 quartet were published in March 1801, simultaneously with the earlier, original version for a quintet of piano, oboe, clarinet, horn and bassoon. Thus, the same piano part is meant to be used for either arrangement. Both versions are dedicated to Prince Joseph Johann zu Schwarzenberg. The piece for piano and wind was first performed on 6 April 1797. It is not known when the version for

strings received its premiere, but it is best to think of the piece as a work for piano with either strings or wind, neither version being an adaptation of the other.

The original quintet, written while Beethoven was pursuing a concert tour through Prague, Dresden and Berlin, is for the same instrumentation as a work by Mozart (Quintet for keyboard, oboe, clarinet, horn & bassoon in E flat major, K. 452), prompting a comparison between the two works, unfortunately for Beethoven. The Op. 16 Quartet/Quintet is one of Beethoven's earliest attempts at symphonic composition in a non-symphonic idiom. The result is a rather extravagant work for a small ensemble, although it maintains the typical three-movement format of sonata-type works for chamber ensembles.

The large, dense Grave introduction to the first movement is as substantial as most of the introductions to Haydn's symphonies – the models for Beethoven's slow introductions – and is, to a small extent, integrated into the development section. At this point in his career Beethoven was already using the compositional technique of realising the implications of tiny gestures embedded in the musical fabric. For example, the sudden, unprepared move from G to A flat at the beginning of the development anticipates a false recapitulation in the key of A flat at the midpoint of the section. In fact, the actual recapitulation begins significantly later, with the main theme being transferred from the piano to the violin.

The harmonically adventurous Andante cantabile movement – a combination of rondo and variation form – features an even distribution of material among the instruments. Two episodes, the first beginning in G minor, the second in B flat minor, separate three appearances of the main theme, which is highly decorated on each of its reprises.

The finale, a rondo in 6/8 time at an allegro tempo, provides a light-hearted close to the work. Changes in register, dynamics and instrumentation mark the various statements of the Rondo theme, which are separated by fragmented episodes featuring athletic piano passages. The balance between instruments achieved by Beethoven in the first two movements almost completely disappears in this energetic finale.

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### **INTERVAL 25 MINUTES**

Tea and coffee at £1 per cup can be purchased from the Church Lane Tea Room, 18 Church Street, just past the Old Plough Inn.

Specialist teas and coffees are also available at standard prices.

Please bring your drinks back to the church, to make space in the Tea Room for others.

Public toilets are in Place Lane, on the north side of the churchyard. The Church Lane Tea Room also has one toilet (for patrons only).

If you are not already a member of Seaford Music Society and would like to join, please see our Treasurer at the table at the back of the church. For a limited period, anybody joining part-way through the season may pay a pro-rata membership subscription, currently £48. Furthermore, the cost of your single-concert ticket today will be deducted from your membership subscription.

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## Johannes BRAHMS (1833-1897)

### Piano Quartet in C minor, Op. 60

- I *Allegro non troppo*
- II *Scherzo: Allegro*
- III *Andante*
- IV *Allegro comodo*

Twenty-four chamber works by Brahms are extant but he probably wrote at least three times that number, destroying much of what he wrote or incorporating ideas into later works. The *C minor Piano Quartet* appeared in its final form in 1876 but it originated in the period 1854-6, the climax of Schumann's tragic illness and Brahms's unhappy love for Clara Schumann. In its earliest form the quartet was in C sharp minor but so thorough was Brahms's destruction of his manuscripts that we do not know how much of the earlier work survives in the later one. It has been suggested, however, that the slow movement in E major (an unusual, though not unique, relationship with C minor, but clearly related to C sharp minor) survives intact. It has long been regarded as a declaration of his love.

In a letter about this work Brahms suggests that it could be seen as an illustration of 'the last chapter of the man in the blue jacket and the yellow vest', an allusion to Goethe's hero, Werther, whose despair and suicide epitomised the *Sturm und Drang* (storm and stress) movement which heralded literary romanticism well before the end of the 18th century. D.F. Tovey, in a penetrating analysis, compares Brahms's Op 60 to a Shakespearean tragedy, noting particularly the way the work unfolds as the inevitable outcome of its earlier music.

In the first movement the pithy first subject is notable for its mysterious modulations and in particular the strange *pizzicato* E natural at its end, which foreshadows the key of the slow movement. The second subject, in E flat, consists uniquely of an eight bar open-ended melody with four variations, the last of which modulates freely. In the recapitulation the second subject is in G major and is only returned to C minor by its freely modulating final variation just in time for an audaciously abrupt end of the movement.

The short and stormy *scherzo* in C minor, which follows, thus appears almost as a coda to the first movement.

The long opening theme of the second movement gives way to a gently syncopated middle section, returning after a marvelously beautiful series of dropping sequences (through C and A flat to E). Ideas from the middle section appear briefly in the coda. The finale unfolds inexorably, the tragic and inevitable outcome of the earlier events. There is a brief hint of relaxation just before the end, but, as Ivor Keys has remarked, "The man in the blue jacket and yellow vest has the last word".

*Programme note courtesy of Making Music*

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### Forthcoming concerts:

#### **Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2019, 3.00 pm, at St Leonard's Church, Seaford**

We welcome back the world famous **London Mozart Players Chamber Ensemble** following their stunning concert here in October last year. If you are not a member of Seaford Music Society you can purchase your ticket in advance, from Newberry Tully Estate Agents or from our Treasurer, Paul Moore. Tickets will also be available at the door (subject to availability).

Don't forget to buy your ticket for our Gala Concert, **Melvyn Tan and Friends**, on **Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> June 2019, 7.30 pm, here at St Leonard's Church (note the day and start time)**. Members receive a substantial discount on the ticket price, which includes a complimentary glass of wine or juice. Tickets are on sale now and can be purchased at any of our concerts as long as stocks remain.