

# Seaford Music Society

**Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> November 2019 at 3.00 pm**

## **Capriccio Ensemble**

Ruth Rogers, Kate Comberti	<i>Violins</i>
Sally Beamish, Sophie Renshaw	<i>Violas</i>
Sebastian Comberti	<i>Cello</i>

Described as “the finest of the younger generation of violinists” (*Musical Opinion*) and hailed by the *Guardian* as “superb”, **Ruth Rogers** is in demand as soloist, leader, and chamber musician. In 2001 she was awarded the Tagore Gold Medal – the Royal College of Music’s highest accolade. She has performed as a soloist at the Royal Albert Hall, the Acropolis in Athens, the Pyramids in Cairo and many other exciting places. Ruth was Co-Leader of the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra from 2008 until 2012, is now Leader of the London Mozart Players and regularly leads many major orchestras. She is a founding member of the Aquinas Piano Trio. Ruth appears at the BBC Proms on television with the John Wilson Orchestra.

**Kate Comberti** is a violinist, amateur and researcher of music and young children. She has performed with numerous orchestras and ensembles, from the Toronto Symphony to the London Sinfonietta, as well as music theatre in London’s West End and as part of the International Music Programme in Banff, Canada. She is currently acting as a consultant on the early years Band Time programme at Junior Trinity, delivering a child-led music education programme centred around improvisation.

**Sally Beamish** was born in London. She began her career as a viola player with the Raphael Ensemble, Divertimenti and London Sinfonietta, before moving to Scotland in 1990 to focus on composition. Her catalogue of over 200 works embraces choral, symphonic and chamber music, as well as opera and ballet. In 2018 she returned to England with the viola made for her by her daughter, Stephanie Irvine, and is once again combining performance with composition. She is currently composer-in-residence with the Academy of St Martin-in-the Fields.

**Sophie Renshaw** enjoys a diverse musical life, divided between performing and coaching chamber music, performing the orchestral repertoire with the London Mozart Players and John Eliot Gardiner’s Orchestre Revolutionnaire et Romantique, and arranging world music for collaborations with her gut string trio. Currently the trio is working with Northumbrian duo Brothers Gillespie on a project spanning songs of the medieval Troubadours to Sufi devotional song and the Gillespies’ own songs inspired by northern traditional folk. A CD of this project is planned in 2020. She has been violist in the Canadian Orford String Quartet and principal viola in the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, and she holds a Professorship of Viola and Chamber music at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

**Sebastian Comberti** was born in London and studied in Italy with Amedeo Baldovino and later in London with Derek Simpson and Sidney Griller at the Royal Academy of Music. He was a founder member of the Bochmann Quartet until 1983, when he became principal cello with the London Mozart Players. He plays with a number of chamber groups, including Trio Goya and Divertimenti Ensemble, and has recorded chamber and solo CDs for CRD, EMI, Harmonia Mundi, Hyperion, Meridian, RCA, CPO and Cello Classics.



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

*Seaford Music Society, registered charity no. 295569*

## Wolfgang Amadeus MOZART (1756-1791)

### String Quintet No. 4 in G Minor, K.516

- I *Allegro*
- II *Menuetto: Allegro*
- III *Adagio ma non troppo*
- IV *Adagio - Allegro*

*“Mozart reserved his most troubled, alarming and even dangerous music for works composed in the minor.”*  
(HC Robbins Landon, *“Mozart: the Golden Years”*)

After the triumphant reception of *The Marriage of Figaro* in Prague earlier in 1787, Mozart returned to Vienna and turned to the composition of *Don Giovanni*, premièred in Prague in October that year. But these very public works were complemented by two more intimate and personal works, two string quintets, perhaps in response to the news that his father was seriously ill. The ensemble of a quartet plus an extra viola (which Mozart himself played) not only gave him the opportunity to explore the extra textural combinations of instruments within the quintet (for example a trio and a duo), and a greater variety of sonorities, but also allowed him personal expression as well.

The whole work is full of original and imaginative passages. The slow movement is the only great movement of the classical period to be played with mutes, and the use of a tragic *adagio* to introduce the last movement was also unique in its time.

A restless throbbing underlies much of the first movement, while the melodic line is broken into sigh-like slurs and the movement remains pervaded by minor keys. Silences interrupt the flow as the movement nears its end, with a final return of the two principal themes, but a G minor cadence makes a defiant conclusion.

With its sudden off-beat chords and contrasting dynamics, the *Minuet* is by no means a dance. The *Trio* offers some relief with its more flowing intertwining lines, although it still retains a subdued air.

The *Adagio*, in the key of E flat major and played on muted strings, offers some relief with its major key. It starts as a song, but soon breaks down into fragments, while throbbing repeated notes accompany a downward scale on the first violin, with broken phrases from the second viola. An off-beat accompaniment seems to brighten the mood momentarily but the movement remains reflective rather than consolatory.

An ominous tread accompanies the first violin's melody in the *adagio* opening to the last movement, which leads to the concluding *allegro*, full of lilting melodies to lift the spirits, but which perhaps do not entirely dispel the shadows cast by the earlier movements.

*Programme note courtesy of Making Music*

## Kenneth V JONES (b. 1924)

### String Quartet No. 1

*Lento espressivo – Allegro moderato*

Kenneth V. Jones has lived in Bishopstone for over 25 years, and achieved international renown as a prolific film-score composer. Born in Bletchley in 1924, Kenneth served with the RAF during WWII, after which he studied at Oxford and the Royal College of Music, where he was later made Professor. His musical encounters have included a long list of who's who in British music, from Vaughan Williams and Walton, to Howells, Britten, Tippett and Berkeley amongst many others. Kenneth was the founder and original

conductor of The Wimbledon Symphony Orchestra, where he gave James Galway his first playing opportunity!

The string Quartet of 1951 was written for a Quartet led by the violinist Denis East, and was broadcast the same year by the BBC. It is in one movement, a short Lento espressivo introduction leading into an Allegro moderato with constant pulsating rhythmic drive. The composer himself has revealed that the acerbic, gritty character of the music is in direct contrast to the pre-war English pastoral style. This is most likely only the second performance of the work, and we are thrilled that Kenneth will be in the audience today.

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### INTERVAL 25 MINUTES

Tea and coffee at £1 per cup can be purchased from the Church Lane Tea Room, two doors down the road at 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.

There is one toilet in the vestry at the back of the church, and public toilets (including disabled facilities) are in Place Lane, on the north side of the churchyard. There are also public toilets (no disabled facilities) in South Street (at the bottom of Church Street).

(We regret the non-availability of public toilet facilities at the time of our last concert. We have ascertained that it resulted from flooding in one of the locations and vandalism in the other, an unhappy concomitance of events which we could not foresee and which we trust will never happen again.)

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 ticket today will be refunded and credited towards your annual membership subscription.**

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## Johannes BRAHMS (1833-1897)

### String Quintet No. 2 in G major, Op.111

- I *Allegro non troppo, ma con brio*
- II *Adagio*
- III *Un poco allegretto*
- IV *Vivace ma non troppo presto*

*“With this letter you can bid farewell to my music – because it is certainly time to leave off.”*  
(Brahms to his publisher, Simrock, in 1890)

By the late 1880s Brahms often spoke of giving up composing and even declared this *String Quintet* would be his last work. In his last years Brahms was the most fêted composer in Vienna, where he had lived permanently since 1869. But much of his composing was done during the summer months, when he left Vienna for country retreats like Bad Ischl, where this quintet was written.

But there is no sense of farewell in this work, where fervour and ebullience are there from the beginning as the cello delivers the soaring opening theme under the full weight of the other strings, immediately introducing the very different sonorities of a quintet of string instruments with an extra viola. This has the effect of pushing the first violin's line higher in its register, making the inner parts richer and opening up possibilities of varying combinations – viola duets, or first viola with second violin and second viola with cello. Even fuller sonority is reached with instruments double-stopping (playing two notes at once). The

warm tone of the two violas introduces a contrasting gentle waltz, while the second violin provides a further flexible melodic line. After a repeat of all this material the movement seems to lose its way, with the opening tremolos now *pianissimo* and uncertain, until the opening resolute mood re-asserts itself to introduce an exploration of all these musical ideas, then repeated in full, until the opening theme is transformed into a gentle rocking coda, giving way to a closing exultant shout.

The following movement is a slow march, infused with a melancholy weariness, which seems at the same time to contain its own consolation. Its variations are richly harmonised, and after a dramatic outburst a viola cadenza restores calm to an ending in the major key.

The third movement opens with a gentle grace that becomes more forceful before subsiding again. A contrasting middle section sees pairs of instruments duetting with a waltzing lilt, and the duetting returns to form a quiet coda.

Good spirits return with an opening little shake that starts the last movement and pervades it with great vigour and variety of dynamics, until a dashing gypsy finale brings the whole work to an exuberant conclusion.

*Programme note courtesy of Making Music*

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## **Our next concert**

**Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> February 2020, 3.00 pm, at St Leonard's Church, Seaford**

We are privileged to welcome back the ***London Mozart Players Chamber Ensemble***, playing works by Mozart and Richard Strauss. 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.

We look forward to seeing you here!

## **Additional benefits for members of Seaford Music Society**

We now have reciprocal agreements with both **Uckfield Music Club** and the **Nicholas Yonge Society** (Lewes). During the summer months, when we take a break, you can attend the chamber concerts of the Uckfield club for just £12 a concert instead of the usual cost of £15. Meanwhile, to begin your winter weekends in the best possible way, you can attend the Nicholas Yonge Friday evening concerts in Lewes for £13 instead of the usual £16. Just present your Seaford Music Society membership card at the door to claim your discount. If you are not already a member, you can join by seeing our Treasurer, Paul Moore, at the table at the back of the church.

Details of the concerts can be found on the relevant websites:

Uckfield Music Club - [www.uckfieldmusicclub.uk](http://www.uckfieldmusicclub.uk)

Nicholas Yonge Society - [www.nyslewes.org.uk](http://www.nyslewes.org.uk)

## **Looking for a novel Christmas gift?**

How about gift membership of Seaford Music Society? Or a voucher for entry to one (or more) of our concerts? And for the young people in your family, a personal invitation to our Family Concert in April, together with a ticket for their guest accompanying-adult! Any of these can be bought at our sales desk at the back of the church. No cash? Don't worry, we accept plastic cards!