

Seaford Music Society

Sunday 20th October 2024 at 3.00 pm

Fibonacci Quartet

Luna De Mol	<i>Violin</i>
Kryštof Kohout	<i>Violin</i>
Elliot Kempton	<i>Viola</i>
Findlay Spence	<i>Cello</i>

As the only ensemble ever to win both First and Audience Prizes at the Premio Paolo Borciani International String Quartet Competition in Italy (2024), the Fibonacci Quartet are one of Europe's leading young string quartets.

Originally formed at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London, the Fibonaccis are a Resident Ensemble at the Escuela Superior de Musica Reina Sofia in Madrid with Günter Pichler, and at the Dutch String Quartet Academy in Amsterdam. Following public finals at Wigmore Hall last May, they were selected to join the Young Classical Artist Trust (YCAT) roster.

During the 2024/25 season the Quartet will perform extensively throughout Europe, including concerts in the UK, Italy, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland, Spain and France. They will undertake residencies with ProQuartet in Paris and Britten Pears Arts in Aldeburgh, as well as teaching and performing at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama in Cardiff in their position as Resident Quartet.

The Fibonacci Quartet are prolific prize winners and have received numerous awards including First Prize in the Royal Over-Seas League Chamber Music Competition, First Prize in the Cavatina Chamber Music Competition, The RPS Henderson Chamber Ensemble Award, First Prize in the International Triomphe de l'Art Competition in Belgium, The Kirckman Society Award, Audience Prize at the Schiermonnikoog Festival and Special Prizes of the Shostakovich Association in Paris and Peermusic in Hamburg.

Additionally, the Quartet regularly give radio and television broadcasts including on Dutch National Television, Dutch Concert Radio, BBC Radio 3 and RAI tv, Italy. They were honoured to work closely with Kaija Saariaho on a new recording of 'Terra Memoria' made at the Barbican as part of the BBC Total Immersion series.

The Fibonacci Quartet are generously supported by the Escuela Reina Sofía, the Hattori Foundation, the Cosman Keller Trust, The Frost Trust and Fondation Biermans-Lapôtre in Paris.



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Franz Joseph HAYDN (1732-1809)

String Quartet in B-flat, Op.76, No.4 ('Sunrise')

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

Justly called 'The Father of the Symphony', Haydn developed the symphonic form from a ten-minute 'overture' format into a serious, four-movement work. His contribution to the string quartet genre is just as profound – he and Mozart spearheaded the string quartet's evolution from the *galant* style, in which typically one instrument predominates and the others accompany, into a true 'quartet' style in which all four instruments contribute as soloists.

Haydn's quartet style has several key features – the technique of thematic elaboration, distribution of the thematic process among all four instruments, integration of contrapuntal passages, use of variation technique, and mastery in building a movement from small motifs. These critical features, together with the marvellous introspection of the lyrical movements, the spirited finales, and the blending of the classical style with the fugal technique of the Baroque, make Haydn's quartet craftsmanship virtually unsurpassable.

After 23 years of service to the Eszterházy family, Haydn moved to Vienna in 1790. Following two visits to London, he returned to Vienna, by now both rich and internationally famous. The six quartets comprising Op.76, commissioned by Count Joseph Erdödy, were completed by September 1797; after these, he wrote only three more (Op.77/1-2 and Op.103).

The first violin opens the first movement with an ascending phrase over the sustained chord of the other instruments (hence the nickname 'Sunrise'). After a lively transitional passage the cello presents the calmer second subject, an inversion of the main theme.

Emerging from a five-note motif, the introspective, hymn-like *Adagio* offers a profound meditation; the opening motif recurs several times, and the movement flows freely in the manner of a fantasia.

The *Menuetto* offers a merry peasant dance; the contrasting central *Trio*, with violins in octaves over a drone-like contribution from viola and cello, is unexpectedly serious. The energetic, contredanse-like finale in ABA format is believed to be based on a folk-song that Haydn heard on one of his trips to England. A sparkling coda concludes the work.

Béla BARTÓK (1881-1945)

String Quartet No.4

- I *Allegro*
- II *Prestissimo, con sordino*
- III *Non troppo lento*
- IV *Allegretto pizzicato*
- V *Allegro molto*

Bartók's *Fourth String Quartet*, dedicated to the Pro Arte Quartet, was composed between July and September 1928, a year after the *Third*. Both works are powerfully modernist in their idiom, and initially seemed unacceptably harsh even to a listener like Anton Webern, who might have been expected to be sympathetic. The form of the two works is utterly different, the slow-fast-slow-fast single span of the *Third Quartet* giving way to a five movement (arch form) pattern in the *Fourth*. Bartók became somewhat addicted to these arch-like symmetries. In the present work the first and last movements are interrelated and even share an ending. All the same, there are differences, for the first movement is related to classic

sonata form, the *Finale* to a more dance-like structure (dance as in *Le Sacre du Printemps* not some Bach suite!).

Moving inwards the second and fourth movements are both scherzos. The second, for muted strings, is based on chromatic scale patterns covering a diminished fifth. Movement is very rapid, the volume level always subdued. Towards the end Bartók introduces some of those mysterious *glissandi* which, years ago, always used to disconcert audiences. Now his effects are accepted, part of his characteristic sound world. In the fourth, rather slower, scherzo movement the scales are more diatonic, the technique *pizzicato*, the new effect a plucking of the string so fierce that it explodes against the finger board. This enchanting movement is the easiest to grasp.

Most warmly expressive is the wonderful central slow movement. At first the upper strings sustain slowly changing harmonies against a rhapsodic cello solo. Later the first violin takes over with a kind of sublimated bird-song. Finally, second violin and viola, then first violin and cello, share the soloistic limelight, their music still played against long held harmony. The effect is most beautiful and adds a fresh dimension to a superbly varied, brilliantly imaginative composition.

INTERVAL 15 MINUTES

There are toilets in the lobby at the back of the church, and downstairs via the stairs beside the stage. **No refreshments will be served during the interval, but we warmly invite you to join us downstairs for tea, coffee and biscuits after the concert ends.**

Franz SCHUBERT (1797-1828)

String Quartet in D minor, D.810 ('Death and the Maiden')

- I *Allegro*
- II *Andante con moto*
- III *Scherzo*
- IV *Presto*

Schubert wrote over 30 chamber works, including two complete *Piano Trios* and the popular *Octet* for wind and strings. However, it was the string quartet that he regarded as the supreme achievement in this field, and in 1824 he planned a series of three of them. The first two, including this *Death and the Maiden Quartet*, were written in February of that year, but they had to wait until 1831 for publication, while there is no clear record of any public performance in the composer's lifetime. The title is not on the autograph, but it is an apt one, since the slow movement is a wonderful set of variations on a harmonic sequence from Schubert's 1817 song *Tod und das Mädchen*.

The *allegro* opens with a powerful rhythmic call to attention, after which the first subject energetically carries on, with triplets a prominent feature. The more suave second subject appears on the violins in thirds, but this also becomes more and more energetic, with scurrying semi-quavers on the first violin. The development is mainly concerned with aspects of the second subject and the recapitulation is announced with the original call to attention, though it is extended with a strenuous fugue-like section. A long held note on the cello dies away and the coda starts speeding up to a climax which subsides to a quiet ending with triplets in the bass.

The theme for the set of five variations that make up the *andante con moto* is ideal for the purpose; it consists of a simple repeated rhythmic pattern with little melodic or harmonic movement, allowing the composer full opportunity to add musical decoration and expressive content – an opportunity of which he takes full advantage.

The *scherzo* is full of fierce dotted rhythms and slashing syncopation, contrasted with a slower, more graceful *trio*, which nevertheless has the same persistent dotted rhythm as the main part of the movement.

Few quartet movements can match the frenzied driving intensity of the final *presto*. When the second subject arrives, after a pause, in longer notes, it is no less driven and is soon accompanied by scurrying patterns of notes, mainly on the first violin. Finally, the speed heats up to a *prestissimo*, and the work ends with great force.

Programme notes courtesy of Making Music

Do come and join us downstairs after the concert for a cup of tea or coffee

Our forthcoming concerts

Sunday 24th November 2024, 3.00 pm, at Seaford Baptist Church, Belgrave Road, Seaford

One of our generation's leading cellists, **Raphael Wallfisch**, makes a welcome return to Seaford Music Society. Accompanied by pianist **Simon Callaghan**, he will be playing music by Schumann, Beethoven, Chopin and Rachmaninov.

Sunday 9th February 2025, 3.00 pm, at Seaford Baptist Church, Belgrave Road, Seaford

One of the highlights of our season, the annual visit from the **London Mozart Players Chamber Ensemble**. Joined this year by **Tim Lines** on clarinet and bass clarinet, they will be performing works by Mozart, York Bowen and Brahms.

Membership of the Society grants you free entry to these and all the remaining concerts this season without additional charge. Children and young adults (under 26) may also attend without charge (children under 14 must be accompanied by an adult). If you are not a member and would like to join, see our Treasurer, Paul Moore, at the desk in the entrance foyer. The cost of your ticket for today's concert will be credited to the cost of your annual membership subscription.

Single-concert tickets for non-members cost £20, and can be purchased in advance from Newberry Tully Estate Agents in Church Street; Seaford Tourist Information Centre; online through TicketSource; or from our Treasurer, Paul Moore.

Additional benefits for members of Seaford Music Society

Members may bring one guest to any of the concerts in our 2024-25 season of concerts, at a reduction of £3 off the single-ticket price, subject to the concert not having sold out.

On presentation of their current membership card, members may also enjoy the following benefits:

- A reduced price of £14 at any Haywards Heath Music Society concert in their 2024-25 season
- A reduced price of £17 at any Nicholas Yonge Society concert in their 2024-25 season
- A discount of £3 off the price of any Uckfield Music Club concert in their 2025 season (exact price to be confirmed)
- A discount of £2 off the price of any concert at the 2025 Lewes Festival of Song (subject to confirmation)

Tickets at these reduced prices are available at the door, on concert days only. Details of any reciprocal benefits that other organisations may make available will be published as soon as they are known.

Details of the concerts can be found on each organisation's website:

Uckfield Music Club:	www.uckfieldmusicclub.uk
Haywards Heath Music Society:	www.haywardsheathmusicsociety.org.uk
Nicholas Yonge Society:	www.nyslewes.org.uk
Lewes Festival of Song:	www.lewesfestivalofsong.co.uk