



Whitstable
Music
Society

Programme Notes
Saturday 28th January 2023

Our Next Concert will be on Saturday 25th February 2023 when Hannah Condliffe (Oboe) and Dominic Doutney (Piano) will perform works by Britten, Debussy, Poulenc, Ravel and others.

*We are very grateful to Roger and Heather Parry
who have sponsored tonight's concert.*

Programme Notes compiled by John Walker and kindly sponsored by Avril Philips

The Villers Quartet

Katie Stillman (Violin) | Tamak Higashi (Violin)
Carmen Flores (Viola) | Leo Melvin (Cello)

Named after Villiers Street in London, the Villiers Quartet encompasses the grand and iconic spirit of the extraordinary music tradition in Britain and has been praised for "exquisite ensemble playing" (Seen & Heard International), and their absolute "commitment and virtuosity" (The Sunday Times). The Villiers Quartet is the Quartet-in-Residence at the Jacqueline Du Pré Music Building at Oxford University.

Hailed as "Champions of British Music" (The Observer), the Villiers Quartet has become one of the most recognised quartets in the UK for the performance of British music. The Quartet has released acclaimed recordings of works by Elgar, Delius, Peter Racine Fricker, William Sterndale Bennett, David Matthews, and most recently music by William Alwyn and Kuljit Bhamra, MBE. In 2020 they gave the world premiere of the complete 1888 Delius string quartet, featuring movements in their original versions uncovered by Professor Daniel Grimley from Oxford University.



Whitstable
Music
Society

www.whitstablemusicsociety.org.uk

www.whitstablemusicsociety.org.uk

Mozart: String Quartet in E flat Major K428

*I. Allegro non troppo II. Andante con motto III. Menuetto & Trio
IV. Allegro Vivace*

The String Quartet No. 16 in E-flat major, K428, was composed in 1783. This is the third of the "Haydn Quartets, a set of six string quartets he wrote during his first few years in Vienna and later dedicated to Joseph Haydn.

The third movement is the movement of obvious homage to the older composer. The affect of the main section lies close to the particular flavour of Haydn's humour and spirit, opening with a guffawing figure, and tending to make jokes out of stuttering motions, as well as passages that get stuck and go around in circles before finding their way out again. By contrast, the central Trio section is pure Mozart. Written in a nearby minor key, and set against brooding bass pedal points, it presents a drifting, mesmeric tableau containing classically Mozartian paradoxes.

The Allegro Vivace starts with a sort of children's tease which is then abruptly interrupted by a blizzard of activity, tearing all over the map. The teasing continues in the next passages and becomes unpredictable. Later the melodies are graver, sweeter; it is Mozart's way, in his chamber music as in his operas, to get us chuckling, and then to transfix us with a moment whose tenderness is all the more affecting because it came out of nowhere.

Frederick Delius: Quartet 1888

*I. Allegro assai II. Allegro Vivace III. Allegro con molta espressione
IV. Finale: Agitato. Allegro*

Born in 1862 in Bradford of German parentage, Frederick Delius was sent by his father to Florida to be an orange grower. There he developed further his earlier musical interests and eventually persuaded his father to support him during a period of musical study at the Leipzig Conservatory, where he met Grieg. With continued paternal support he moved to Paris and in 1897 settled at Grez-sur-Loing with the painter Jelka Rosen, who later became his wife. His final years brought blindness and paralysis, the result of an early syphilitic infection, and his later music was dictated to the young English musician Eric Fenby, who became his amanuensis. Delius had a strong champion in the conductor Sir Thomas Beecham, who did much to bring his music before the British public. The musical language of Delius, with a characteristic harmony and lyricism of its own, often has a rhapsodic intensity of feeling.

The Delius String Quartet of 1888 is a four movement work and the first two movements were lost for many years before resurfacing at an auction in 2018 The complete quartet was then edited and reconstructed by Daniel M Grimley. Whilst this is youthful music, it is also ambitious, and one can hear the voice of the later Delius that we now know and

love. There is also a strong influence of Grieg present in some of the melodic passages. This is particularly noticeable in the first movement and in the rhythmic drive of the last movement.

*** Interval ***

Dvorak: Quartet in A Flat Major Op. 105

*1. Adagio ma non troppo. Allegro appassionato 2. Molto vivace
3. Lento e molto cantabile 4. Allegro non tanto*

During his early years as a professional musician, Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904) barely squeaked by as principal violist in the Provisional Theatre Orchestra of Prague, finding as much time as he could to compose. He encountered little success until 1877, when the influential music critic Eduard Hanslick encouraged him to send some scores to Johannes Brahms. Brahms was so delighted with what he received that he recommended Dvořák to his own publisher, Fritz Simrock, who immediately took Dvořák into his fold.

Like the Quartet in G major from the same period, the Quartet in A flat major is also a masterpiece of its genre. In this, his last chamber work, Dvorak brought together all the musical experience he had acquired and transformed the traditional quartet form into something exceptional. The overall tone of the work is positive and joyful, and faithfully reflects his spiritual disposition at the time.

The first movement begins with a slow introduction which, first in the cello, then gradually in the other instruments, anticipates the main theme.

The second movement is sometimes described as Dvorak's most inspiring scherzo. It is written in traditional three-part A-B-A form, the whole built around a single thematic focal point, namely a highly rhythmical, syncopated idea exposed in the introduction to part A.

The third movement is a prime example of typical Dvorakian lyricism and fervour. With the exception of the middle section, with its somewhat more sombre tone, the movement represents a wonderful arc of tranquillity and contentment.

The fourth movement crowns the work in an expression of spontaneous joy. It is constructed from three themes and betrays a strong resonance of Czech folklore, in particular, the polka. Towards the end, Dvorak gradually enhances the joyous tone of the movement, and the work culminates in dazzling euphoric style.
