



ST JOHN'S SMITH SQUARE

Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> October 2020, 3.00pm

THE  
*Revolutionary*  
DRAWING ROOM



*Beethoven – The Late Quartets, Concert 3*



## PROGRAMME

Beethoven - String Quartet in C# minor, Op. 131

- 1 Adagio ma non troppo e molto espressivo
- 2 Allegro molto vivace
- 3 Allegro moderato
- 4 Andante ma non troppo e molto cantabile – piu mosso – Andante moderato e lusinghiero – Adagio – Allegretto – Adagio ma non troppo e semplice – Allegretto
- 5 Presto
- 6 Adagio quasi un poco andante
- 7 Allegro

On completion of Op. 130, Beethoven had fulfilled his commission from Count Galitzin for three string quartets and might well have turned to other genres for his subsequent works. However, it is clear that certain creative ideas from the Galitzin quartets continued to preoccupy him. In particular, the four-note motif consisting of two pairs of semitones which opens Op. 132 and permeates the Grosse Fuge finale of Op. 130 seems to have become something of an *idée fixe* in his last years. An early version of the fugue subject which opens Op. 131 appears in a conversation book of December 1825. Six months later the quartet Op. 131 was completed, and the four-note motif of the opening fugue is developed throughout the work, transforming into melodies of widely varying characters.

The profound seriousness of the first movement segues into a quicksilver vivace in which the semitone intervals acquire a playful chromaticism within a major key. The short third movement imitates operatic recitative which leads to a cantabile duet between the two violins. In the course of the variation form fourth movement, this cantabile melody undergoes a series of character transformations, in turn lyrical, comic, pleading, bumbling, graceful and contemplative, until finally evoking the dance rhythms of the Viennese ballroom. The fifth movement is a scherzo in all but name; combining simple melodies with intricate polyphonic textures, Beethoven also contrasts pizzicato and sul ponticello sonorities with singing lines. The sixth movement begins with a poignant theme in the viola. The 1st violin takes up a subtly altered version of this theme before launching the quartet into a fearsome finale.

## Rachel Stott - String Quartet No 4 'Euphonia'

Euphonia was commissioned by Teesside Music Society with funding from the Ralph Vaughan Williams Trust and first performed on October 11<sup>th</sup> 2020 in Stokesley parish church. It was composed during the lockdown in London in May 2020 at a time when the members of the Revolutionary Drawing Room were not able to rehearse together, although they were able to practice in isolation in their own homes. These unusual circumstances influenced the form of the piece, which is in nine short movements. As each movement was completed, it was emailed to the players, who were finally able to rehearse it in July.

The subtitle Euphonia refers to a story recounted by a character in Berlioz's Evenings in the Orchestra. In this story Berlioz gives a detailed description of an imaginary town in the Hartz mountains in the year 2344. The entire population of this town, around twelve thousand people, engages in music as sole activity. The streets of the town bear the names of instruments, all the cellists, for example, living on Cello Street. Anyone who does not perform music devotes him or herself to the manufacture of instruments, to engraving scores or to studying acoustics. Children are trained in music from an early age, beginning with rhythmic exercises and later learning to sing melody and understand harmony. When they start to learn instruments, their tuition is of the highest standard. Their instrumental teachers have assistants who are expert in techniques such as pizzicato, harmonics and staccato playing. Euphonia, therefore, is a musical utopia. There is only one fly in the ointment; it is an autocracy, ruled by the Emperor of Germany. The citizens of Euphonia are not free.

In the world of 2344 which Berlioz describes, mankind has discovered a means of flight which enables intercontinental travel. However, this is not by aeroplane but hot air balloon. Balloon technology has advanced to such a degree that balloons can be steered and flights can cover thousands of miles. String Quartet No. 4 – 'Euphonia', imagines a scenario in which four string players from the city escape in a hot air balloon and set off to seek their fortunes in London.

**"...a formidable quartet, whose virtuosity is matched by their insightful attention to every detail."**

**EARLY MUSIC REVIEW**

## The Revolutionary Drawing Room



**The Revolutionary Drawing Room** is a period instrument ensemble specialising in the repertoire of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The name 'Revolutionary Drawing Room' refers to the revolutionary years in Europe between 1789 and 1848. The 'drawing room' (the name deriving from the earlier 'withdrawing room') was where chamber music was performed in Georgian times, in the houses of musicians and their patrons. The political upheavals of that time were matched by a breathless pace of change and the forging of new styles and forms in musical composition, as well as new models of musical instruments. The string players of the Revolutionary Drawing Room use original instruments and bows, or modern copies, creating a special sound derived from the beauty and flexibility of gut strings.

The ensemble, founded in 1990, has performed in Canada, Germany, Holland, Austria, Switzerland, Denmark and Ireland and across the UK, and recorded for CPO (Donizetti and Boccherini quartets) and the BBC (Mendelssohn Octet). Recent appearances have included concerts in the Gregynog, Maldon and Petworth Festivals and the Music and Beyond Festival in Ottawa. The quartet is currently completing a cycle of Beethoven's Quartets over four years at St. John's, Smith Square.

Recent recordings include Mozart's Clarinet Quintet with Colin Lawson on the Clarinet Classics label and 'A Viennese Quartet Party' on Omnibus Classics, A double-CD of flute quartets by Mozart and his contemporaries with Rachel Brown was released in September 2016 on the Uppernote label.

**Adrian Butterfield** is a violinist, director and conductor who specialises in performing music from 1600-1900 on period instruments. He is Musical Director of the Tilford Bach Festival and Associate Director of the London Handel Festival and regularly directs the London Handel Orchestra and London Handel Players as well as working as a guest soloist and director in Europe and North America. He has led The Revolutionary Drawing Room for 25 years.

He started playing string quartets at the age of seven at Pro Corda, a string chamber music course for children, and after 11 years as a student was a member of the coaching staff for over ten years.

The London Handel Players perform regularly at Wigmore Hall and throughout Europe and North America and made their debut at Carnegie Hall in 2014. Adrian's world premiere complete recordings of Leclair's first two Books of violin sonatas were released in 2009 and 2013 on Naxos Records.

He is Professor of Baroque Violin at the Royal College of Music in London, gives masterclasses in Europe and North America and has taught at Dartington and Pro Corda Baroque. He also directs an annual baroque project with the Southbank Sinfonia.

He has conducted all the major choral works of Bach as well as numerous works by Handel and his contemporaries and directed ensembles such as the Croatian Baroque Ensemble in Zagreb, the Malta Philharmonic Orchestra and the London Mozart Players.

Plans for the 2020/21 season include conducting Messiah with the London Mozart Players and Handel's *Il Trionfo* in the London Handel Festival, performing Bach's Brandenburg Concertos with the London Handel Players, Beethoven quartets with the Revolutionary Drawing Room and recording more Leclair sonatas for Naxos.

Hungarian violinist **Dominika Fehér** was born into a musical family and has always had a passion for chamber music. During her studies at the Franz Liszt Music Academy Budapest she had regular coaching with members of the Bartók and Kodály Quartets as well as János Rolla, the leader of the Franz Liszt Chamber Orchestra. Upon completing her Masters degree with highest honours, Dominika was awarded the Weingarten Scholarship to study with Oistrakh pupil Rimma Sushanskaya at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, where she later became a Junior Fellow as a member of the Bantock Quartet. Their performances included Steve Reich's 'Different Trains' and 'Triple Quartet'. While at the Conservatoire, she developed a passion for early music under the guidance of Margaret Faultless, Lucy Russell and Oliver Webber, and has become a sought-after performer specialising in historically informed performance practice of 17th – 19th century music.

Dominika has toured the world with leading early music ensembles, such as the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, English Baroque Soloists, Academy of Ancient Music, Early Opera Company and The Kings Consort, and recorded for Signum Classics, Resonus Classics and Convivium. She has appeared at the BBC Proms and also performed at the Royal Albert Hall, Wigmore Hall, Royal Opera House Covent Garden and Royal Festival Hall in London, Carnegie Hall in New York, La Scala in Milan, Konzerthaus in Vienna and National Centre For the Performing Arts in Beijing.

Dominika has broadcast live as soloist in Dittersdorf's Double Violin Concerto on BBC Radio 3 and given solo performances of works by Bach, Vivaldi, Mozart, Piazzolla, Schnittke and Malcolm Arnold. In 2019 she was a finalist in the Premio Bonporti International Baroque Violin Competition. She plays

a Rogeri violin kindly loaned to her by Simon Smewing through the Beare's International Violin Society.

**Rachel Stott** is a viola player and composer. She played for many years with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, London Classical Players and other period instrument orchestras while also exploring new music with Music Projects of London, Ensemble Exposé and the New Music Players. She performs with chamber music groups The Revolutionary Drawing Room, The Bach Players and Sopriola and explores repertoire for viola d'amore with both contemporary and baroque ensembles. Rachel's compositions have been performed at the London South Bank, Wigmore Hall, St John's Smith Square, in UK festivals and abroad in Europe, America and Japan. Her first string quartet, *Quiet Earth*, was commissioned for performance by the Fitzwilliam String Quartet at the 2002 Swaledale Festival and a second quartet, *The Enchanted Lyre*, was performed by the Dante String Quartet at the Wigmore Hall in 2005. *Winds Through a Symmetry*, composed for the Callino Quartet, was composed during a residency at the Banff Centre for the Arts in Canada in 2015, and her most recent quartet, *Euphonia*, was written for the Revolutionary Drawing Room during the lockdown in London, spring 2020. She has recently completed a commission from the Society for Strange and Ancient Instruments for their trumpet marine project.

Aside from her work as a viola player and composer, Rachel recently completed an MA in Creative Writing at Royal Holloway, University of London. She is interested in projects which combine musical and literary skills. She has written a series for BBC Radio 3 entitled *Harmony and Invention*, adapted the script for the Revolutionary Drawing Room's CD, *A Viennese Quartet Party*, and created the text for the recent Omnibus Classics release, *Odysseus and the Sorceress*.

**Ruth Alford** is a respected chamber musician and continuo-cellist who performs with many ensembles and chamber groups in London. She studied cello and chamber music with Bernard Gregor-Smith and the Lindsay Quartet at Manchester University, graduating with an honours degree in music and winning the Proctor Gregg Performance Award. Further studies followed at the Royal Academy of Music in London with David Strange, the Amadeus Quartet, Sidney Griller, Jenny Ward-Clarke and William Pleeth. During this time Ruth performed in a wide variety of musical genres ranging from solo recitals to jazz and music theatre. As well as the Revolutionary Drawing Room, Ruth plays in the period instrument chamber music ensemble DeNOTE and is a member of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, English Baroque Soloists and the Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique.

Indeed, Ruth still thrives on a broad musical diet from Baroque to Contemporary as well as sharing her enthusiasm for music through various educational outlets. She performs and records widely throughout Europe, the Far East and America as a principal player and continuo-cellist with the English Baroque Soloists, Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique and Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment as well as chamber ensembles including Brandenburg Consort, The Music Collection, Fiori Musicali, Florilegium, Configure8 and The Revolutionary Drawing Room.

\*\*\*\*\*

The final concert in this series takes place as follows:

***Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> October, 3pm***

Beethoven - String Quartet in Bb major Op. 130

Beethoven - 'Grosse Fuge' Op. 133

Tickets for all concerts are available from the St John's Smith Square website at [www.sjss.org.uk](http://www.sjss.org.uk).

All four concerts will be available to view online from the week of Monday 26<sup>th</sup> October. For further details please visit the St John's Smith Square website.

# St John's Smith Square

The coronavirus pandemic has had a devastating effect on people's lives and their livelihoods. St John's Smith Square is a registered charity, We receive no regular public funding with all our revenue provided for by hiring out the hall, ticket revenue, catering receipts and generous donations. When we closed our doors on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2020 we immediately lost over 80% of our income.

We are delighted to now be able to re-open and to start to share the joy of live music in these challenging times whilst providing a vital base for artists to once again perform. Ticket sales alone only cover approximately 30% of the operating costs for these concerts. If you have enjoyed today and are able to consider making an additional donation your support would be greatly appreciated. Details of ways in which you can help can be found on our website at:

<https://www.sjss.org.uk/donations>. You can also make a simple donation by TEXT MESSAGE:

**Text STJOHNS to 70450 to donate £10**

*Texts cost £10 plus one standard rate message*

## Thank you for your support.

In accordance with the requirements of Westminster City Council persons shall not be permitted to sit or stand in any gangway.

The taking of photographs and use of recording equipment is strictly forbidden without formal consent from St John's Smith Square.

Smoking is not permitted anywhere in St John's Smith Square.

Please ensure that all digital watch alarms, pagers, and mobile phones are switched off.

## Please stay in touch with us online

Twitter: @StJohnsSmithSq

Facebook: /StJohnsSmithSquare

You Tube: /StJohnsSmithSquare

Instagram: /StJohnsSmithSquare

Vimeo: /StJohnsSmithSquare

[info@sjss.org.uk](mailto:info@sjss.org.uk)

[www.sjss.org.uk](http://www.sjss.org.uk)

## Administration

Richard Heason – Director

Lydia Brookes – General Manager

Kelly Etridge – Box Office Manager

David Hackney – House Manager

Mary Clements – Bookkeeper

## Board of Trustees

Dr Martin Smith – Chairman

The Countess of Chichester – Vice-Chairman

Lady Brewer

Professor Peter Holgate

Claudia Pendred

Jessica Simor QC

**Registered Office:** St John's Smith Square Charitable Trust, St John's Smith Square, Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HA

Registered in England | Company No. 3028678 | Registered Charity No. 1045390