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2021-22**

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MUSIC *in* Peebles

presents



THE BRODSKY QUARTET

Krysia Osostowicz & Ian Belton (violins)

Paul Cassidy (viola), Jacqueline Thomas (cello)

Eastgate Theatre, Peebles, Sunday 6th February 2022 at 2.30 pm



75th ANNIVERSARY
SEASON
2021-2022

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2022 is a big year for both Music in Peebles and the Brodsky Quartet!

As regular supporters of Music in Peebles will know, this is our 75th season, with the first concert of Peebles Music Club (as it was then called) having taken place in the Autumn of 1947.

The Brodsky Quartet started life in the North-East England town of Middlesbrough in 1972, and this year celebrates its 50th anniversary. Brother and sister Michael and Jacqueline Thomas with friends Ian Belton and Alexander Robertson, all living within half a mile of each other, used to congregate at the Thomas family home after Youth Orchestra on Friday nights to play quartets; their enthusiasm and passion for the medium took hold.

A biographical note of the Brodsky Quartet can be found after the programme notes, and there is a fascinating history of the group on their website at:

<https://www.brodskyquartet.co.uk/group-history>

Jacqueline, the quartet's cellist since its formation, has written the following note to mark the occasion.

The Brodsky Quartet is celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2022, and we like to think we still look young enough for that to be almost unbelievable!

How has it been 50 years since we started this lifelong journey together? Looking back, I find it wonderful that 10- and 12-year olds were already infused with passion and belief in the longevity that is now playing out. Two of us remain from the beginning, one joined as we turned professional 40 years ago, and our new fourth member has had her own similar path in the endlessly rewarding and fascinating life that is the String Quartet!



*Jacqueline Thomas
Brodsky Quartet cellist*

So many people have helped us along the way: from our parents, through teachers, agents, sponsors, record companies and promoters, we have a lot to be thankful for. Many concert halls worldwide have loyally supported all our projects - London's Kings Place to Sydney Opera House, too many to mention. From entire cycles of Schubert, Shostakovich, Beethoven, Zemlinsky, Bartok, to the more unusual things we've thrown at them; song cycles - with a Who's-Who line-up of collaborators - theatrical pieces, educational projects and grand spectacles. Like the 400-strong performance of Britten's Noye's Fludde at Wimbledon Festival, bringing back fond memories of our own childhood involvement back in Middlesbrough 1971, not long after the work was written. Crazy late-night marathons at our favourite summer school, Dartington, which we first visited as students in '74 then returned as professionals at least twenty times over the years. ANAM in Melbourne, where students rose to the challenge of our demanding Side-by-Side projects, to be repeated in Mexico, Holland, Scotland and, coming up this year, Dartington once more.

Delfina Entrecañales, Neil Rackham, Patrick Fahey are amongst the generous friends who have helped us along the way, sponsoring concerts, acquiring instruments, funding recordings. Marjon Koenekoop, Maria Angeles de Scals amongst the many agents who have put in tireless work on our behalf, culminating in our long-term soulmate and fifth member, the wonderful Sarah Trelawny Ford.

We still gain a huge amount of pleasure in the endlessly fascinating vocation we have made our lives' work. Rehearsals can delve with manic intensity into the minute detail of our craft, as much now as when we were young and finding our collective voice. The passion remains in our hearts and, we hope, will still manage to thrill our audiences as we set off on this anniversary season!

PROGRAMME

Approx.
duration
(minutes)

Alexander Borodin (1833-1887)

Scherzo in D for String Quartet (1882)

12

Franz Peter Schubert (1797-1828)

String Quartet No. 13 in A minor, D.804 (1824)

("Rosamunde")

35

- i. Allegro ma non troppo
- ii. Andante
- iii. Menuetto. Allegretto - Trio
- iv. Allegro moderato

INTERVAL (20 minutes)

James MacMillan (b.1959)

For Sonny (2011)

5

Memento (1994)

4

Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975)

String Quartet No.9 in E flat, Op.117 (1964)

26

- i. Moderato con moto
- ii. Adagio
- iii. Allegretto
- iv. Adagio
- v. Allegro

Alexander Borodin (1833-1887)

Scherzo in D for String Quartet (1882)

A scherzo (Italian for joke), besides being the brisk transition to a well-set last movement, has the culinary function of a saucy little starter for a hungry man's meal. We do well to savour Borodin's stylish entrée.

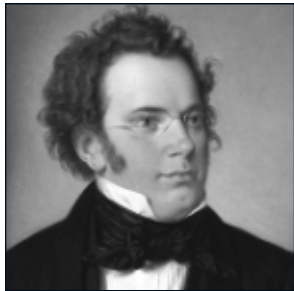


Amazingly, he was an amateur composer with a day job as professor of chemistry, and holder of official and academic posts. His musical output was small, but its consistent quality caused him to be invited to join 'The Five' (with Balakirev, Cui, Mussorgsky, Rimsky) where his only overtly Russian-flavoured work (and how!) was the opera *Prince Igor*. Very much a westernising Russian - he instigated a medical school for women - he could adopt the airy scherzo style of Mendelssohn which we hear in this piece, which could be a worthy encore to the Mendelssohn Octet, to which it owes some.

Another composer of that generation was our own Arthur Sullivan, also adept at the Mendelssohnian patter. Borodin's featherlight 6/8 rhythm and the gentle murmurs in the contrasting middle section, with its solo violin moment, seems ready to take on the wit and sentiment of WS Gilbert's verses.

Franz Peter Schubert (1797-1828)

String Quartet No. 13 in A minor, D.804 (1824) ("Rosamunde")



- i. Allegro ma non troppo
- ii. Andante
- iii. Menuetto. Allegretto - Trio
- iv. Allegro moderato

Schubert's concentration on chamber music, which he undertook after 1824, was fuelled by the preceding flow of songs, some of which contained themes for further development, some with motifs pointing to mood or context. The opening moments of this quartet are a case in point; two bars of bare accompaniment that hark back, at more ruminative tempo, to his early song *Gretchen am Spinnrade*, with second violin hovering around the mediant C natural. In a reprise, the minor key turns to major which, in Schubert's manner, tends to deepen the introspection. Switches from major to minor and from the 'Gretchen' spinning-wheel figure to unison assertions continue through this movement.

All four movements begin quietly. The slow movement reworks the incidental music for the theatre piece '*Rosamunde*', in the relaxed Viennese idiom which, before Schubert's stature was fully appreciated, was taken for his main contribution to music. This well-loved theme uses the dactyl-spondee (daa, da-da daa, daa) rhythm, as in Beethoven's Seventh Symphony allegretto, which Schubert loved.

His circle of friends and associates included, as well as the musicians who played the quartet, the violinist Schuppanzigh (to whom it was dedicated), singers of course, writers and the painter Moritz von Schwind who loved this third movement. Instead of a scherzo it is an atmospheric character piece which again uses an earlier song, this time *Die Götter Griechenlandes*, quoting the line "Schoene Welt wo bist du?" ("Beautiful world, where are you?"). The last movement is built round a sprightly foursquare dance in a gypsy style with 'Hungarian' grace notes. There is a contrasting distant-march theme that anticipates Mahler's characteristic drumbeat of melancholic undercurrent.

INTERVAL (20 minutes)

James MacMillan (b.1959)

These short pieces are both in memory of the dead. James MacMillan himself writes of them as follows.

For Sonny (2011)

This is a little miniature for string quartet written in memory of a little boy, the grandson of a friend, who died a few days after his birth.



Throughout, the first violin plays a simple fragment, like a nursery rhyme, repeating over and over again, pizzicato. The other instruments provide an ever-changing context for this little tune, sometimes accompanying it with easy harmonies, sometimes straying into stranger territory.

Memento (1994)

A brief movement for string quartet, *Memento* was written in memory of a friend, David Huntley, the representative of Boosey & Hawkes in the USA, who died in 1994. It was premiered at his memorial concert in New York by the Kronos Quartet. The music is slow, delicate and tentative and is based on the modality of Gaelic lament music and the Gaelic heterophony of psalm-singing in the Hebrides.

Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975)

String Quartet No.9 in E flat, Op.117 (1964)

- i. Moderato con moto
- ii. Adagio
- iii. Allegretto
- iv. Adagio
- v. Allegro



Shostakovich, normally so fluent and not given to changes or revisions, wrote this work twice. He burnt the first attempt in a stove in 1961 “in an attack of healthy self-criticism” he wrote, implying that it turned out well in the end, “the second such case in my creative practice. I once did the similar trick of burning manuscripts in 1926”.

The whimsical character of the opening persists throughout the quiet first movement. Its hushed dynamic, never rising above mezzo-piano, prepares for the homophonic textured adagio which opens with a viola recitative reminiscent of the sixth movement of Beethoven’s C sharp minor quartet, Op.136. The allegretto third movement is a fleet-footed scherzo in a wry humour, influenced by jazz and with an adaptation verging on addiction to the “Lone Ranger” gallop from Rossini’s William Tell Overture that seems to have fascinated the complicated Russian composer. The tension builds up as the increasing dissonance accentuates the relentless pace.

The same falling semitone figure links all the movements except first to second, which are played without breaks. So we find ourselves in a strange place by the second adagio, a recitative or speech-rhythm meditation alternating with vicious-sounding pizzicato chords from the cello accompanied by a tremor on the other strings. These recur in the exuberant tour-de-force of a finale, only three minutes long but again saturated with the William Tell tune transfigured.

Programme notes by Philip Hutton

THE BRODSKY QUARTET



Since forming in 1972, the Brodsky Quartet have performed over 3,000 concerts on the major stages of the world and have released more than 70 recordings. A natural curiosity and an insatiable desire to explore has propelled the group in a number of artistic directions and continues to ensure them not only a prominent presence on the international chamber music scene but also a rich and varied musical existence. Their energy and craftsmanship have attracted numerous awards and accolades worldwide, while their ongoing educational work provides a vehicle to pass on experience and stay in touch with the next generation.

Throughout their career of nearly five decades, the Brodsky Quartet have enjoyed a busy international performing schedule, and have extensively toured the major festivals and venues throughout Australasia, North and South America, Asia, South Africa and Europe, as well as in the UK..

Over the years, the Brodsky Quartet have undertaken numerous performances of the complete cycles of quartets by Schubert, Beethoven, Tchaikovsky, Britten, Schoenberg, Zemlinsky, Webern and Bartok. It is, however, the complete Shostakovich cycle that has now become synonymous with their name: their 2012 London performance of the cycle resulted in their taking the

prestigious title 'Artistic Associate' at London's Kings Place and, in October 2016, releasing their second recording of the cycle, this time live from the Muziekgebouw Amsterdam.

The Brodsky Quartet have always had a busy recording career and currently enjoy an exclusive and fruitful relationship with Chandos Records. Releases on the label include 'Petits Fours' – a celebratory album of 'Encore' pieces arranged exclusively by the quartet for their 40th anniversary – the complete quartets of Shostakovich, and the Elgar String Quartet and Piano Quintet with Martin Roscoe. Their album of the Late String Quartets of Beethoven was released to coincide with their performance of the repertoire at Kings Place and their most recent release, Homage to Bach, comprises the phenomenal premiere recordings of Bach's three Violin Sonatas arranged by Paul Cassidy.

The Quartet are also regularly recorded for television and radio with their performances broadcast worldwide and have been the recipients of several awards for recordings, including the Diapason D'Or and the CHOC du Monde de la Musique, as well as receiving a Royal Philharmonic Society Award for their outstanding contribution to innovation in programming.

As well as partnering many top classical artists for their performances and recordings, the quartet have made musical history with ground-breaking collaborations with some of the world's leading artists across many genres and have commissioned and championed many of the world's most respected composers.

The quartet have taught at many international chamber music courses and have held residencies in several music institutes including, at the start of their career, the first such post at the University of Cambridge and latterly at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, where they are visiting International Fellows in Chamber Music. They were awarded Honorary Doctorates by the University of Kent and an Honorary Fellowship at the University of Teesside, where they were founded.

The quartet took their name from the great Russian violinist Adolf Brodsky, the dedicatee of Tchaikovsky's violin concerto and a passionate chamber musician.



Praise for the Brodsky Quartet's latest recorded cycle of the Shostakovich String Quartets

'The performances as a whole achieve a rare degree of intensity.'

5 star review, BBC Music Magazine, December 2016

'...what may well be the Brodsky Quartet's crowning recorded achievement.'

Julian Haylock, The Strad, Jan 2017

The Brodsky Quartet last appeared in Peebles in October 2012, as part of their 40th anniversary celebrations (if you were there, you will certainly remember the 'Wheel of 4tunes'!). The line-up this time is the same apart from violinist **Daniel Rowland**, who left the Quartet in 2018 to concentrate on his solo work. The quartet themselves take up the story....

".... we were lucky to find a wonderful replacement [for Daniel] in **Gina McCormack**. We spent two great years together, though sadly one of them was marred by the pandemic, and then Gina was hit with the devastating news that her husband is suffering from Motor Neurone Disease. She reluctantly took the decision to give up the Quartet so that she can concentrate all her efforts on caring for him.

"Despite the huge sadness surrounding these circumstances, the break in concerts forced by the pandemic did at least afford us the time to regroup. The stars have aligned once more in bringing us the wonderful **Kryisia Osostowicz**. Kryisia has spent her professional life immersed in chamber music, including 25 years with the Dante String Quartet. Having known each other since student days, our similar journeys have converged with serendipity at this new phase in the Brodsky Quartet's life as we approach our 50th anniversary season. Welcome Kryisia!"



Kryisia Osostowicz
plays a violin made by
Francesco Goffriller, 1720

Ian Belton's violin is by
Giovanni Paolo Maggini,
c.1615



Paul Cassidy plays on
'*La Delfina*' viola, c.1720,
courtesy of
Sra. Delfina Entrecanales

Jacqueline Thomas's cello
is by Thomas Perry of
Dublin, 1785.



MUSIC *in* Peebles

NEXT CONCERT

Tuesday 1 March 2022 at 7.30pm in the Eastgate Theatre

LEON McCAWLEY



Haydn	Keyboard Sonata No.53 in E minor, Hob.XVI:34
Mozart	Rondo for piano No.3 in A minor. K.511
Mozart	Piano Sonata No.18 in D major ("Hunt") K.576
Schubert	Piano Sonata No.20 in A major, D.959

After Leon McCawley's performance for us in 2018, there were immediate calls for a speedy return visit, so we are delighted to welcome him back with a recital of masterworks from the Classical era through to the dawn of Romanticism, repertoire in which he has few peers.

The first half brings sonatas by Haydn and Mozart, the latter being his final sonata and nicknamed "The Hunt" for its horn-like opening. Between the two sonatas comes the melancholy Rondo No.3, also by Mozart.

Schubert's penultimate Piano Sonata D.959 is one of three that he wrote after Beethoven's death and only three months before Schubert's own death. Pianist Jonathan Biss called the *andantino* 2nd movement "a composed hallucination", whilst the final Rondo, based on the finale of Beethoven's Sonata No.16 in G, reflects Schubert's admiration for the great master.

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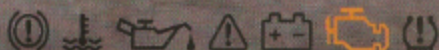


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In its 75th season, Music in Peebles faces unprecedented uncertainty.



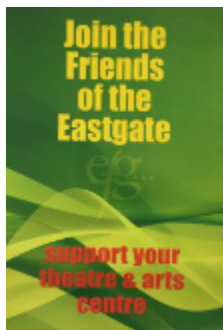
We remain committed to presenting high-quality live concerts. However, until audiences return to pre-pandemic levels, there is no doubt that our ability to maintain the number and quality of concerts will be under pressure.

Your donation, large or small, will help us to go on bringing outstanding musicians and the finest music to Peebles through the uncertain times ahead.

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MUSIC *in* Peebles

Patron: Gina McCormack

2021-2022 Season

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Tuesday 5 October 2021 at 7.30pm

CARMENCO

Tuesday 2 November 2021 at 7.30pm

JAMES WILLSHIRE

Tuesday 16 November 2021 at 7.30pm

GAIA

Monday 13 December 2021 at 7.30pm

KWON-LIM DUO

Sunday 9 January 2022 at 2.30pm

PATRON'S CONCERT

Sunday 6 February 2022 at 2.30pm

BRODSKY QUARTET

Tuesday 1 March 2022 at 7.30pm

LEON McCRAWLEY

Tuesday 29 March 2022 at 7.30pm

AILIE ROBERTSON

Tuesday 12 April 2022 at 7.30pm

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