

SUNDAY 6 JUNE
12.30PM & 2.30PM



DAVID ADAMS violin
LUCY GOULD violin
GARY POMEROY viola
KATE GOULD cello
TIM HORTON piano

CONCERTS 5a & 5b

PIANO QUARTET IN B FLAT, OP. 18 WEBER



STRING QUARTET IN F, OP.96 AMERICAN DVOŘÁK

Piano Quartet in B flat, Op. 18
Carl Maria von Weber (1786–1826)

Allegro
Adagio ma non troppo
Menuetto. Allegro
Finale. Presto

Carl Maria von Weber is a composer whose place in musical history is often overlooked, despite the enduring popularity of a number of his works, notably the opera *Der Freischütz* and his original and highly virtuosic works for clarinet. He can take his place on a list of composers of the era who led all-too-brief lives (Schubert, Mendelssohn and Chopin, for instance), dying in London in 1826 just short of his fortieth birthday. To put his music in context, this Piano Quartet is an early work from 1809, written in Stuttgart when Weber was in his early twenties. Around the same time in Vienna, Beethoven was writing his fifth and sixth symphonies, and Schubert, who was twelve years old, had just started music school. Weber's music, like that of Beethoven and Schubert, forges an organic link between Classicism and Romanticism.

That Weber wanted his music to look to the future is illustrated by his habit of writing the slow movement of a work first (he showed the Adagio of this Quartet to his employer as far back as 1807, two years before the work was completed), often followed by the finale. Indeed, there are several works left in this state, entitled 'Adagio and Rondo'. Weber's first instinct therefore was not to be drawn to the first movement sonata structure, so ubiquitous in the Classical period; even in his sonata writing, Weber made the form his own. Here for instance, after an opening figure that is almost Mozartean in its order, and a succession of richly melodic themes that sometimes recall the opera stage, we find a brand new radiant melody announced on the viola amidst the storms of the central development section.



The Adagio is certainly original in its conception, being far more concerned with texture, character and dramatic oppositions than theme or melody. There are certainly moments of impassioned *cantabile* (singing style), but nothing presented in the manner of a 'main theme'. Rather, there are a succession of boldly-etched sections that make great play of the range of the ensemble and the expressive possibilities within. Weber has not cast off the Classical world to such an extent that he can do without a Minuet, but this one is full of character and drama – certainly not danceable, even by the most skilled of ball guests. The trio section makes up for this with a (tongue-in-cheek?) waltz, where the forceful Minuet butts in half way through. The Finale starts with a theme that is irresistible for contrapuntal treatment, but Weber resists this temptation for almost the entire movement; what follows is a hummable musical comedy from the *opera buffa* stage, to send any audience home with a spring in their step. Finally, at the outset of the coda, we are given the exhilarating counterpoint that crowns a wonderfully exuberant work.

String Quartet in F, Op. 96 *American*
Antonín Dvořák (1841 – 1904)

Allegro ma non troppo
Lento
Molto vivace
Finale: Allegro ma non troppo

For a work that contains so much seemingly carefree melodic inspiration and inspired simplicity, Dvořák's *American* Quartet has become the subject of a surprising amount of argument and controversy. The title was not the composer's, nevertheless for many years one could read about the Native American influence of the melodies based on pentatonic scales (where five notes are used within the space of an octave, rather than the diatonic seven) and drum beats of the frequent ostinato (repetitive, literally 'obstinate') accompaniments. One would be told of the spirit of African American song in the plaintive slow movement, and in less enlightened times the Quartet was often casually referred to by a nickname that it is not now appropriate to put in print: even as late as 1939 in a BBC radio broadcast. Today, in our spirit of re-evaluation, it has been pointed out that there is scant evidence for any of these associations; attributing such influences to music that is not really African American, or that of the indigenous American people, subjugates these voices when they are authentically heard. At least there seems to still be a consensus that the F Major Quartet, Op. 96 is a wonderful invention, full of radiant character and immediately lovable tunes.

The Quartet is certainly American in one sense, having been composed whilst Dvořák was spending the summer of 1893 with his family in the small town of Spillville, Iowa. His wife and children had travelled to join him for the holidays, Dvořák having been lured to New York the previous year by an extremely lucrative appointment as head of the National Conservatory of Music. He arrived in



Spillville having recently completed his Symphony *From the New World* in E minor, Op. 95 where the title was Dvořák's own, and he sent a letter shortly after the Quartet's composition, stating that: 'as for my new Symphony, the F major String Quartet and the Quintet (composed here in Spillville) – I should never have written these works 'just so' if I hadn't seen America. There were many African American students at the National Conservatory, one of whom – Harry T Burleigh – recalled several sessions in which he and others would sing spirituals to Dvořák. Who is to say that these influences did not find their way into the score of the Quartet?

On the other hand, Dvořák composed the Quartet surrounded by Bohemians in the thriving expat neighbourhood of Spillville. He later commented that 'when I wrote this quartet in the Czech community of Spillville in 1893, I wanted to write something for once that was very melodious and straightforward, and dear Papa Haydn kept appearing before my eyes.' He was understandably more than a little homesick, and the folk songs of his homeland share certain characteristics with some 'American' music; for instance, there are numerous pieces written by Dvořák before he travelled to America which make liberal use of the pentatonic scale or an accentuated short note, which are usually attributed to a Czech folk music root.

But if one puts these and other associations aside (did the train-loving Dvořák imagine a locomotive in the driving ostinato of the last movement, or depict the annoying scarlet tanager in the Scherzo, who would quartet is a work of rare genius in free-flowing form. The first movement begins with a nod to Smetana's E minor Quartet *From My Life*, with its prominent viola solo, before a serene, vocally-inspired second theme arrives, marked *ppp*. Whatever the inspiration for the soulful second movement, its melody traverses an ever changing harmonic landscape with touching effect, before the vibrant Scherzo restores the good humour and unbuttoned spirit. The finale handles the four instruments deftly, during a toe-tapping dance that cannot fail to raise a smile. Indeed Dvořák's final inscription in the score echoes this sentiment: 'Finished on 10th June 1893 in Spillville. I'm satisfied. Thank God. It went quickly.'

The Weber is supported by Colin Webster

The biographies for individual performers can be found on our Festival website:
www.winchesterchambermusic.com/london-bridge-trio/ &
www.winchesterchambermusic.com/guest-artists/

TEA • COFFEE • LUNCH • WINE • GIN • COCKTAILS



CABINET ROOMS

WINCHESTER

Relax with a nice cup of tea, coffee or G&T in
Winchester's stylish café-bar for grown-ups.
Find us opposite the theatre on Jewry Street.



WWW.CABINETROOMS.COM
A LONG OVERDUE TASTE OF NORMALITY

2 DE LUNN BUILDINGS, JEWRY STREET, SO23 8SA
01962 866480 WINCHESTER@CABINETROOMS.COM

WINCHESTER
CHAMBER
MUSIC
FESTIVAL

SAVE THE DATE

28 APRIL – 2 MAY 2022
LONDON BRIDGE TRIO
AND GUESTS

www.winchesterchambermusic.com

KEEP UP TO DATE

with all things musical
by visiting
winchestermusic.info

Home of Classical Music
Events and Festivals in
and around Winchester



THANK YOU

Winchester Chamber
Music Festival would like to
thank the following funders,
without whom the 2021 Festival
could not have gone ahead:

CAVATINA CHAMBER MUSIC TRUST
RAINBOW DICKINSON TRUST
SCHUBERT ENSEMBLE
THISTLE TRUST
WINCHESTER BID



THANK YOU

INDIVIDUAL DONATIONS FROM:

George Gould, Kate's dear late uncle – in support of the cost of a film maker and other venue costs

Cranbourne Farm Concert Society – in support of Concert 3

Richard and Caroline York – in support of Concert 4

Colin Webster – in support of the Weber in Concert 5

All Festival Friends

The Trustees owe a huge debt of gratitude to the Festival Friends' community who have been wonderfully loyal and supportive since Covid struck at the beginning of last year. 'Not only has subscription income held up in the absence of a 2020 Festival but refunded ticket money and other donations have enabled us to compensate artists and sponsor piano hire and various concerts. Without this generosity, the socially distanced 2021 Festival would not have been viable.

Thank you so much.

Richard Thomas, Friends' Coordinator

We also wish to thank:

Cabinet Rooms, Gervades Dry Cleaners, The Home Shop Ltd

FESTIVAL TEAM

Artistic Director

Kate Gould

Festival Manager

Lucy Bending

Friends Team

Richard Thomas,
Tim & Maureen Cox

Concert Manager

Charlotte Templeman

Film makers

Patrick Allen (Concerts
in Winchester)

Andrew Smilie (Schools film
and Open Rehearsal)

Education Animateur

Sam Glazer

Programme notes

Daniel Tong

Winchester Chamber Music

Festival Trustees

Christine Chamberlain

Kate Gould

Carol Orchard

Richard Thomas

Hilary Webster

Independent Examiner

Jeanette Whelton

Design

The Graphic Design House

Website build

Realising Designs

Piano hire

Jacques Samuel

Piano tuning

Chris Allain

Venue

St Paul's Church, with
particular thanks to Katy
Palacio for all her tireless
work behind the scenes

Schools

All Saints

St Swithun's

To contact the Festival, please email

manager@winchesterchambermusic.com | www.winchesterchambermusic.com