## Ilkley Concert Club



King's Hall Wednesday 5th October 2016



FRITH PIANO QUARTET
&
CHI-CHI NWANOKU



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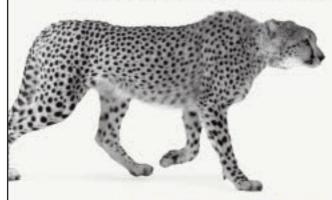
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#### **TONIGHT'S PROGRAMME**

#### **Beethoven**

Piano Quartet in E Flat Major op.16 (Last performance at ICC 23/01/1963)

#### **Hummel**

Piano Quintet in E Flat Major op.87
(First performance at ICC)

#### **INTERVAL**

(Coffee, tea and bar facilities available in the Winter Garden)

#### Schubert

Piano Quintet in A Major D.667 'The Trout' (Last performance at ICC 23/04/1997)

#### **Ilkley Concert Club**

Registered Charity No. 506886

The Club records its appreciation of the invaluable assistance and support given by the City of Bradford Metropolitan Council.



#### **PROGRAMME NOTES**

BEETHOVEN PIANO QUARTET in E Flat Major op 16 (1770-1820) Grave – Allegro Andante Cantabile Rondo. Allegro

Written in 1796, this delightful work started life as a quintet for piano and wind instruments. With an eye to commercial potential, Beethoven's publisher persuaded him to make an arrangement for piano and strings. Sales ploy or not, Beethoven undertook the commission with great care, essentially recomposing the work; since strings can play continuously – unlike winds – their parts are much more extensive than the parallel wind parts of the original piece. The confidence of the arrangement shows the young Beethoven reaching the height of his powers in the years before the onset of the deafness which would cast such a shadow over the remainder of his life. An account survives of the first performance during which the irrepressible Beethoven delighted the audience – and infuriated his colleagues – by abruptly breaking off to deliver extensive and dazzling improvisations at the piano.

The quartet opens with an unsettling, solemn introduction which leads straight into a virtuosic and elegant allegro with the main subject given to the piano. The tender and lyrical slow movement provides opportunities for each of the instruments to enjoy heartfelt solos. The finale, a rollicking, high-energy rondo, is dominated by the piano that enjoys a mini-cadenza prefiguring the great piano concertos, the first of which dates from the same year as this quartet.

(Duration: 27 minutes)

HUMMEL (1778-1837)

# PIANO QUINTET in E Flat Major op.87 Allegro e risoluto assai Menuetto. Allegro con fuoco Largo Finale. Allegro agitato

Although overshadowed by the mighty presence of his Viennese contemporary, Beethoven (with whom he had a stormy relationship – his wife had once been the object of one of Beethoven's many unhappy infatuations), Johann Nepomuk Hummel enjoyed a long career as a pianist, teacher and composer of piano and chamber music. Unlike his famous rival, he never composed a symphony. Beethoven aside, Hummel's musical style, which has been described as existing "somewhere between Mozart [from whom he had received lessons as a child of 8] and Chopin", influenced his progressive musical colleagues, in particular Schubert, who dedicated his last three piano sonatas to Hummel. Indeed, the E Flat Piano Quartet which we will hear tonight led directly to the composition of Schubert's "Trout" Quintet; the unusual combination of piano, violin, viola, cello and double bass was adopted by Schubert to create a companion piece for friends wishing to perform Hummel's work. Following his death, however, his reputation quickly faded; this is only the fourth time in its history that the Concert Club has programmed a work by Hummel.

Although it was not published until 1822, this Piano Quartet is an early work written at the age of only 24. Unusually, the work remains in the same key for all four movements and the overall mood is genial, closer to that of a serenade or divertimento than the seriousness of a string quartet. The first movement opens with a four note motto theme, which is developed energetically across a wide harmonic range. The second movement Menuetto is marked "con fuoco" ("with fire") but the cheerful mood is maintained. The slow movement is

very brief – little more than an introduction to the finale – and consists of a group of harmonically ambiguous chords followed by a simple but attractive melody. The "agitato" of the finale is mainly provided by the piano as Hummel uses the rondo format to take the music through a variety of contrasting emotions before the main theme returns to drive the quintet to its thrilling conclusion.

(Duration: 19 minutes)

#### INTERVAL

 $(Coffee, \ tea\ and\ bar\ facilities\ available\ in\ the\ Winter\ Garden)$ 

SCHUBERT (1797-1828)

PIANO QUINTET in A Major D.667
Allegro vivace
Andante
Scherzo. Presto
Andantino - Allegretto
Finale. Allegro giusto

Schubert is said to have composed his beautiful song, *Die Forelle* (The Trout), late one night in 1818 after sharing several bottles of the strong Hungarian red wine, Szekszard, with a friend. He had, in fact, composed it a year earlier and copied it out for his unsuspecting friend from memory. However, it is from such anecdotes that we derive the image of Schubert as a "guileless child romping among giants" (in Schumann's words), an image which belies the serious study, hard work and inner struggles which lay behind the beguiling and seemingly effortless music of the brief, carefree years before 1822, when the shadow of illness darkened much of the music of his last years.

Schubert uses "The Trout" as the theme for the six variations which form the penultimate movement of his piano quintet. The work employs the same instrumentation as that by Hummel, heard in the first part of tonight's concert. The quintet was written as a gift for Sylvester Paumgartner, a wealthy mine owner, amateur musician and Hummel enthusiast in the town of Steyr, some 90 miles west of Vienna, where Schubert spent an idyllic summer holiday in 1819.

The first movement sets the joyous tone of the whole work, alternating engaging rustic melodies with more pensive passages. The next, slow movement has three themes, the second of which is shared by the viola and cello; a cloud passing briefly across the bright summer sky. The third movement is a breathless scherzo which scurries past in little more than four minutes. Following the "Trout" variations, the finale is an energised allegro which brings Schubert's "holiday poem" to an emphatic conclusion.

(Duration: 38 minutes)

Programme notes © C.N. Lane

#### Frith Piano Quartet with Chi-Chi Nwanoku

Benjamin Frith piano Robert Heard violin
Louise Williams viola Richard Jenkinson cello
Chi-chi Nwanoku double bass

It was the wealth of wonderful music written for the piano quartet medium that inspired four friends and colleagues to form the **Frith Piano Quartet** back at the turn of the millennium. As well as performing the complete piano quartets of Mozart, Brahms, Dvorak and Fauré, the ensemble has been keen to promote lesser known gems by Mendelssohn, Weber, Mahler, Richard Strauss, Frank Bridge and Arthur Bliss.

It is in this spirit of exploration of works overlooked by posterity that the Frith performs the Piano Quartet by Hummel for us tonight. The group's gift for imaginative programming will be no surprise to Ilkley Concert Club members, who will recall the their last visit to Ilkley in January 2014 when they presented a sparkling evening of music by Suk, Martinu and Dvorak.

Of course all four players are occupied in various forms of music making as you will see below. But Ben tells me that since last appearing here, the Frith Piano Quartet has had a residency at the Lake District Summer Music Festival giving concerts and masterclasses. They have given tours of Scotland, appeared at the Wigmore Hall and at King's Place in London, where they performed works by Anthony Turnage, and have only just returned from performing at the Orpheus and Bacchus Festival in Bordeaux.

Their recording of early masterpieces by Walton, Lekeu and Bridge received excellent reviews and will hopefully be available to buy at the end of the evening.

Benjamin Frith studied the piano with Dame Fanny Waterman from the age of ten. Winner of the Rubinstein and Busoni International Piano Competitions, he has performed concertos with the Hallé, the Warsaw Philharmonic, the CBSO, the Israel Philharmonic and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra – with whom he will be performing Rachmaninov's Variations on a Theme of Paganini early next year. He has given recitals across Europe, the Middle and Far East and Australia. His Naxos recordings of music by Field and Mendelssohn are renowned worldwide.

**Robert Heard** studied at Cambridge and RAM before joining the RPO. In 1990, after a spell at the Philharmonia he was invited to join the CBSO by

Sir Simon Rattle as Associate Leader. A member of the string trio, Pro Musica with Richard and Louise, he now has a freelance career in order to pursue agricultural interests!

**Louise Williams** began her career as a violinist and a founder member of the Endellion Quartet but was diverted to the viola in order to join the Chilingirian Quartet. She has devoted much of her time encouraging young musicians and to that end has sat on the Munster Trust for many years. She plays a 1616 viola by the Amati brothers.

**Richard Jenkinson** won cello and chamber music prizes while studying at the Guildhall. In 1998 he was appointed Principal Cello with CBSO. His CD with Ben Frith on the EM label, '*The Moon Sails Out*' was released last year to critical acclaim, and features works by Ivor Gurney, Cyril Scott and Ian Venables. Richard is also in popular demand as an orchestral conductor. He plays a cello by G.B.Grancino of Milan circa 1662.

Chi-chi Nwanoku was born in London of Nigerian and Irish parents. She spent two years of her early childhood living in Nigeria and continues to visit at every opportunity with her children. Her musical education began when she was seven and discovered, on a neighbour's piano, an exciting world of sounds and possibilities. Around the same time Chi-chi was spotted by an athletics coach and took intense training as a 100 metre sprinter! Within ten years she reached national competition level, but a knee injury forced an abrupt halt to this career path. Continuing to pursue her passion for music, she took up the double bass at the age of 18 and studied at The Royal Academy of Music in London, and in Rome with Franco Petracchi. She has developed a worldwide reputation as one of the finest exponents of her instrument today.

Chi-chi is Principal Double Bass and a founder member of the OAE and Endymion Ensemble. As well as being Professor of Double Bass Historical Studies at RAM, she is a frequent broadcaster on radio and television, and has been seen recently on television as a judge on the All Together Orchestra Challenge. A tireless promoter of musical education and advancement for young coloured musicians in the classical field, Chi-chi founded the Europe's first professional all-black orchestra, Chineke which performed at the Royal Festival Hall last month. She was awarded the MBE for services to Music in the Queen's Birthday Honours in 2011. Chi-chi plays a unique historical instrument built by Nicolas Amati (Cremona) dated 1631.

(Biographical notes compiled by Sarah Warnes)

#### **CLUB NOTES**

#### A WARM WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

Each person who has a Season Ticket automatically becomes a Member of Ilkley Concert Club (ICC). We have 21 New Members this Season, rather fewer than usual. This does not reflect falling interest in ICC: quite the opposite. We had very few resignations and consequently there are over 30 people on the waiting list to become Members next Season. We do hope you will enjoy this Season's music and that of many more to come. The fact that all the seats available for Season Ticket holders are sold before the Season starts means that the Concert Planning Group can be confident of the income available to book artists for future seasons.

#### **AGM**

Please note the AGM will be held in King's Hall before the next concert on Wednesday 2 November 2015 at 7pm. This is your organisation and we welcome your input and views.

#### **RETURNED TICKETS & REFUNDS**

Season Ticket Holders – please do let us know if you can't come to a concert. Jennie Rundle organises the sale of any returned ticket(s) that you are unable to use. ALL she needs is an email or phone call and she will do her best to resell your ticket(s). Many New Members joined ICC because they were able to appreciate its pleasures by buying seats for individual concerts.

If you intend to give the refund to ICC, as many do, please let Jennie know when you email or phone her – grateful thanks for those donations.

If you intend to collect your refund, please make sure you collect them at the end of the following concert, but please let Jennie know if there is a reason you are unable to do this and she can make an alternative arrangements.

Mrs Jennie Rundle – icc.jennie@gmail.com or 01943 609 045 10am to 7 pm only please (10am to 1pm on Concert Day)

#### **COLLECTION FOR Help Musicians UK**

Thanks to the generosity of Members, the collection made at the end of the May concert for this charity (formerly Musicians Benevolent Fund) was just over £1,166. According to Bob Ryan, our Hon. Treasurer at the time, the tax that they can reclaim on this will bring their total to just over £1,300.

#### **RECOMMENDED RECORDINGS**

**Beethoven:** An excellent Hyperion disc, CDA67745 (full price), includes the Piano Quartet and Beethoven's reworking of the C minor Piano Trio, the String Quintet Op.104. Also included is the charming "Eyeglass Duo" for Viola and Cello. The recording quality is up to Hyperion's usual high standard.

**Hummel and Schubert:** Both works are included on another Hyperion CD, Helios CDH55427 (budget price). The Schubert Ensemble of London is outstanding, and is very well recorded.

An interesting alternative for the Hummel, on period instruments, is on a very cheap Brilliant Classics disc, which includes Piano Quintets by Dussek and Onslow. The excellent performances are by the Nepomuk Fortepiano Quintet.

The reliable label Naxos has a lovely performance of the "Trout Quintet" on 8.550658 (budget price). Jenó Jandó (piano) and the Kodaly Quartet also perform Schubert's Adagio and Grand Concertante on this well recorded CD.

Raymond Waud. raywaud@gmail.com

#### **NEXT CONCERT - WEDNESDAY 2ND NOVEMBER 2016 AT 8PM**

#### **Coull String Quartet**

#### Mozart

String Quartet in E flat major K428

#### **Dvorak**

Cypresses (selection)

#### **Beethoven**

String Quartet in B flat major op.130 with *Grosse Fuge* 



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