

Ilkley Concert Club



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BRODSKY QUARTET with **LAURA VAN DER HEIJDEN** cello



Wednesday 5th October 2022
King's Hall

PROGRAMME

Bach (arr Paul Cassidy)

Violin sonata in C major, BWV1005

Shostakovich

String quartet no. 8 in C minor, op 110

INTERVAL

Schubert

String quintet in C major, D956

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PROGRAMME NOTES

JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH Violin sonata in C major (1685-1750) BWV1005

(Arranged for string quartet by Paul Cassidy)

Adagio

Fuga

Largo

Allegro assai

Bach's six sonatas and partitas for solo violin (BWV1001-1006) followed a well-established musical tradition of unaccompanied works by such composers as Johann Walther (1654-1748) and Heinrich von Biber (1644-1704). He almost certainly took inspiration from his friendship with Giuseppe Torelli, a famous violinist and conductor working in Dresden while Bach was *Kapellmeister* at nearby Weimar. The earliest surviving autograph manuscript of BWV1001-1006 is dated 1720 during Bach's Cöthen period, although the actual dates of composition (often difficult to establish where Bach's works are concerned) may go back to his Weimar period or to the early days of his tenure in Cöthen.

The three partitas in the set (BWV1002, 1004, 1006) reflect the general layout of the *sonata da camera* (or 'chamber sonata'), which comprise a suite of movements derived from dances, such as the *bourée*, *gavotte* and *sarabande*, whereas the sonatas (BWV1001, 1003, 1005) are in a uniform four-movement pattern that mirrors the structure of the Baroque *sonata da chiesa* (or 'church sonata'). These movements comprise an intense and reflective slow movement, a fugue, a more tuneful slow movement and a lively finale and the set as a whole is recognised as being the pinnacle of Bach's writing for solo violin. Although he was best known as a keyboard virtuoso (he certainly played these pieces on the clavichord with additional improvised harmonies), Bach was also a highly skilled violinist. His son, Carl Philippe Emanuel Bach confirmed this, writing to a correspondent: 'From his youth up to fairly old age he played the violin purely and penetratingly, and thus kept the orchestra in best order, much better than he could have done from the harpsichord. He understood completely the possibilities of all stringed instruments.'

The introductory *Adagio* of BWV1005 begins with a pulsating

dotted rhythm over which Bach places technically demanding layers of rich harmonies, once thought impossible on a bowed instrument. The second movement is a highly complex and extensive fugue, based on the chorale *Komm, heiliger Geist, Herr Gott* (Come Holy Ghost, Lord God) in which Bach employs a variety of contrapuntal techniques, including *stretto*, inversion and double counterpoint. A lyrical aria-like third movement leads into the concluding joyful and virtuosic *Allegro assai*.

First performance at ICC

Duration: approx. 23 minutes

DIMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH
(1906-1975)

String quartet no. 8
in C minor, op 110

Largo
Allegro molto
Allegretto
Largo
Largo

Shostakovich was born during the first Russian Revolution of 1905-1907, at a crucial period of Russian history that saw the eventual overthrow of the Tsar, the October Revolution of 1917 and the rise of the USSR. From childhood therefore, his life was bound up with the new Soviet state to which he gave his loyalty, albeit at times uneasily. Despite falling in and out of official favour, Shostakovich always accepted the dictates of the regime and took an elevated view of the moral and civic responsibilities of a Soviet musician towards his fellow citizens and the state.

Given the overall political situation and pressures under which he lived, Shostakovich's body of work is astonishing, including as it does fifteen symphonies, orchestral, choral and chamber music, opera, piano music and solo songs. Of his fifteen string quartets, the sombre Eighth, written in 1960 in East Germany (DDR), is generally considered to be his finest and it was his only work composed outside Russia. Officially he was in the DDR to write a score for a Soviet film on the destruction of Dresden but a visit to the city so moved and inspired him that he completed the quartet in three days, with the dedication 'In Remembrance of the Victims of Fascism and War'. In the USSR, it became known as the 'Dresden' quartet.

The eighth quartet comprises five movements that lead from one to

the other without pause. It has been called autobiographical because a dominating four-note motif (D-E flat-C-B) that appears throughout the work and already used in the Tenth Symphony, refers to the first four letters of the composer's name in German notation (D-S-C-H). Movements one to four of the quartet also abound in other quotations, almost always introduced by the four-note motif. The first movement includes references to the First and Fifth symphonies while the second quotes from the second piano trio. In the third movement, the motif introduces a quotation from the first cello concerto. The fourth movement quotes from a popular Russian revolutionary song 'Languishing in Prison', sung at Lenin's funeral, and from Shostakovich's 1934 opera 'Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District' that found such disfavour with Stalin in 1936. The unusual beginning of this movement (three notes repeated against a low drone) is said to represent the bombing of Dresden.

Last performance at ICC 14/01/1998

Duration: approx. 20 minutes

INTERVAL

FRANZ SCHUBERT
(1797-1828)

String quintet in C major, D956

Allegro ma non troppo

Adagio – Scherzo

Trio – Allegretto

The C major quintet was Schubert's last great work. It was completed in September 1828, only two months before he died. It is his only composition for string quintet. After his death it was forgotten and not performed until 1850. Publication followed in 1853, since when it has been regarded as one of Schubert's finest chamber works and among the greatest in all chamber music literature.

C major is not only the key of Schubert's ninth and last symphony 'The Great' (also composed in 1828) but also of the string quintets by Mozart (K515) and Beethoven (op 29) the two composers most revered by Schubert and influential in his development. Indeed, the musicologist Charles Rosen has found many affinities between the first movement of the Mozart quintet with that of Schubert,

suggesting a direct influence. However, instead of employing both Mozart and Beethoven's conventional string quintet scoring of a quartet plus an additional viola, Schubert calls for a second cello. This instrumentation was not unique to Schubert (Boccherini also used two cellos) but it was unusual and creates a richness and depth in the lower strings that enabled Schubert to experiment with pairing the first violin with a cello against a second violin and viola and cello trio or alternate the two violins with the two cellos. In this way, the bass line is strengthened in a way that is not possible when using two violas.

Schubert's late works tend to open with expansive first movements – for example the B flat piano sonata D960, the C major symphony D944 and the G major string quartet D887 . The quintet too opens with a spacious movement that occupies over one third of the total length of the entire work. The glorious *Adagio* is probably the best-known movement of the four as its melancholy elegiac mood has made it popular as background music to radio and television drama. It plays an important role in episodes of Inspector Morse and several episodes of the Desmond Morris series *The Human Animal*. The sublime opening theme of the *Adagio* gives way to a churning, restless episode before returning to bring the movement to a peaceful, if rather chastened, conclusion. The final two movements seem more straightforwardly positive in mood but the finale is held up by a descent into a distinctly dark place before high spirits return to round off this late, great masterpiece.

Brahms greatly admired Schubert's quintet which inspired his own 1865 piano quintet. Other later tributes to Schubert's final great work include that of the pianist Arthur Rubinstein who requested that the second movement be played at his funeral, while the violinist Joseph Saunders had the second theme of the first movement engraved on his tombstone.

Last performance at ICC 10/11/1999

Duration: approx. 55 minutes

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BRODSKY QUARTET

Krysia Osostowicz *violin*

Ian Belton *violin*

Paul Cassidy *viola*

Jacqueline Thomas *cello*

The internationally renowned Brodsky Quartet was founded fifty years ago on Teeside. It took its name from the great Russian violinist, Adolf Brodsky, the dedicatee of Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto and a passionate chamber musician. The quartet has travelled extensively across Australia, North and South America, Asia, South Africa and Europe.

Over the years the Brodsky has undertaken numerous performances of the complete cycles of quartets by Schubert, Beethoven, Tchaikovsky, Zemlinsky, Britten, Schoenberg, Webern and Bartok. Their 2012 London performance of the complete Shostakovich cycle resulted in the quartet being awarded the prestigious title 'Artistic Associate' at London's Kings Place, a residency that lasted for 10 years!

The Brodsky's highly acclaimed discography includes the complete Shostakovich quartets, which they have recorded twice, the Elgar String Quartet and Piano Quintet with Martin Roscoe and the late quartets of Beethoven. The latest release features the Schubert Quintet with Laura van der Heijden, which you will be hearing this evening.

Regularly commissioning and championing compositions from some of the world's most respected composers, the Brodsky's natural curiosity and an insatiable desire to explore has propelled them in a number of artistic directions. The disc *Rocking Horse Road* is the result of a collaboration with Jacqui Dankworth. They have also worked with leading figures in the world of pop including Sting, Björk, and Sir Paul McCartney. Back in 1985 Japanese designer, Issey Miyake, provided the quartet with innovative concert attire. The players subsequently took to the catwalk playing 'live' for Miyake's Men's Show in Paris!

Worldwide radio and television performances have been rewarded with various awards, including one from the Royal Philharmonic Society for the Brodsky's outstanding contribution to innovative programming. The quartet has held residences in several institutions, including the University of Cambridge and the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

I have it on good authority that during lockdown Ian created a fabulous vegetable garden and both Jacky and Paul wrote books which I believe we are going to hear about and will be on sale this evening!

LAURA VAN DER HEIJDEN *cello*

Laura van der Heijden was born in England to Dutch-Swiss parents and gave her first public performance at the age of nine. Since winning the BBC Young Musician Competition in 2012 Laura has emerged as one of the leading cellists of her generation. Her perceptive interpretations and engaging stage presence have captivated audiences and critics alike. These attributes have been recognised in concerts with many major international orchestras (and all 4 BBC orchestras!) at venues such as the Tchaikovsky Concert Hall in Moscow, Amsterdam's Het Concertgebouw and Opernhaus Zürich, as well as in concert halls and festivals throughout Britain. Laura has also made numerous appearances on BBC Radio 3's *In Tune*.

Hailed as 'dazzling, imaginative and impressive', Laura's debut album, 1948 features Russian music for cello and piano with pianist Petr Limonov and won the 2018 Edison Klassiek Award and the 2019 BBC Music Magazine Newcomer Award. Recently signed to Chandos, Laura's latest Album, *Pohádka* [Fairy Tale], was released in February this year.

As a passionate chamber musician Laura has collaborated with Tom Poster, Katya Apekisheva, Matthew MacDonald, Jâms Coleman, Max Baillie and Huw Watkins. She has given recitals at many of Britain's festivals, including the Harrogate International Festival, Cheltenham Festival, and Oxford Lieder. She has worked with the Doric Quartet as well as tonight's colleagues, the Brodsky. She is also a member of Kaleidoscope Chamber Collective, an Associate Ensemble of the Wigmore Hall, and features on their recent debut album, *American Quintets*.

Laura is a graduate of St John's College, Cambridge. She plays a late 17th century cello by Francesco Ruggieri of Cremona.

Compiled by Sarah Warnes

CLUB NOTES

A warm welcome to all members and friends to the first concert of our 76th season! It is great to be able to look forward to enjoying eight performances from first rate musicians in the King's Hall with all our usual accompaniments – programmes sales, service of hot and cold drinks and of course the CD stall! To all our members I want to say a big thank-you for supporting us through the past two years. I hope you will agree that we did our best to keep up the tradition of top-class music making in Ilkley despite the constraints imposed by the pandemic. We are grateful as well to the King's Hall staff for supporting our efforts!

We also owe a debt of gratitude to all the musicians who played for us either on-line or in person during that period for being prepared to fit in with our demands. They were very happy to be able to perform and to enjoy the response of the Ilkley audience. We had a number of thoughtful responses from those who played two concerts in one evening to the effect that it was really interesting for them to play the same pieces twice within such a short period – and how different they felt the performances were!

Hail and farewell!

A warm welcome to Alison and Julian Roberts, who have now taken over the running of the CD Stall from Tony Hudson and Richard Rundle. We hope you will support them by both donating and buying CDs to raise funds for the Club. Our thanks go out to Tony in particular for all his work over the last 17 years! Richard and Jennie Rundle have also been staunch supporters of the Club for many years: Jennie in her role as tickets supremo is one of the best known of our members. She has now handed this role over to Lindsey Wharmby, who has been the public face of our ticket office for some time. Please contact her on concertclubilkley@gmail.com if you are not able to use your ticket or want to buy single tickets.

Don't forget that our **Annual General Meeting** takes place an hour before our next concert. It will be held in the King's Hall at 7.00 pm on Wednesday 2 November. The papers were sent to you with your season tickets. See you there!

Chris Skidmore—Chair

NEXT CONCERT

WEDNESDAY 2 NOVEMBER 2022

8:00pm

MARSYAS TRIO flute, cello and piano



Louise Farrenc

Piano trio in E minor, op 45

Hilary Tann

‘In the Theatre of Air’

Thea Musgrave

Canta Canta for flute, cello & piano

Chen Yi

‘Night Thoughts’

Fanny Hensel

Piano trio in D minor, op 11

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