

# *Ilkley Concert Club*



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

## **TRESKE QUARTET**



**Wednesday 11th December 2024**  
**King's Hall**

THE TICKET OFFICE

## function offer

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# PROGRAMME

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## **Beethoven**

String quartet no. 10 in E flat major, op 74

## **Stravinsky**

Three Pieces for string quartet

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INTERVAL

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## **Purcell (arr Britten)**

Chacony in G minor

## **Britten**

String quartet no. 2 in C major, op 36

# PROGRAMME NOTES

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**LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN**  
**(1770-1827)**

**String quartet no. 10**  
**in E flat major, op 74**

Poco adagio - Allegro

Adagio ma non troppo

Presto

Allegretto con variazioni

The eleven years between 1803 and 1814, his 'middle period', saw Beethoven at his most creative and confident, producing a constant flow of masterpieces, including *Fidelio*, symphonies 3-8, five string quartets, the violin concerto, piano concertos four and five, the triple concerto and seven major piano sonatas. In 1809 alone, he produced three works, coincidentally all in the key of E flat; sonata op 81a, 'Les Adieux', the fifth piano concerto and the op 74 quartet. This remarkable outpouring of music was all the more astonishing as Europe was embroiled in the Napoleonic wars and Austria was under almost constant siege, with battles raging around Vienna throughout 1809.

Beethoven's six op 18 quartets of 1801 brought him both appreciative audiences and an enthusiastic following of amateur string players. He then left a gap of four years before fulfilling a commission from Count Andreas Razumovsky, in 1808, for three quartets (op 59), which were unfortunately unpopular with players and audiences alike. As Beethoven needed to take his traditional audience with him however, he ensured there was nothing problematic about his next quartet, the genial and straightforward E flat major, op 74.

The quartet is known as the 'Harp', a sobriquet that becomes almost immediately obvious in the first movement. Following the short *Adagio*, a chromatic rising line in the first violin introduces the *Allegro* and immediately a pizzicato arpeggio motif in all four instruments makes its first appearance. This motif recurs throughout the movement, increasing in number and intensity, sometimes on plucked strings, sometimes bowed. This was something quite new, especially when played under a virtuoso violin at the conclusion of the movement. Following a tranquil slow movement in the form of a rondo, another innovation occurs in the ferocious *Scherzo*, where Beethoven constructs a double trio on an A (Scherzo) – B (Trio) A –

B – A pattern. There is no break between the third movement and the charming final theme and variations.

*Last performance at ICC 19/11/2018*      Duration: approx. 29 minutes

**IGOR STRAVINSKY  
(1882-1971)**

**Three pieces for string quartet**

I [Dance]

II [Eccentric]

III [Canticle]

Between 1909 and 1913 Stravinsky's mature style was finally established in three famous compositions, namely *The Firebird*, *Petrushka* and *The Rite of Spring*. Perhaps it was a reaction to the riotous first performance of *The Rite of Spring* that caused him, from 1914, to eschew writing for a conventional orchestra for almost ten years, concentrating instead on vocal music and works for small chamber ensembles.

The *Three Pieces* date from 1914 but remained unnamed until 1928 when Stravinsky arranged them, with another work, for large orchestra under the title *Quatre études*. Although written for four instruments playing at the same time, the *Three Pieces* are not at all equivalent to the classical string quartet with which we are familiar; they are, rather, three discrete miniatures and the way in which Stravinsky structures each piece and handles the instruments goes against one of the basic principles of traditional chamber music; that of dialogue between the parts, where each instrument plays individually within an overall unified concept. In *Three Pieces*, Stravinsky carries the principle of individuality to its logical conclusion as each instrument plays more or less independently, using different performance techniques and thematic structures.

In the first piece, for example, the viola (written on two staves) plays on just one note both as a drone and as a repeated pattern. The second violin plays just four notes, always in the same order and the cello is used as a percussion instrument. There is a hint of Russian folk music in the first violin, also based on just four notes.

The second piece was inspired by 'Little Tich' a famous comedian much admired by Stravinsky and the third and longest eventually resolves into a chorale which begins with the same notes as the Gregorian *Dies Irae*.

*First performance at ICC*

Duration: approx. 8 minutes

## INTERVAL

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

**HENRY PURCELL**  
**(c1659-1695)**

**Chacony in G minor, Z730**  
**[arr. Benjamin Britten]**

‘Chacony’ is the English translation of the French ‘chaconne’. Latin American in origin, a chaconne is a dance in triple metre that became particularly popular in Europe in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, where it often occurs as a suite movement. The form was less popular in England and, for the G minor Chacony, Purcell used a viol consort in the ‘antique’ style rather than the new and fashionable strings popularised by European composers such as Corelli.

Purcell was employed by Charles II as ‘Composer in Ordinary’ from about 1670 and, in his capacity as composer and organist at Westminster Abbey, was expected to provide elaborate ceremonial music for State occasions, alongside writing incidental music both for elaborate Court masques and for the flourishing Restoration London theatre scene, famously patronised by Charles II. The Chacony in G minor was written around 1680, almost certainly for either a masque or a theatrical performance, although its actual performance provenance is not known. Given its emotional depth and musical language however, it is most likely that it was composed as incidental music to a tragedy. It is based on a repeated descending motif of four consecutive notes of a scale (in the Chacony a minor scale), a pattern known as a ‘ground bass’ or simply a ‘ground’; a famous example of this technique is Dido’s lament from Purcell’s *Dido and Aeneas* (1689). The Chacony’s eight-bar ground provides the thematic basis for eighteen variations spanning a wide range of musical emotions and rhythmic and harmonic patterns, all within the discipline of the ground.

Benjamin Britten was a life-long admirer of Purcell’s music, realizing (or editing for modern performance) at least fifty of his works. He began his arrangement of the Chacony for string quartet or string orchestra in late 1947 and conducted the first performance in January 1948. Following revisions in 1963, the score was published in 1965.

*First performance at ICC*

Duration: approx. 7 minutes

**BENJAMIN BRITTEN**  
**(1913-1976)**

**String quartet no. 2**  
**in C major, op 36**  
*Allegro calmo, senza rigore*  
Vivace  
*Chacony: sostenuto*

1945 was an important year for Benjamin Britten, being the year in which he rose to international fame with the phenomenal success of his opera *Peter Grimes*, praised by many as Britain's most important contribution to opera since *Dido and Aeneas*. 1945 also saw the 250th anniversary of Henry Purcell's death. Britten, who had already begun to take a serious interest in Purcell's music, was invited to arrange a two-day celebratory Purcell Festival at Wigmore Hall and composed his second string quartet – which includes a Chacony – specifically for this anniversary. It was first performed on November 21st, the actual date of Purcell's death. Britten regarded Purcell's music very highly and looked back to him for inspiration rather than to contemporary composers such as Vaughan Williams. He said he found in Purcell the qualities of 'clarity, brilliance, tenderness and strangeness' to which he aspired in his own compositions, and considered him to be 'the last important international figure of English music'.

Purcell's influence is apparent in the first few bars of the quartet where the violins and cello play an introductory theme while the viola plays a drone, which many critics believe was inspired by Purcell's 'Fantasia upon One Note' Z745, throughout which a viola maintains a drone on middle C (this Fantasia was also played in the first Purcell concert). The most overt tribute to Purcell however is the lengthy third movement Chacony comprising a theme and twenty-one variations. In Britten's programme notes he writes that the sections of the Chacony 'may be said to review the theme from (a) harmonic, (b) rhythmic, (c) melodic and (d) formal aspects'. The first three sections each end with solo cadenzas from the cello, viola and first violin, the second violin maintaining a C drone under the viola. The movement concludes with three further variations which build towards a climax in a succession of powerful C major chords.

*Last performance at ICC 08/01/1997*      Duration: approx. 30 minutes

# TRESKE STRING QUARTET

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This evening we are pleased to welcome back the Treske Quartet, an emerging ensemble based in Manchester. They first appeared in Ikley at one of our RNCM student concerts in 2022 and have since gained an increasing reputation. They were residents at the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity in the summer of 2022 and 2023 RNCM Quartet Studio Artists. The musical identity of the quartet lies in their commitment to championing repertoire by 20th and 21st century composers, demonstrated tonight by performances of Stravinsky and Britten. The goal of the quartet is described as seeking to curate and perform programmes that include a variety of musical styles by established and emerging composers, and to give audiences radical experiences with new sound worlds. They work closely with living composers, performing their works and in doing so contributing to the growing pool of modern string quartet music.

**Oliver Baily** is a founder member of the Treske Quartet and, of particular local interest, was appointed very recently, in October 2024, to the position of Sub Principal (No 3) Violin 2 in the Orchestra of Opera North. He is a graduate of the Royal Northern College of Music where he studied with Ben Holland and whilst there won the Helen Porthouse Paganini Prize and the Emmanuel Prize. Oliver has given solo performances across the UK and concerto appearances with the Settle Orchestra, Manchester Beethoven Orchestra and Vacation Chamber Orchestra. As a chamber musician he has performed at numerous UK festivals including the Ryedale Festival, West Cork Music Festival and Buxton International Festival. Oliver performs on a Derazey violin made in Paris in the late 19th century and enjoys playing, with the rest of the quartet, on a set of instruments made from the same tree from the W.E. Hill & Sons workshop and loaned by the Harrison Frank Family Foundation.

**Mollie Wrafter** graduated with a First Class Honours from the Royal Northern College of Music, studying with Leland Chen where she won the Norman George Violin Competition and the Nossek Prize for Chamber Music. She was awarded the Irish Heritage Performance Bursary for her Wigmore Hall debut performance in 2019. She enjoys a busy freelance career, balancing solo engagements and her quartet work. In April 2022 Mollie won the



Aileen Gore Cup and RTE Lyric FM Award at the Feis Ceoil in Dublin and subsequently she was awarded the RDS Jago Award and a professional solo engagement with the RTE Concert Orchestra which aired on RTE Lyric FM. Mollie features on Manchester Collective's debut LP (yes, Long Playing record) 'The Centre is Everywhere' and was named one of Golden Plec Magazine's 'PlecPicks' in 2021. This year she has thoroughly enjoyed playing with the Hallé Orchestra through their Advanced Orchestral Strings Programme and was delighted to receive the Charles Hallé Award. Mollie sits on the Board of Directors of the National Youth Orchestra of Ireland.

**Abigail Hammett** was born in South Wales and has recently completed her Masters at the Royal Northern College of Music where she studied with Levon Chilingirian and Benedict Holland. During her time at the RNCM she was recipient of the Leverhulme Scholarship and won the RNCM Schubert prize and the Hirsch Chamber Prize. Since graduating she has been tutored by Veit Hertenstein, Peijun Xu and Nobuko Imai. Abigail is a dedicated chamber musician and a founding member of the Treske Quartet. Abi freelances in Manchester where she is an Artist on Live Music Now, and frequently performs with Opera North, the Hallé and other orchestras across the North. Her viola was made by her father Timothy Hammett in 2013.

**Robert Wheatley** is a German born English cellist and versatile musician with an international career performing in the fields of chamber music, contemporary music and improvisation. Robert is a founding member of the contemporary music ensemble S201, the Emmeline String Quartet, Crimson Sunbird and multidisciplinary impro-group Theatre Filidonia. He has been the cellist of the Treske Quartet since November 2022. His work as a performing artist has led him all over the world having visited South Korea in 2018 and 2019 appearing at Youngnam Contemporary music festival and the Daegu Contemporary music festival, Klangzeit Festival Berlin, Beethovenfest Bonn in Germany as well as on many other national and international stages. He began his cello studies in 2014 with Prof. Christoph Richter at the Folkwang University of the Arts, Essen and subsequently moved to Manchester to study a Masters degree in cello at the RNCM under Nicholas Trygstad where he was the recipient of the Barbirolli Cello prize in November 2019.

Compiled by Paul Hurst

# CLUB NOTES

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## **Twenty years ago**

Are you familiar with our website archive which contains information for all Concert Club concerts, arranged by composer, performer, type of music and concert season? It provides a really fascinating reflection on musical taste and the continuing high standards of the Club. Do explore its riches! - <https://concerts.ilkeleyconcertclub.org.uk/>

Back in 2004/5 our December concert shared similarities with our next concert – a horn trio was playing the Brahms Horn Trio alongside a variety of other items. The season had started with pianist, Freddy Kempf playing the Mussorgsky *Pictures at an exhibition* and two Beethoven sonatas. Later in the season Adrian Brendel (cello) with Tim Horton (piano) performed a programme of Bach and Beethoven and the soprano, Jane Irwin, provided a recital of Schumann, Wolf and Mahler with English songs. Our current programme follows a similar pattern.

Both then and now, the remaining season was filled with a variety of groups. In 2004/5 it was a string quartet, a wind quintet, a trio with piano and an octet: we have two string quartets, a duo of accordion and recorder and a piano quintet. Interestingly two of their groups were from the Czech republic and we have one from the Netherlands: unfortunately European groups find it harder to travel these days.

The big difference in the programmes is the presence of works by women composers in our present series but 20 years ago the programmes otherwise ranged as widely, containing music by the American Elliot Carter and the French, Charles Koechlin – still a feast of varied music!

## **Disposal of our CD stall stock**

At one or two of our concerts in the New Year, Friends will have the chance to buy CDs from the stock remaining in our hands at sale price. Unsold CDs will be given to charity.

However in order to do this we will need help from a few members willing to staff the tables and take the money. If you feel that you could help in this way, please contact Robert Templar on [rdtemplar@btinternet.com](mailto:rdtemplar@btinternet.com) or by phone at 07720 409611.

Chris Skidmore, Chair

# NEXT CONCERT

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**WEDNESDAY 8 JANUARY 2025**

**Concert 7:30pm**

## **BEN GOLDSCHIEDER HORN TRIO**



### **Mozart**

Horn Quintet in E flat major,  
K407 (arr. for horn trio)

### **Clara Schumann**

Three Romances for violin and  
piano

### **Mendelssohn**

*Lieder ohne worte*, op 62 no 1

### **Brahms**

Intermezzo in E flat, op 117

### **Huw Watkins**

Trio for horn and piano

### **Brahms**

Trio for horn, violin and piano

### **Ticket Sales**

Contact Lindsey Wharmby  
concertclubilkley@gmail.com OR 07791 083326.

### **Members**

Please let Lindsey know in good time if you can't come.

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**ALEXANDRA LOWE**  
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