

THE FITZWILLIAM
STRING QUARTET



FSQ @ HAY
Y GELLI

September 15th – 17th 2023

WEEKEND PROGRAMME

A Fusion of Fantasy and Folklore

The Fitzwilliam players' obsession with fantasias originated in their passion for the music of Henry Purcell (needless to say!); such that, to mark both the composer's 350th birthday and the quartet's own 40th anniversary (2008/9), they commissioned a series of them from a number of composers with whom they have worked closely over the years: the results produced a remarkable variety of realisations of the form, ranging from "Doubles" on the actual Purcell works, from the quartet's former 2nd violinist Marcus Barcham Stevens, to completely free interpretations from such as Jeremy Thurlow, Carolyn Sparey, and Uwe Steinmetz – the latter involving the composer himself on soprano sax! The late, lamented, Duncan Druce's exquisite contribution embraces both worlds, as will be heard.

It might even be claimed that this weekend's exploration of indigenous music could also be traced back to Purcell, whose rich array of dances adorning his theatre works was hardly less of an influence – not only in the FSQ's approach to so much music in later quartet repertoire, but also in Lucy Russell's personal quest to bring a wider range of experience to her own violin playing: of part-Norwegian origin herself, she was naturally drawn to the Hardanger fiddle (as well as to a love of Grieg), but more recently to the inspirational work of Paul Hutchinson and Sophie Renshaw (as can be heard on Saturday evening).

Friday 15th September
7.00 St Marys Church
Hay-on-Wye



PROGRAMME

Chopin Mazurka Op. 24 (No.2)

Chopin Mazurka Op. 17 (No.4)

Chopin Mazurka Op. 41 (No.4)

Schumann Fantasie in C, Op. 17

INTERVAL

Chopin Fantaisie-Impromptu in C# minor, Op. 66

Traditional arr. Sir Stephen Hough Londonderry Air

Grainger Molly on the Shore

Schubert Fantasy in C, D 760 'Wanderer'

Three Mazurkas

Fryderyk Chopin (1810 – 49)

C major, Op.24 No.2 (1834-5)

A minor, Op.17 No.4 (1832-3)

A flat, Op.41 No.4 (1840)

During the first half of the 19th century it was still very much the norm for performers to be fully rounded musicians, to the extent that the leading virtuosi would be expected to compose their own music for inclusion in their concerts. In fact, the tradition has persisted well into the 20th century – notably with composers such as Rachmaninov, Messiaen, Shostakovich, Thomas Adès; except that more recently we find that many composers just happen to be fine performers or conductors as well. Regrettably, the opposite scenario would seem to be increasingly less common, to the point of near-extinction. Chopin was no exception to the norm of his time: born in the village of Zelazowa Wola, but growing up in nearby Warsaw, his serious musical education began at the Warsaw Lyceum in 1813, and thence at the Conservatoire from the age of 16 – during which time he first became absorbed in the folk music of his native country. 1829 (the year following his graduation) saw him giving concerts in Berlin, Vienna, and eventually Warsaw itself: this on 17th March 1830, when he presented the F minor piano concerto (actually the first of the two to have been composed). Less than eight months later he left Poland for Austria and Italy; on arriving in Paris the following September he found himself stranded by the eventual crushing of the Polish uprising that had broken out soon after his departure, and so never again returned to his homeland.

Despite debilitating homesickness Chopin quickly became absorbed into the richness of Parisian artistic circles, making the acquaintance not only of such great musicians as Berlioz and Liszt, but also the poet Heine and the painter Delacroix (whose portrait of him is one of the most famous). However, with various solo works – which quickly followed his arrival in the French capital – he gave early notice of his distaste for the prevalent *stile brillante*, with its characteristic virtuosic extravagances as espoused by such popular pianists as Moscheles, Herz, and Hunten. In his concertos he had already revealed a more *bel canto* manner of pianism, whose melodic arabesques seem to look further back to the improvised embellishments of the baroque – as observed by Liszt himself when he wrote of “those small groups of chromatics which fall like many coloured, glittering dewdrops on the melodic figure”. It may even come as a surprise to learn that the composer most at the centre of his thinking and playing was none other than JS Bach – and the formal mastery we find in the second concerto, in particular, bears witness to his devotion to a previously neglected master, and one who had already aroused the passion of his great contemporary Mendelssohn. And while on the subject of his contemporaries we should remind ourselves that those four years from 1809 to 1813 gave us perhaps the most extraordinary package of collective genius in musical history, with the birth not only of Chopin, but also of Mendelssohn, Schumann, Liszt, Wagner, and Verdi! As if instinctively aware of what all those highly innovative musicians would go on to achieve, we find in these early Romantic works a composer fully conversant with the new harmonic language emerging with these visionary people – yet if we examine the chronology we find, to our

astonishment, that it was in fact the teenage Chopin who getting in there first and calling the shots himself!

On top of all this, of course, was his absorption in the familiar dance forms of his homeland: the Polonaise had long been taken up in neighbouring countries, especially Russia; but it is surely in the 59 Mazurkas (composed between 1825 and 1849) where we find Chopin's truly Nationalist voice – betraying, alongside that essential spirit of the Polish people and their indigenous dancing, a melancholic longing which at times can be so deeply affecting – particularly so in Op.17/4, with its strangely elliptical conclusion.

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Fantasie in C major, Op. 17

Robert Schumann (1810-1856)

1. Durchaus phantastisch und leidenschaftlich vorzutragen
2. Mässig: Durchaus energisch
3. Langsam getragen: Durchaus leise zu halten

In June 1836 Robert Schumann, in despair at his enforced separation from Clara Wieck, composed the first movement of what was to become his C major Fantasie, calling it *Ruines. Fantasie...* He quickly added two more movements titled *Trophies* and *Palms*, inspired by his desire to compose a large-scale work to raise funds for the Beethoven Monument Appeal. Schumann offered it to the publisher Kistner as a 'Sonata for Beethoven'. Kistner turned it down, perhaps perplexed by the music's strangeness and the unconventional sequence of movements.

After another publisher, Breitkopf und Härtel, agreed to publish the work, Schumann 'tidied up some of its details' and wrote in an illicit letter to Clara that 'the first movement is more impassioned than anything I have ever written - a deep lament for you'; quoting a yearning theme from the second group of the first movement, he wrote, 'I like this melody best. I suppose you are the note in the 'motto'? I almost think you must be.' At that stage the titles of the second and third movements were 'Triumphal Arch' and 'Constellation'. But when the work finally appeared in 1839, entitled *Fantasie*, and with a dedication to Liszt, Schumann dropped the descriptive titles in favour of an epigraph by the Romantic poet-philosopher Friedrich Schlegel:

Durch alle Töne tönet
Im bunten Erdentraum,
Ein leiser Ton gezogen
Für den, der heimlich lauschet

(Through all the sounds in earth's motley dream, one soft note echoes for the one who listens in secret')

The first movement, marked 'fantastic and passionate throughout', is permeated by a falling five-note 'motto' so often associated with Clara in Schumann's work. Also threaded into the music is a quotation from the final song in Beethoven's cycle *An die*

ferne Geliebte ('To the distant beloved'), another of his favourite musical symbols. At first the allusion is veiled. But the Beethoven theme emerges more pointedly at the dark centre of the movement before sounding explicitly in the coda: at once a profoundly tender avowal to his own 'distant beloved' and a reminder that Schumann originally intended this music as a homage to Beethoven.

There is another, more oblique, Beethoven reference in the swaggering march-like second movement, in E flat, where the textures and dotted rhythms of the first episode recall the *alla marcia* of Beethoven's A major Piano Sonata, Op. 101. Clara described the movement as 'a victory march of warriors returning from battle'. The structure is that of a complex sonata-rondo, with central Trio that begins with the theme in syncopation in the middle of the texture - a typical instance of Schumann's fondness for 'veiling' his melodies. For Clara the Trio (which also quotes her motto) evoked 'young village maidens, all dressed in white, each with a wreath ready to crown the warriors kneeling before them'.

After the tumultuous energy of the first two movements, the finale, marked 'slow, sustained, and soft throughout', brings a profound spiritual peace. Clara's motto is intoned in the bass in bar five. Elsewhere Schumann alludes to several Schubert works, including the 'Wanderer' Fantasy and the song, 'Die Gebüsche', significantly to a poem by Friedrich Schlegel. A beautiful dip from C major to A flat introduces the more urgent central section with another Clara-related theme, of which Robert noted in his sketchbook 'dabei selig geschwärmt' ('was blissfully enraptured' - as well he might have been). Schumann originally intended to conclude the Fantasie with another allusion to *An die ferne Geliebte*. But he changed his mind, ending with reference to the A flat theme and a disturbed chromatic sequence before the music finally subsides into the beatific calm of C major.

'You can only understand the Fantasie if you go back to that unhappy summer of 1836 in which it was created,' wrote Robert to Clara. On 23 May 1839, she wrote back to him: 'Yesterday I received your wonderful Fantasie; today I am still half ill with rapture.'

INTERVAL

Fantaisie-Impromptu in C sharp minor, Op.66 (posth 1834) Fryderyk Chopin (1810 – 49)

It has to be confessed that this piece was specially requested by the present writer, having been a personal favourite since childhood! Composed in the same year as the A minor mazurka (heard earlier this evening), it was not published until 1855. We can only guess at why Chopin withheld such a profoundly personal utterance. TOO personal, maybe....? The piece certainly touches a deep nerve. It has been suggested that the influence of Beethoven's "Moonlight" sonata was too obvious; but apart from a parallel key structure (C sharp minor – D flat major – C sharp minor), and certain arpeggiated figuration, this theory seems thin on the ground. More pertinent is quite why it should have become so popular – and we must guess at that too. For the context of this particular festival, the

freedom of form and expression underlined by its double-barrelled title could hardly fit the bill more perfectly.

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Londonderry Air

Traditional arr. Sir Stephen Hough

Molly on the Shore (1907/11)

Percy Aldridge Grainger (1882 – 1961)

Lovingly and reverently dedicated to the memory of Edvard Grieg.

- Irish Reel [for piano] based on two Cork Reel tunes.....
- Set for string four-some (4 single strings) or string band (double basses at will.)
- Birthday-gift, Mother [Rose] 3.7. '07

Percy Grainger was one of the younger generation of like-minded composers – along with their mentors Grieg and Delius – who maintained a close and mutually influential friendship during the early years of the 20th century, often based round a shared love of folklore. His own description of this evening's engaging and witty piece is printed at the head of the full score – followed by further detailed information and instructions, such that the music itself doesn't begin until over halfway down the first page! The two reel tunes were "Temple Hill" and "Molly on the Shore", respectively Nos. 901 and 902 of *The Complete Petrie Collection of Ancient Irish Music*, edited by Sir Charles Villiers Stanford. Although moving with ease in conventional musical circles, where his most notable acquaintances included Busoni, as well as Grieg and Delius, and in which he achieved considerable celebrity status as a virtuoso pianist, Grainger's mission ultimately lay in other milieux – notably as an avid collector and scrupulous arranger of folk material from such far flung regions as Denmark, Ireland, and Lincolnshire. He drew his greatest inspiration from the most natural sources of sound, expressing himself through such unconventional means as free rhythm, ensemble improvisation, and "elastic scoring" – whereby a considerable degree of freedom over size and range of orchestration is encouraged on the part of the performers. So Molly is equally valid played on the piano or by a string quartet.

His description of the latter ensemble as a "string four-some" is typical of a unique irreverence and eccentricity – as are the various markings in the score which exemplify his refusal to conform, for example "louden lots" instead of *crescendo molto*, or "feelingly and clingingly" (*espressivo e legato*). During his biographer Penelope Thwaites's King's Place festival to mark Grainger's 50th anniversary (February 2011), Molly was played twice: first by the FSQ, who then joined in with the composer's own piano roll: the pianola used was literally a "player piano", in that it was literally wheeled up to the piano keyboard, which it then proceeded to play! This type of instrument is actually operated by a human "player", who controls such aspects of the music as tempo and dynamic. It was an extraordinary experience for us all, an honour to share the stage with Michael Broadway (perhaps the finest exponent on the pianola as one will ever witness); but

especially to feel we were actually “playing with” Grainger himself! We celebrate the work of this wayward, gifted, and misunderstood genius through what is one of the most popular and admired of his many transcriptions. As Prof Wilfrid Mellers so perceptively and colourfully wrote: “Grainger’s music reminds us that the Happy Tribes of Folk sang and danced that they might have life more abundantly”.

Alan George © 2023

Fantasy in C, D 760 ‘The Wanderer’

Franz Schubert (1797 – 1828)

1. Allegro con fuoco ma non troppo
2. Adagio
3. Presto
4. Allegro

Between 1820 and the autumn of 1822 Schubert began and then abandoned several large-scale instrumental works – most famously the ‘Unfinished’ Symphony – as he struggled to reconcile his expanded subjective vision with the four-movement sonata design. Only with the ‘Wanderer’ Fantasy of November 1822 did he triumph over his creative impasse, through a show of demonic energy (Schubert often treats the piano with a Beethovenian brutality) and through a radical – and prophetic – reinterpretation of the traditional sonata design, whereby four linked movements each grow from a single thematic cell.

More mundanely, Schubert had a strong financial incentive for completing the Fantasy, which had been commissioned by a wealthy nobleman, Emmanuel Liebenberg de Zsittin. Talented though he was (he had studied with Hummel), Liebenberg may have got more than he bargained for in the bravura pyrotechnics and volcanic, quasi-orchestral writing of the outer movements. Schubert himself was evidently fazed by the finale. As his friend Leopold Kupelwieser recalled, ‘Once when Schubert was playing the Fantasy ... and got stuck in the last movement, he jumped up from his seat with the words: “Let the devil play the stuff!”.’

From the ‘Trout’ Quintet of 1819 to the C major violin and piano Fantasie of 1827, Schubert often drew on his own songs as a basis for instrumental variations. The C major Fantasy is the most ingenious instance,. The whole work grows outwards from the Adagio second movement, a series of free – and increasingly flamboyant – variations on a mournful theme from ‘Der Wanderer’ (1816). In Schubert’s lifetime this quintessential song of Romantic alienation was second only to ‘Der Erlkönig’ in popularity. The song melody’s repeated notes and dactylic (long-short-short) rhythm underlie the hammering opening of the first movement. This initial idea then gives rise to a more gracious, lyrical variant, in the remote key of E major, which in turn spawns a leisurely *dolce* theme in E flat major. Violent disruptions, courtesy of diminished seventh chords, are liable to occur at any point during the movement. The final page pares down the opening theme to its

hammering dactyls, in the process wrenching the music from G major to G sharp major, the dominant of the Adagio's key of C sharp minor.

The Scherzo, in A flat, ingeniously metamorphoses the Fantasy's opening paragraph, then slips to C last major for a waltzing theme – a rare glimpse in this work of the 'popular' Viennese Schubert! The lulling Trio turns out to be a beautiful transformation of the dolce theme from the first movement. Schubert conceives the finale as a kind of recapitulation to the first movement, which had broken off at the end of the development. It begins as a strenuous fugue on the Fantasy's opening theme but becomes less fugal and more deliriously virtuosic – and violent – as it proceeds, culminating in a titanic send-off that seems to force the contemporary fortepiano to its limits and beyond.

Simon Callaghan performs internationally as a soloist and chamber musician, in parallel with a highly successful career as a recording artist. A favourite performer at the internationally- renowned Husum Festival of Piano Rarities in Germany, Callaghan's recent sell-out concert was praised by VAN Magazine as a "cleverly curated recital full of discoveries" and by the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung as "technically brilliant". Callaghan has developed a wide following and appears on a regular basis in the UK's major concert halls, and on tours to Asia, North America and Europe. Recital partners have included Sheku Kanneh-Mason, Nicholas Daniel, Adrian Brendel, Feng Ning, Samuel West, Prunella Scales and Timothy West. BBC Young Musician of the Year Finalist Coco Tomita and Callaghan have a successful duo partnership which saw their first record released in 2022 on Orchid Classics. He is also a founding member of the London Piano Quartet, joining colleagues from the renowned Piatti Quartet to showcase the repertoire for piano quartet with a particular focus on revivifying works that have fallen into obscurity.

Simon Callaghan's distinguished and eclectic discography includes recordings for Hyperion, Nimbus and Lyrita. He has a strong profile on BBC Radio3 and on a variety of streaming platforms, his most recent single on Apple Music with Coco Tomita surpassing 1 million streams in the first month of its release. He is a strong social media enthusiast, using it as a form of promotion for classical music in general but seeing it as a particular tool in his advocacy of the rare and unexplored.

Callaghan's broad repertoire encompasses the standard works of the 19th and 20th centuries and increasingly concentrates on much that is rare and unexplored, examples including Bernhard Scholz, Josef Rheinberger and Carl Reinecke. A cornerstone of his work is his commitment to British music, and he has recently begun a series on Lyrita, recording world premieres of British concertos with Martyn Brabbins and the BBC National Orchestra of Wales. Callaghan has also made first recordings of the complete piano music by Rebecca Clarke, George Dyson and William Busch. By the end of 2023, he will also have recorded four albums for Hyperion's celebrated The Romantic Piano

Concerto series. His first disc for Hyperion, with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, formed part of his PhD at the Royal Northern College of Music and was praised by BBC Radio 3's Andrew McGregor: "I have nothing but praise for the performances... impressive pianism".

Callaghan launched a comprehensive Poulenc project for Nimbus Records in 2019 and recorded *L'histoire du Babar* with actor Miriam Margolyes. The album received five stars from The Independent, reviewer Michael Church: "here, thanks to Harry Potter actor Miriam Margolyes's artistry and Simon Callaghan's excellent pianism, is Poulenc's delightful musical response. And as I listened to this recording, I found the original drawings reappearing in my mind with all their detail intact – extraordinary. It lasts just 30 minutes, but my god does it resonate." Simon Callaghan's reputation and experience in chamber music led to his appointment as Director of Music at London's celebrated Conway Hall, only the sixth incumbent since the founding of the series in 1887. Callaghan is collaborating with Roger Vignoles, one of the most distinguished piano accompanists of our time, on a new song recital element for the series in 2023/24. He was elected a Steinway Artist in 2012.

A former professional singer, **Richard Wigmore** is a music writer, lecturer and broadcaster for Radio 3, specialising in the Viennese Classical era, chamber music and Lieder. His publications include *Schubert: the complete song texts*, the *Faber Pocket Guide to Haydn* and many articles for dictionaries and encyclopedias.

Saturday 16th September
3.30pm St Mary's Church
Hay-on-Wye



THE FITZWILLIAM STRING QUARTET

Lucy Russell *violin*
Andrew Roberts *violin*
Alan George *viola*
Ursula Smith *cello*

Dances from *Dido and Aeneas*, Z.626

Henry Purcell (1659 – 95)

*Overture – Chorus ("To the Hills and the Vales")/The Triumphant Dance –
Echo Dance of Furies – Act III Prelude/The Sailors' Dance – The Witches' Dance*

Dances from *The Fairy Queen*, Z.629

*Hornpipe – Jig – Act III Prelude ("If Love's a Sweet Passion") – Dance for the Fairies –
- Chacony*

Fantazia No.7 (Z.738)

Quartet in E flat major, Op.76 No.6 (Hob. III:80) *Franz Joseph Haydn (1732 – 1809)*

Allegretto – Allegro

Fantasia:- *Adagio*

Menuet:- *Presto*

Finale:- *Allegro spiritoso*

Palimpsest – Fantasia for 2009

Duncan Druce (1939 – 2015)

Andante cantabile (from Quartet No.1 in D major, Op.11

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840 – 93)

INTERVAL

Quartet in G minor, Op.27 (1877/8)

Edvard Hagerup Grieg (1843 – 1907)

Un poco Andante – Allegro molto ed agitato – Presto – Prestissimo

Romanze:- *Andantino – Allegro agitato*

Intermezzo:- *Allegro molto marcato – Piu vivo e scherzando*

Finale:- *Lento – Presto al Saltarello – Un poco Andante – Presto*

Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* (libretto by a favourite collaborator, Nahum Tate) was first staged in the Spring of 1689; the likelihood is that one of the first performances took place at a girls' dancing school in Chelsea, when all the solo parts but that for Aeneas would probably have been sung by female voices. The other possible "first performance" would have been, like Blow's *Venus and Adonis*, as a court masque. *Dido* was Purcell's only complete opera, as opposed to "incidental" music – which includes the "semi-operas" *King Arthur*, *Dioclesian*, *The Fairy Queen*, and *The Indian Queen*, where there is considerable spoken material necessary to complete the plot. It was itself subsequently used as incidental music and performed only occasionally in its original form in the early eighteenth century. So the present suite of extracts is not without precedent.

Those chosen for today constitute the bulk of the opera's dance music – to be followed by a similar selection from one of those semi-operas: *The Fairy Queen* is such a hybrid, written at the instigation of John Dryden, who stimulated much of Purcell's work in this field. It was first performed at the Dorset Garden Theatre in 1692. Principally an adaptation of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, it contained two overtures, four extended masques interspersed between the drama, and dances – headed First and Second Music – intended to be played before the curtain rises: believe it or not, this was

to give those present in the theatre for reasons other than to watch the play (whether for social gatherings or for business purposes – including prostitution!) time to leave; they had to pay an admission charge if still there when the Overture sounded! Also so that those who *did* intend to stay should know that the time was approaching for them to consider taking their places. The music itself is some of Purcell's finest in his mature style, with the heavy influence of the English school which pervades his earlier works less obvious here than that of the French and Italian styles.

(© Peter Seymour)

Purcell was emphatically part of the company of "The Great Anniversaries" for 2009, having been born 350 years previously. He composed this astonishingly anguished fantasia in 1680, aged only 20. These pieces were, of course, originally intended for viol consort (without continuo), and are full of amazing contrapuntal ingenuities. Nevertheless, they contain some of his most intense and passionate music, exploring quite extraordinary regions of tonality and chromatically dissonant harmony – remarkably advanced and visionary for a composer in the seventeenth century, let alone one in his early twenties.

In 1795 – one hundred years after Purcell's death! – **Joseph Haydn** returned to Austria after the second of his two triumphant visits to London. His master was now Prince Nicolaus II Esterhazy – the fourth of that dynastic family under whom he was to serve. Although the prince was determined to resurrect music at his court after his predecessor, Prince Anton, had disbanded his father's famous orchestra, the demands on the now ageing composer were considerably reduced from the heady days of before, such that he was able to live for most of the year in a new house in Vienna, with his presence at Eisenstadt required only during the summer months. Nicolaus II's passion was for church music, and all he required of his illustrious old Kapellmeister was an annual mass to celebrate the name-day of his wife, Princess Marie Hermenegild. Although the prince himself was a difficult man Haydn was particularly fond of the princess; so the production of these masses for her must have given him enormous pleasure, despite the physical effort they cost him ("often when the powers of mind and body weakened, and it was difficult for me to continue in the course I had entered on....."). In her turn Princess Marie saw to his comfort when eventually he could compose no more. The second of the two tremendous oratorios composed during this period – *The Seasons* – caused him particular physical hardship; yet the virile splendour of all of this music betrays not the slightest hint of the composer's feebleness.

If the six great masses form a fitting apotheosis to Haydn's career in their fusion of symphonic and ecclesiastical styles, the eight string quartets he composed following his return from London (Opp.76 and 77) surely occupy a similar position in his instrumental output, surpassing even the twelve "London" symphonies – whose formal mastery is combined with the perfection of quartet style achieved in Op.74 to attain yet more sublime heights. The six quartets of Op.76 were commissioned in 1796 by Count Joseph Erdödy, and published three years later. Each is a masterpiece in its own right, and each has its own special characteristics which enable it to stand apart from its companions in the set. The E flat is in many ways the most forward-looking – and maybe even the

quirkiest – of them all. To begin with, he dispenses with the usual sonata *allegro* (as he also did in the previous quartet), improvising a replacement which is basically a simple ternary structure with a quick coda, combined with a variation technique which continues the monothematicism of his sonata movements – but here with more emphasis on the variations, which are built on a rather archaic-sounding “theme” which seems stuck in cryptic two-bar phrases.

Then there is the extraordinary *Fantasia*, whose deeply yearning melody explores so many remote keys via so many strange modulations that Haydn actually dispenses with a key signature altogether for the first half of the movement, eventually ending up in far off B major (where in fact he actually began, although by then one has lost all sense of a tonal centre). This in a work based in E flat! – which is now emphatically restored by the bucolic, folk like minuet. But Haydn is far from finished! – instead of a Trio he writes *Alternativo*, which consists entirely of lilting scales played one after the other – sometimes upside-down to amuse us further. No trace of the traditional two repeated halves here. Finally, a return to the outdoors, and a fleet but heavy-footed dance whose unusual triple metre foreshadows his last quartet finale of all, not many months into the future.

Duncan Druce's uniquely versatile career, as composer, violinist, violist, lecturer and writer on music, demonstrated an unusual breadth of musical sympathies. In addition to his original compositions, which include chamber, choral and orchestral works, he has achieved considerable success with reconstructions of incomplete or lost music by Mozart, Bach, Beethoven, and Berwald. His completion of the Mozart Requiem, published by Novello, has been widely acclaimed, with many performances and broadcasts and at least two commercial recordings. Having studied at King's College, Cambridge, he rose to prominence as a performer in 1967 when he became a member of the Pierrot Players. During his ten years with this group and its successor, the Fires of London, he took part in numerous premières of music by Maxwell Davies, Birtwistle, Feldman, Henze, and many others. At this time he was also a pioneer of the early music movement, and from the 1970s appeared with most of the well-known British groups specialising in Baroque and Classical period performance. For his last 30+ years he lived in West Yorkshire, where he taught at the University of Huddersfield. To the FSQ he was a true “Oracle”: many was the occasion when his unmatched knowledge drew us to consult him on matters of musical style and performance practice – from Purcell to the present day. We still miss him enormously. Of this piece he wrote:

When we hear a great piece of music from the past, a vivid sense of life is transmitted; Purcell's thoughts and feelings on July 19th, 1680 become real and immediate. This appears to go against our awareness that most of the past has vanished, or is preserved through incomplete and often ambiguous relics. And what survives often gains a meaning different from its original one by juxtapositions with survivals from another era. In a historic town centre, for example, buildings of different ages create an intriguing counterpoint of contrasting architectural styles. In writing this piece, it was my “fancy” to imagine that Purcell's Seventh Fantazia had only been preserved in fragmentary form, and that its manuscript, in places indecipherable, also contained the surviving

fragments, written in palimpsest, of another, later Fantasia, the second movement of Haydn's String Quartet Op.76 No.6, plus a few later additions, added in an attempt to "make sense" of the score. Sometimes a recognisable phrase of Purcell emerges, or one from the Haydn, at others the effect is more uncertain. At places, the two sources seem to progress together in harmony, at others we hear rhythmic conflict or tonal stress that's not present in either of the original pieces.

Tchaikovsky's famous and much loved *Andante Cantabile* is based on a folk tune from the Ukraine, which he heard sung by a workman while staying with his sister Alexandra at Kamenka during the summer of 1869. The second theme is the composer's own – a worthy companion, graced by exquisitely imaginative scoring. The acclaim afforded to this delicate little piece is indeed supported by honorable precedent, in that the great Leo Tolstoy himself (as reported by an extremely proud composer) was moved to tears by this movement at its première – who can be sure whether he was aware of the words to which Piotr Ilyich heard it sung:

Upon the divan Vanya sat
And filled a glass with rum:
Before he'd poured out half a tot
He ordered Katenka to come

The D major quartet itself – the first of any significance by a Russian composer – is certainly not a work of immaturity, as its catalogue number might suggest: Tchaikovsky already had to his credit three operas, the first symphony, *Fatum, Romeo and Juliet, The Storm Overture*, besides several piano pieces and songs – he had even composed a string quartet: the un-numbered, single-movement B flat major. In 1871 his financial position was far from healthy, so Nikolai Rubinstein suggested that he give a concert of his own music to raise some money. He was obviously in no position to hire an orchestra; and since such an occasion clearly demanded a large scale work he busied himself instead during the February of 1871 with the composition of this quartet. It displays throughout a wonderful feeling of freshness and spontaneity, partly originating in the highly subtle use of dance rhythm which pervades the whole work – itself perhaps inspired by a rhythmic twist in the quoted folk tune, which doesn't quite fit into a regular metre.....

It was Tchaikovsky's Norwegian contemporary **Edvard Grieg** who persuaded Julius Delius that his son could be a musician, the two composers having first met in Leipzig when young Fritz was still studying there, then again on a walking holiday with student friends in Norway. His was perhaps the greatest single influence on Delius's own musical thinking: "...I tell you frankly, never in my life have I met a nature which has won all my love as yours has". Delius heard the (original) Brodsky Quartet perform Grieg's G minor Quartet in Leipzig in February 1888, and it evidently made a lasting impact on the impressionable young composer: "Dear Grieg, I should like to let you know what pleasure your quartet gave me & in what a strange mood it left me. It will be of little importance to you if I tell you how much I love you & esteem you, but it is true & comes from my heart & so I thank you for all the pleasure that I feel in your works." Later the same year Delius heard the quartet again in London, and also Grieg himself playing his own piano concerto

– it was at this time that a dinner was arranged at which the older composer was able to persuade the senior Delius of his son's great potential. When Delius himself finally came to write a string quartet, in 1916, it was perhaps an unconscious (posthumous) tribute to his mentor that he should quote a native melody himself (heard sung by plantation workers while supposedly growing oranges and grapefruit in Florida during the 1880s). Grieg wrote to Matthison-Hansen:

I have recently finished a string quartet which I still haven't heard. It is in G minor and is not intended to bring trivialities to market. It strives towards breadth, soaring flight and above all resonance for the instruments for which it is written.

It was not actually his only attempt at a quartet, since he had previously completed one in the early 1860s, with just two movements of another left at the time of his death. As with his C minor symphony of fourteen years earlier, the G minor quartet is indeed a large scale, highly ambitious work, often striving for orchestral sonorities, but also not ashamed to wear its heart on its sleeve or to acknowledge its debt to the traditional music of his homeland. Indeed, his fascination with the *hardingfele* (Hardanger fiddle) reached its zenith in his 1902 set of piano pieces *Slåtter* (Op.72), which freely transcribe traditional fiddle tunes, exploiting their characteristic multiple-stopping sonorities in a manner which results in harmonies not at all out of place in the century they were written. Such sonorities had already found their way into the present quartet – which was actually composed when staying at a farm in Hardanger itself!

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THE FITZWILLIAM STRING QUARTET

The original members of the FSQ first sat down together at Fitzwilliam College Cambridge, in October 1968 – as undergraduates during their inaugural term. Their first concert appearance took place in Churchill College the following March, ahead of their public debut at the Sheffield Arts Festival in June – making the Fitzwilliam now one of the longest established string quartets in the world, and almost unique in having passed a half-century with an original player still on board (but recently joined by both the Chilingirian and Brodsky Quartets – with our congratulations!). The present line-up combines founding member Alan George with a younger generation of performers: violinists Lucy Russell (herself celebrating 35 years in the group) and Andrew Roberts (son of the great pianist Bernard), along with Canadian cellist Heather Tuach.

International recognition came early for the FSQ, as the first group to record and perform all fifteen Shostakovich string quartets, drawing on the players' personal connection with the composer: he travelled to York to hear their performance of his thirteenth quartet, and this musical friendship (the composer's own word!) prospered through correspondence, and the presentation of his final two quartets – written in the years immediately following that visit. Sadly, a carefully planned trip to spend a week with him in Moscow was necessarily abandoned, following his death in August 1975. Benjamin Britten afterwards reported that his friend had told him the Fitzwilliam were

his “preferred performers of my quartets”! Complete cycles were given in a number of major centres, including London, New York, and Montréal. A new recording of the last three quartets was specially released by Linn in October 2019, to celebrate “FSQ@50” year. Whilst their pre-eminence in the interpretation of Shostakovich has persisted, the authority gained has been put at the service of diverse other composers spanning six centuries, from the mid-16th to the present day.

The quartet has appeared regularly across the UK, Europe, North America, the Middle and Far East, and Southern Africa, as well as making many award winning recordings for Decca, Linn, and Divine Art. A long-term ambition to record Beethoven and Schubert on gut strings – following the success of previous discs on historical instruments – was finally initiated during their 50th anniversary season, with recordings of Schubert’s last four quartets (the A minor and D minor already available, the C minor and G major their first release post-lockdowns). Beethoven’s Opp.131 and 135 are scheduled to follow next March. Thus does the Fitzwilliam remain one of the few prominent quartets to play on older set-ups, yet simultaneously bringing about the addition of over 60 new works to the repertoire – as can be heard on perhaps their most novel disc so far: a jazz-fusion collaboration with German saxophonist/composer Uwe Steinmetz and former Turtle Island Quartet violinist Mads Tolling.

After graduating from Cambridge in 1971 they immediately embarked on their first professional appointment, succeeding the celebrated Amadeus Quartet at the University of York. From there, the group built a niche for itself in concert venues around Yorkshire and the rest of the UK, at the same time joining a select company of aspiring quartets to have emerged under the guidance of Sidney Griller at the Royal Academy of Music. Having been Quartet-in-Residence at York for twelve years, at Warwick for three, at Fitzwilliam College Cambridge from 1998, and at Bucknell (Pennsylvania, USA) since 1978, their university work now continues at Clare Hall Cambridge (where they are Fellow Commoners), and at St Andrews – the latter incorporating their annual quartet course (“Strings in Spring”), which sits comfortably alongside their regular coaching weekend at Benslow Music (Hitchin). The quartet is very proud to have been granted its own annual chamber music festival here in this famous “book town” of Hay-on-Wye. The FSQ golden anniversary season itself included a concert back in Cambridge on 2nd March 2019, 50 years to the day after that debut performance.

Lucy, Andrew, and Alan regret to announce that Heather has been suffering from severe auditory impairment, resulting from Covid 19 earlier in the year. So we are extremely thrilled – and grateful! – to have secured Ursula’s services for current events. She has led a highly distinguished career as principal cellist in various groups, including the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, as well as seven years in the eminent Zehetmair Quartet. www.fitzwilliamquartet.com

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TIM HOMFRAY, CLASSICAL MUSIC MAGAZINE

"Bows & Bellows!"

Saturday 16th September

8pm Hay Castle



Paul Hutchinson is regarded as one of the top accordionists in the country because of his unique, refreshing, and at times classical approach to playing. A member of the much-loved duo Belshazzar's Feast, Paul has 20 years of touring in the UK, appearances on television and radio and gained them many plaudits including a nomination for Best Duo at the BBC Folk Awards in 2010. He is regarded as one of the top accordionists in the country because of his unique, refreshing and at times 'classical' approach to playing. He is an experienced workshop leader. Paul also has a keen interest and knowledge of 17th & 18th-century music which has resulted in appearances at festivals in the UK, Europe and the USA. His love of fusion music originates from his days with the renowned Celtic jazzers, Hoover the Dog. Pagoda is the next exciting chapter in his musical journey providing a vehicle for his own compositions with more than a helping hand from the wonderful jazz clarinetist, Karen Wimhurst. Their debut album 'Clarion' received 5 star reviews from Songlines and fRoots.

Gabi Maas plays modern and baroque violins, viola and nyckelharpa. Her passion for exploring different styles has led her to work with groups ranging from Concerto Caledonia and Istante Collective to Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique and Scottish Chamber Orchestra.

Gabi has been learning various traditional styles for the last ten years. She is especially interested in fiddle music from the west coast of Ireland and Scandinavian baroque dance tunes, and took up nyckelharpa in order to explore the Swedish and Finnish repertoires further.

She has also collaborated extensively with Algerian Berber musicians and studied Carnatic violin in Chennai with Sri Vittal Ramamurthy.

Her album 'The Curlew' with cellist Alice Allen came out in 2020

Sophie Renshaw enjoys a varied musical life spanning chamber music partnerships, orchestral playing, teaching and cross genre collaborations with world and folk artists, for which she creates arrangements. She has been violist in the Orford String Quartet of Canada and Principal Violist in the Scottish Chamber Orchestra. Currently a Professor of Viola and Chamber music at Royal Conservatoire Scotland, Sophie enjoys performing the classical repertoire as a member of London Mozart Players and Orchestre Romantique et Révolutionnaire. In 2018 she founded string trio Trio Mythos with violinist Lucy Russell and cellist Ruth Phillips to explore the connections between folk and Baroque music. In 2019 she created string arrangements for songs by singer-songwriters Brothers Gillespie and Provencal polyphonic vocal trio Tant Que Li Siam which were performed alongside re-workings of traditional folk tunes and Baroque chamber works in France and UK and recorded for CD in 2019 under the name "Hirondelle." Throughout her viola playing career, Sophie has sought to develop both sides of her musicianship as interpreter and innovator. Her 38 years of professional playing began as violist in the Orford String Quartet, in residence at the University of Toronto. She later took up the Principal Viola position in the Scottish Chamber Orchestra and has

performed as a chamber musician at numerous festivals, including the International Festivals of Gstaad, Kuhmo, ISM Prussia Cove, London Proms and Carnegie Hall recital series.

Her orchestral and ensemble work has spanned those orchestras that use elements of Historically Informed Performance Practice such as Orchestre Romantique et Revolutionnaire and Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment to the modern orchestra – BBC National Orchestra of Wales and Royal London Philharmonic. She has been guest Principal Viola with English National Opera, Glyndebourne and Holland Park Opera and many of the UK's leading chamber orchestras including Britten Sinfonia, Orchestra of St Martin in the Fields and English Chamber Orchestra.

“Over my career I have played for audiences in all imaginable types of spaces: large and small concert halls, village halls and community centres, prisons, hospitals, underground car parks and Japanese Zen temples. All these events have held exactly the same purpose for me: to connect with my fellow musicians and audience so we may be transported out of everyday life into a realm that transforms and connects us. This is the power of music.”

Lucy Russell is an internationally regarded violinist; versatile, committed and expert at what she does. She is leader of the Fitzwilliam String Quartet, which is ensemble in residence at St Andrews University and Clare Hall, Cambridge. She has enjoyed a career on modern and historical instruments for all her working life. Her experience as an orchestral player and leader has included working with groups such as AAM, OAE, ORR and EBS. As leader of the Fitzwilliam Quartet, she has performed and recorded a diverse array of repertoire ranging from ancient to modern, and within the world of early music, she partners with John Butt (harpsichord) and with Sezi Seskir (fortepiano). She has made many highly acclaimed CDs for Linn records with repertoire spanning from Bach sonatas with Butt (receiving a five-star review from Classical Music magazine) and Haydn, Schubert, Brahms and Bruckner (all on gut) with the Fitzwilliam Quartet. In their 50th Anniversary, the quartet recorded the last three quartets by Shostakovich as a tribute to their long association with the man and his music. FSQ will be recording Beethoven's Op131 and 135 for Linn records in March 2024.

Lucy is Professor of Baroque Violin at the Royal College of Music, Honorary Professor of violin at St Andrew's University, a Visiting Tutor at Birmingham Royal Conservatoire and Director of the Baroque Ensemble at the University of York, where she also teaches. She was recently invited by Sir Simon Rattle to 'prepare' the Royal Academy of Music's string players for his rehearsal with them. She is also Director of the St Andrew's Baroque Summer Course for students who aspire to join the profession and a member of the faculty for Chamber Music Collective in the USA. Lucy is a recently qualified Mindfulness Teacher (MMTCP) which she plans to bring in the lives of fellow musicians at all levels – enabling greater physical and mental freedom and presence through experimental awareness to enable enhanced communication and joy through music-making.

Sunday 17th September
5.30pm St Mary's Church
Hay-on-Wye



THE FITZWILLIAM STRING QUARTET

Lucy Russell *violin*
Andrew Roberts *violin*
Alan George *viola*
Ursula Smith *cello*
with
Simon Callaghan *piano*

Molly on the Shore (1907/11)

Percy Aldridge Grainger (1882 – 1961)

Lovingly and reverently dedicated to the memory of Edvard Grieg.

Irish Reel [for piano] based on two Cork Reel tunes.....

Set for string four-some (4 single strings) or string band (double basses at will.)

Birthday-gift, Mother [Rose], 3.7. '07

Ben Hartley Notebooks (2023, first performance)

Liz Dilnot Johnson (b.1964)

Celtic Elegy (2021/2 – first performance of new version)

Ian Stephens (b.1974)

Trio sur des mélodies populaires irlandaises (1925)

Frank Martin (1890 – 1974)

Allegro moderato

Adagio

Gigue:- *Allegro*

INTERVAL

Piano Quintet in A major, Op 81

Antonín Dvořák (1841 – 1904)

Allegro ma non tanto

Dumka:- *Andante con moto – Vivace – Tempo I*

Scherzo (Furiant):- *Molto vivace*

Finale:- *Allegro*

Percy Grainger was one of the younger generation of like-minded composers – along with their mentors Grieg and Delius – who maintained a close and mutually influential friendship during the early years of the 20th century. His own description of this afternoon's engaging and witty piece is printed at the head of the score – followed by further detailed information and instructions, such that the music itself doesn't begin until over halfway down the first page! The two reel tunes were "Temple Hill" and "Molly on the Shore", respectively Nos. 901 and 902 of *The Complete Petrie Collection of Ancient Irish Music*, edited by Sir Charles Villiers Stanford. Although moving with ease in conventional musical circles, where his most notable acquaintances included Busoni, as well as Grieg and Delius, and in which he achieved considerable celebrity status as a virtuoso pianist, Grainger's mission ultimately lay in other milieux – notably as an avid collector and scrupulous arranger of folk material from such far flung regions as Denmark, Ireland, and Lincolnshire. He drew his greatest inspiration from the most

natural sources of sound, expressing himself through such unconventional means as free rhythm, ensemble improvisation, and “elastic scoring” – whereby a considerable degree of freedom over size and range of orchestration is encouraged on the part of the performers. His description of the type of the latter ensemble as a “string four-some” is typical of a unique irreverence and eccentricity – as are the various markings in the score which exemplify his refusal to conform, for example “louden lots” instead of *crescendo molto*, “feelingly and clingingly” (*espressivo e legato*), or “middle-fiddle” for viola!. We celebrate the work of this wayward, gifted, and misunderstood genius through what is one of the most popular and admired of his many transcriptions. As Prof Wilfrid Mellers so perceptively and colourfully wrote: “Grainger’s music reminds us that the Happy Tribes of Folk sang and danced that they might have life more abundantly”.

Award-winning British composer **Liz Dilnot Johnson** lives on the Herefordshire side of the Malvern Hills. Her richly diverse music includes danceworks, films, opera, luscious choral, vocal and orchestral works and a wealth of delicately layered and complex chamber music, performed all over the world. *When A Child Is A Witness – Requiem for Refugees* won the Ivors Composer Award 2022 for Community and Participation, involving over 100 performers including children and refugee groups, with Lucy Russell (on violin and Hardanger fiddle). Johnson’s debut double album *Intricate Web* (2017) features *Sky-burial* performed by the Fitzwilliam with vocalist Loré Lixenberg, while the music video *Can You Hear Me?* includes music from her large-scale cantata *I Stand At The Door* for mezzo-soprano, baroque violin, choir and baroque orchestra with words by Greta Thunberg, Kurt Masur, the Book of Revelations, David Hart and the composer herself. In 2024, when Liz will enjoy her 60th birthday, the FSQ is commissioning Liz’s String Quartet No. 5, with the premiere in Great Malvern in April 2024, plus further performances planned at St Andrews, Clare Hall Cambridge, and the Hay Festival 2024. There will also be four CD releases of Liz’s music: *The Space Between Heaven and Earth* for basset horn (an early tenor clarinet) with piano, *Inflorescence* for soprano saxophone with piano, *In The Mirror* for cello and piano commissioned and recorded by FSQ cellist Heather Tuach, and a full album of Liz’s selected choral works performed by Ex Cathedra, the choir with which Liz is Composer-in-Residence.

Ben Hartley (1933-96) was a painter who settled in the Devonshire countryside and lived there as a recluse. Alongside his numerous rustic artworks and quirky self-portraits (often painted on old brown parcel paper) he kept notebooks full of pencil sketches. He makes little observations of the landscape, people and creatures around him and this set of pieces for string quartet takes two of Ben’s offerings as inspiration:

1. *A New Beauty* 18th November 1964 Notebook entry: ‘Week of wetness, and a new beauty – that of brown autumnwinter... The dock leaf, the dandelion and the cow in the field...The leaves are gone, the landscape winter-looking.’
2. *Old Ben Dances* Painting: a pair of old man’s legs (Ben’s own?) adorned with stout boots and a splendidly thick woollen pair of yellow knee-high ‘gaiters’. I imagine these legs dancing!

Liz plans to create more of these miniatures for string quartet, some of this music already features in her solo Cello Suite. www.lizdilnotjohnson.co.uk

Ian Stephens's music has been widely performed in the UK and further afield, by ensembles including the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, Brighouse and Rastrick Brass Band, Northern Ballet, and Choir of King's College Cambridge, and has been broadcast on BBC Radio 3 and 4. Born in Sidmouth, Devon, Ian studied music at Bristol University and is based near Liverpool, where he takes a full part in the musical life of the city. He is a Composition Tutor at Chetham's School of Music in Manchester, and a mentor on the Rushworth Young Composer scheme. An album of his chamber music is in preparation with the Fitzwilliam Quartet. He writes of this touching piece:

Celtic Elegy was originally written in 2001 for my wife, the clarinettist Mandy Burvill, and the cellist Joanna Lander, then both members of the RLPO. It's inspired by the Irish air 'She moved through the fair', but with drones and ornamentation more redolent of Scottish bagpipe music. I made this version for violin and cello at the request of the Fitzwilliam in 2022. www.ianstephens.net

Frank Martin was assuredly one of Switzerland's leading composers of all time, spanning multiple musical epochs in his long life: Kai Christiansen points out that "when [he] was born in 1890, Brahms was about to compose his clarinet quintet. When Martin died in 1974, Shostakovich had just completed his 15th and last string quartet", suggesting the composer's own musical language went through similar changes, taking in his own versions of serialism, impressionism, and neoclassicism, often characterised by a "startling rhythmic vitality with a penchant for cross and polyrhythms". I myself once played in a performance in Siena of his secular oratorio *Le Vin Herbé* – based on the Tristan and Isolde legend – and was deeply taken with its sensual and sensitive treatment of the subject. He was a fine pianist and – remarkable for its time – also played the harpsichord and clavichord. He was born into a Huguenot family, brought up a Protestant and became deeply religious, yet found himself drawn to Catholic texts throughout his life.

This trio, described by Christiansen as a "three-movement Irish fantasia", was the result of a specific commission from an American amateur musician – who must, like so many of his compatriots, been of Irish descent (he preferred to remain anonymous!). Martin had already developed an interest in various ethnic musics, and this commission provoked extensive study of Irish folksong at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, resulting in the inclusion of around a dozen authentic melodies in this effervescent work.

For many music lovers the true personality of **Antonín Dvořák** is enshrined less in his large scale symphonic works, but rather in those where either he allows his deep rooted Czech temperament to come to the fore (as with the famous Slavonic Dances), or in certain more intimate chamber works which even betray a whiff of the homespun. Into the latter category would be placed the wonderful Bagatelles (*Maličkosti*), Op.47, for the decidedly homely combination of two violins, cello, and harmonium; or *Cypřiše* (*Cypresses*), for string quartet. But what of the full scale chamber works themselves?

Interestingly, they appear to fulfil different rôles at different times of his life: some of the earliest quartets are huge, ambitiously symphonic, lasting up to an hour! By the time he came to write this Op.81 piano quintet he had completed at least a dozen of them, yet had not attempted one for six years, since Op.61 of 1881. Similarly, although having composed three piano trios, plus a piano quintet and quartet, by the same year, it was not until 1888 that he once more put his great experience in these forms to practical but triumphant use in the production of another piano quintet – again, in the bright and optimistic key of A major. Whilst the inevitable influence of his great friend Brahms is often to the fore, and in particular the massive sonorities achieved in his own F minor quintet from 1864, it transpires that the terse, angst-ridden tone of much of that work is less in evidence than the sunny, life-enhancing spirit which pervades another piano quintet, from 22 years further back: that of Brahms's great mentor Robert Schumann. Indeed, no chamber work can ever have opened in more gloriously lyrical mood than Dvořák's quintet, setting off as it does with the cello launching straight into one of the composer's most unforgettable melodies.

Yet – as with the Schumann – the effervescence is temporarily suspended for the second movement, and a gloomy melody whose march-like tread strikingly recalls the harmonic darkness of its apparent model. This in fact proves to be the first of two essentially Slavonic “dances” which form the centre of Dvořák's grand conception: the *Dumka* actually originated in the Ukraine, and was a kind of folk-ballad whose striking contrast between elegiac lament and wild gaiety found creative response way beyond the Czech lands and into Poland and Russia – where it was taken up by Tchaikovsky, amongst others. The *Dumka* was often paired with another national dance, the *Furiant* – no stranger at this point in Dvořák's symphonic and chamber works, yet on this occasion dispensing with the usual *hemiola* triple-time rhythms. Finally, a high spirited Allegro whose *moto perpetuo* motif, even when subjected to the somewhat more academic rigour of fugue, never quite gives up its sparkle.

1888 was to prove a significant year for Dvořák, not only on account of the composition of this marvellous quintet and work on his opera *Jakobin*: there were also important concerts for him in Budapest and Dresden, but February and November saw visits to Prague by none other than Tchaikovsky. The two composers struck up a genuine friendship, resulting in a major trip to Russia in March 1890. London – and the eighth symphony – followed quickly after the Russian adventure, before this increasingly international musician's travels culminated in 1892 with his long and well documented stay in the USA, where he composed his most famous work, the symphony *From the New World*. As he said himself, “The influence of America can be felt by anyone who has ‘a nose’”. Yet the pentatonic scale, which we think of as being so characteristic of native American music, happens to be no less vital an ingredient of Bohemian folk melodies: listen to the joyful tumbling unisons at the end of this exuberant quintet! Even at the height of Dvořák's fame the extent of its popularity would likely have come as something of a surprise to this humble and home-loving gentleman.

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