

ABBHEY CHURCH EVENTS

In the Benedictine tradition of nurturing the arts and learning

2018-2019 Season



Maxwell Quartet

Colin Scobie
1st Violin

George Smith
2nd Violin

Elliott Perks
Viola

Duncan Strachan
Cello



PROGRAM

String Quartet in E-flat major, Op.71 no. 3,
Apponyi, Hob.III:71 Franz Joseph Haydn
Vivace (1732-1809)
Andante con moto
Menuet
Finale. Vivace

Visions at Sea (2011).....Joey Roukens
(b. 1982)

Scottish Folk Music (*to be announced from the stage*)

INTERMISSION

Quartet in B-flat major, Op.130 Ludwig van Beethoven
Adagio ma non troppo - Allegro (1770-1827)
Presto
Andante con moto, ma non troppo
Alla danza tedesca, allegro assai
Cavatina. Adagio molto espressivo
Grosse Fuge



The Maxwell Quartet appears by arrangement with Lisa Sapinkopf Artists
www.chambermuse.com • www.maxwellstringquartet.com

*With grateful thanks to an anonymous friend of Abbey Church Events,
and special thanks for the assistance of Saint Martin's University students.*

2nd February 2019
8:00 p.m.

Saint Martin's Abbey
Lacey, Washington

About the Artists

First Prize winner and Audience Prize winner at the 2017 Trondheim (Norway) International Chamber Music Competition, the Glasgow-based **Maxwell Quartet** has been hailed for "great communication" (The Strad) and as "brilliantly fresh, unexpected and exhilarating" (The Scottish Herald). The Quartet is now firmly regarded as one of Britain's finest string quartets, with a strong commitment to their folk music heritage and to bringing together wide-ranging projects and programmes to expand the quartet repertoire.

The Quartet performs regularly across the UK and abroad, including London's Wigmore Hall, Purcell Room, St Martin-in-the-Fields, and the BBC Proms. Their 2017-18 season included engagements in Denmark, Norway, Germany, the Netherlands, France and China. They have held residencies at Oxford University, Perth Concert Hall and many festivals across the UK, including their own Loch Shiel Festival in the Scottish highlands. Their first U.S. tour, nearly a month long, in winter 2019, will include a NYC début on the prestigious Schneider Concert series. Their début CD release, of Haydn and traditional Scottish folk music, will coincide.

The Quartet consists of four great friends who grew up playing classical and folk music together in youth orchestras and music schools across Scotland. Launched in 2010, the Quartet was named the Conservatoire of Scotland's Young Artists in Residence the very next year.

Passionate about partnerships, the Quartet has collaborated with the Danish String Quartet, world-renowned pianists Benjamin Grosvenor and Jeremy Menuhin, the Cryptic Theatre, the Royal Ballet School, the soul duo Lunir, cinematographer Herman Kolgen, and many more. They have also commissioned some of the UK's most dynamic composers including Anna Meredith, Tom Harrold, Mark Simpson and Colin Broom. The quartet regularly broadcasts on BBC Radio Scotland, as well as giving school workshops and children's concerts.

The Maxwell Quartet was mentored by the Endellion Quartet and Hatto Beyerle, founding member of the Alban Berg Quartet.



Program Notes

Haydn

Although commissioned by Count Apponyi, a good violinist and generous patron of the arts, this quartet was actually written in preparation for Haydn's second trip to London, and the violinist more on Haydn's mind was surely the London impresario Johann Peter Salomon. So the work incorporates several of the tricks Haydn developed to impress (or, in the beginning, subdue) his English audiences. The first movement, for instance, begins with what László Somfai has memorably called a "noise-killer curtain," one loud, attention-getting chord separated from the main Vivace material by a full bar's rest. Another London trick is the series of unusual--for the time, almost freakish--modulations in the development section that veer from the sonata-form movement's standard harmonic path. The movement's witty first theme spins along happily for four bars before stopping to check itself with two quiet, bouncy little measures, and continues to repeat that pattern. The second subject is a slippery canon that never quite fires its contrapuntal shot.

The Andante con moto is a set of free variations on two themes, one an informal major-mode humming tune, and the other a minor-mode subject closely related to the first. The two are so similar, in fact, that it can be difficult to determine which is being varied--or if the second theme itself is simply a minor variation on the first. The movement's most notable moment comes in the third variation, in which the often-neglected cello gets the leading voice.

As if emboldened by his cello solo in the slow movement, Haydn allots a brief solo to each instrument in his lengthy Minuet, as if the momentarily dominant player were making a quiet confession to the others. The central trio begins deep in the solo cello, and by the end has risen to a violin part placed well above the staff.

The final movement, Vivace, takes ternary form, with the loping outer sections looking ahead to the Viennese waltz. The middle portion is a mild fugato in which Haydn shows off to the Londoners his superior Teutonic technique. —*James Reel*

Roukens

Joey Roukens was born in Schiedam, the Netherlands, in 1982. He studied composition with Klaas de Vries at the Rotterdam Conservatory and psychology at Leiden University. His works have been performed

by major ensembles and soloists in the Netherlands and abroad, such as the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, the Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra, the New York Philharmonic, the Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, Britten Sinfonia, and Tokyo Sinfonietta. For a long time, Roukens has also been active in pop music.

Roukens strives to move away from modernist ways of thinking in search for a more eclectic and direct idiom. He seeks to organically integrate elements from highly diverse influences and aesthetics, and thus doesn't shy away from the use of tonality, references to popular music, vernacular culture, "stealing" from the musical heritage of the past, and the odd trivial turn.

Visions at Sea explores the turbulent voyages that Dutch seafarers made in the 17th century. It uses old Dutch sea shanties carefully woven into a dynamic framework which lurches from moments of serene beauty to ones of wild frenzy.

Beethoven

Beethoven's last string quartets were composed during the final years of his life between 1824 and 1826. The project began with a commission from the Russian Prince Nicholas Galitzin, an amateur cellist who requested "one, two or three" string quartets. Once Beethoven began work in earnest, he turned out five massive quartets that ultimately become six separate works known simply and profoundly as "The Late Quartets." For decades, these quartets were regarded by most as quite possibly the work of a once great composer now degenerated into a deafness and insanity. (Schubert, Mendelssohn and Schumann thought differently). It was not until the 20th century that the late quartets became widely regarded as profound and transcendent masterworks worthy of entering, if not becoming, the apex of the traditional repertoire.

The third of the late quartets in the order Beethoven composed them, Op.130 was completed in November of 1825. Beethoven and his publisher surprisingly agreed that the finale did not sit well with the rest of the quartet movements. The bristling fugue of epic proportions was deemed "too much" for audiences of the time, and it was detached and published as a separate opus. Beethoven composed a fresh, much lighter finale to complete Op. 130 in its revised, final version. The quartet will be performed tonight in its original version.

Like nearly all of the Beethoven's late quartets, Op. 130 can be approached in many ways. Without regard to the well-established elite tradition of

quartet form, style and expression, Op.130 presents a surface beauty, technical facility and rich emotional aspect that can't fail to strike a casual listener as truly lovely music with profound tendencies. But seen within a framework of traditional works by Haydn and Mozart, Op.130 is, like the other late quartets, a very odd and possibly incomprehensible departure. Herein lies one sense of the term "difficult" applied to these late works: "difficult to follow" compared to the rhetorical conventions of the time. But surely another meaning behind the term "difficult" is the emotional demands they make they induce in the listener. Throughout the late quartets, one finds extreme emotional states that can, at times, be difficult because they are simply so intense and effective.

Op.130, particularly in its original form, is truly an anomaly from a conventional perspective. Rather than the traditional four movements, it has six. Of these, two are almost laughably short while the original fugal finale was outrageously long and truly "difficult" in every sense of the word. The fourth movement is a triple meter German dance with a trio of a rustic character, but the second movement is also clearly a scherzo of ternary design. Two scherzi? Although the opening movement appears to be in a rather straightforward sonata form (it is far more), the fifth movement is a basic operatic cavatina of surprisingly simple design with an indescribably haunting character nonetheless. The musicologist Michael Steinberg suggests that to the listeners of the day, this must have seemed like a miscellany of movements, more like a divertimento or suite than a string quartet. Musicologist Leonard Ratner provides a convincing analysis that Beethoven was indeed intentionally invoking an antique form of suite complete with Renaissance canzona, a march, an aria and a gigue, a design that practically renders the Grosse Fuge an inextricable part of a grand design.

All of this only reinforces the essential fact that Beethoven was an undaunted pioneer and artistic visionary who created, particularly in the late quartets, truly complicated works of high art that speak on many levels lending themselves to multiple if not infinite interpretations and reactions. They are indescribably compelling works that have mesmerized players, composers, scholars, poets and avid listeners for nearly two hundred years. Perhaps one of their most essential traits is that they can become as "difficult" as one wishes or, miraculously, as direct, simple and obvious as one's willingness to hear and feel. Feel and "understand" them as you can and as you will. It is a project worthy of a lifetime. —*Kai Christiansen*



Still to Come in 2019



Soo Been Lee

Violin

Dina Vainshtein

Piano

Saturday, 2nd March 2019 ~ 8:00 p.m.

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Master Class - Kreielsheimer Hall

Friday, 1st March 2019

3:00 p.m.



Ilya Yakushev

Piano

Saturday, 23rd March 2019 ~ 8:00 p.m.

Saint Martin's Abbey was founded in 1895 by the Benedictine monks of Saint John's Abbey, Collegeville, Minnesota. The Benedictines are a monastic order of the Roman Catholic Church. Today, as in years past, the Benedictine monks of Saint Martin's Abbey pray, work and live together in community, seeking God and responding to Him in their life of prayer. The monk is a man who seeks in the monastery an environment in which he might live the Christian life to the fullest. Under the leadership of their elected abbot, the monks of Saint Martin's Abbey gather together for common prayer several times daily in the Abbey Church, and individually spend time each day in private prayer and spiritual reading.

For centuries, the apostolate of education has characterized many Benedictine communities as their principal work. The monks of Saint Martin's, together with their lay colleagues, are involved in a wide variety of work within Saint Martin's University as administrators, auxiliary personnel, teachers and counselors and in work within the Abbey. Some also are engaged in pastoral ministry in Catholic parishes of the Pacific Northwest. The principle of "unity in diversity in Christ" is as characteristic of the Benedictine community of Saint Martin's Abbey today as it was at the time of its founding over a century ago.

In the spirit of the fifteen hundred-year-old Benedictine tradition of nurturing the arts and learning, the monastic community of Saint Martin's Abbey established in 1980 an annual music and lecture series which brings gifted musicians and recognized academics to the Abbey Church. Since its establishment, Abbey Church Events has presented several Pacific Northwest debuts, among which was that of soprano Dawn Upshaw in 1990. Among many other luminaries, Abbey Church Events has presented pianist Richard Goode; The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center; the late pianist/scholar Charles Rosen; soprano Benita Valente; Calmus; and the poet Jane Hirshfield. Our 2018-2019 season features Messiaen's "Quartet for the End of Time" and the first American tour of Scotland's Maxwell Quartet.

Abbey Church Events lectures and concerts are offered free to the public. The series is underwritten by the interest on a small endowment established by the monks of Saint Martin's Abbey, as well as by freewill offerings, bequests, and occasional grants. The Abbot Gerald R. Desmond Lectures receive support from a bequest of Lou Waynick Beck. During the 2018-2019 season we are especially grateful for the continued support of Olympia Federal Savings, a gift from an anonymous friend of Abbey Church Events, support from family and friends of the late Carol Tamblyn Carlson, the Annaliese Soros Educational Residency Program of Young Concert Artists, and for special services provided by Saint Martin's University students.

www.stmartin.edu/abbey/church_events.htm

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