

## **PROGRAMME NOTES**

Sunday 13 October 2019, 3pm, Chorleywood Memorial Hall

**Peter Nall directs the début performance of the**

**18-17 ENSEMBLE** - 15 expert string players from Peter's wide range of professional colleagues in the surrounding district

The programme includes two of the greatest string masterpieces

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847) String Octet in E flat, op.20

1. Allegro moderato, ma con fuoco; 2. Andante; 3. Scherzo: Allegro leggierissimo; (iv) Presto  
Composed in 1825 and dedicated to his close friend, Eduard Rietz, this work shows an astonishing mastery of counterpoint and was innovative, being one of the first works of its kind to feature an ingenious interplay between two distinct string quartets. Nevertheless, it requires a first violin of virtuoso abilities. Featuring astoundingly accomplished fugal writing, the whole work exhibits tremendous energy and excitement and it is staggering to realise that the composer was only sixteen when he wrote it.

Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)

Serenade in C major for Strings, op.48

1. Pezzo in forma di sonatina: Andante non troppo — Allegro moderato
2. Valse: Moderato — Tempo di valse
3. Élégie: Larghetto elegiaco
4. Finale (Tema russo): Andante — Allegro con spirito

Tchaikovsky's Serenade for Strings is one of several compositions in which the great exponent of 19th-century Romanticism in Russian music shows an attraction to the poise and elegance of the Classical period. Tchaikovsky wrote this piece in 1880 not on commission or to fulfil a particular obligation, but as he told a correspondent, "from inner compulsion. It is a heartfelt piece and so, I dare to think, not lacking in real qualities." Tchaikovsky had not misplaced his confidence. Its seemingly effortless flow of melody, coupled with an original and very beautiful handling of string sonorities, makes this one of the composer's most successful works

Friday 26 October, 7.30pm, Baptist Church

**David Halls, piano/harpsichord**

**Caroline Halls, soprano**

**Steven Halls, cello**

**Daphne Moody, violin**

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) Nur ein Wink from *Christmas Oratorio*

JS Bach, Ich folge dir gleichfalls from *St John Passion*

Antonín Dvorák (1841-1904), Piano Trio No.1 in B flat

Edward Elgar (1857-1934), Four popular songs with string obbligato

Elgar, Piano Trio movements

For the first time ever, David Halls, Director of Music at Salisbury Cathedral, his daughter Caroline and his brother Steven combine with their long-time friend and professional colleague, Daphne Moody to present a unique programme that combines their talents in different combinations. The programme includes also some specially commissioned surprise arrangements from the astonishingly gifted Iain Farrington.

Friday 29 November, 7.30pm, Baptist Church

**Maggini String Quartet**

Ludwig Beethoven (1770-1827) String Quartet in F, op.18 no.1

1. Allegro con brio; 2. Adagio affettuoso ed appassionato; 3. Scherzo – allegro molto; 4. Allegro.

Frank Bridge (1879-1941) String Quartet no.1 “Bologna” (1906)

1. Adagio – Allegro appassionato; 2. Adagio molto; 3. Allegretto grazioso – Animato  
4. Allegro agitato – Allegretto moderato – Adagio molto

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1947) String Quartet no.6 in F op.80

1. Allegro vivace assai; 2. Allegro assai; 3. Adagio 4. Finale - Allegro molto

Written between 1798 and 1800, and published in 1801, Beethoven’s Quartet no.1 was actually the second he wrote, and it was extensively revised, prompting him to write "Be sure not to hand on to anybody your quartet, in which I have made some drastic alterations. For only now have I learnt to write quartets; and this you will notice, I fancy, when you receive them". With his set of six opus 18 quartets both paid homage to the masterpieces of Haydn and Mozart and threw down the gauntlet to his contemporary musicians and audiences that he was a major force in what was to become the supreme chamber form.

Frank Bridge studied at the Royal College of Music from 1899 to 1903 under Charles Villiers Stanford and others. He played the viola in a number of string quartets, most notably the English String Quartet, before devoting himself to composition. He privately tutored a number of pupils, most famously Benjamin Britten, who later championed his teacher's music and paid homage to him in the Variations on a Theme of Frank Bridge (1937), based on a theme from the second of Bridge's Three Idylls for String Quartet (1906). Like Beethoven’s, Bridge’s Quartet No.1 was not his first, for his Phantasy String Quartet in F minor, a single movement work, appeared in 1905 and there were other early quartet experiments.

On 12 May 1847 Mendelssohn, whose health was already delicate, collapsed in shock, unconscious, at hearing of the death of his sister Fanny. He never entirely recovered, and confessed that he ‘could not think of work, or even music, without feeling the most intense emptiness and barrenness in the mind and heart’. The following month he travelled to Interlaken in Switzerland. Here he seemed to rally and, by the time of his return to Leipzig in July, he had composed some portions of both an oratorio and an opera, plus an entire string quartet and two movements of another. The complete work, **String Quartet No.6 in F minor, Op.80**, was the first he had written in nine years and incomparably the most important of these productions. It was destined to be the last work he finished; in September he suffered another collapse and wrote nothing more before his death on 4 November. The quartet was not published until three years later. Despite being the last completed utterance of someone who was by any standard a major quartet composer, it has remained sadly neglected.

Wednesday 11 December, 1pm Baptist Church

**Purcell School**

The popularity of these concerts continues to grow and grow both with our regular audiences and the schoolchildren who attend them. It forms a special relationship between the famous music school and the TRMS and each concert produces superb playing from these gifted young performers.