



**Somerville Music Society
Evening Recital, 29 May 2014
Arbellio Quartet**

Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)

String Quartet in D minor, op. 76/2, *Fifths*

- I. Allegro
- II. Andante o più tosto allegretto
- III. Menuetto: Allegro ma non troppo
- IV. Vivace assai

Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy (1809-1847)

String Quartet No. 6 in F minor, op. 80

- I. Allegro vivace assai
- II. Allegro assai
- III. Adagio
- IV. Finale: Allegro molto

Arbellio Quartet

Josie Robertson (violin), Louisa Tatlow (violin), Christine Anderson (viola), Feargus Egan (cello)

The Arbellio Quartet was formed in 2011 by students at the Royal College of Music, where they studied primarily with Levon Chillingirian and other members of the Chillingirian Quartet. They performed extensively in the RCM and outwith during their first year together, winning the Helen Just and Susan Connell prize and representing the RCM in the Cavatina Intercollegiate Chamber Music Competition, where they were highly commended. For the Chillingirian Quartet's 40th anniversary concert in 2012 they joined them on stage for a performance of Mendelssohn's Octet at the RCM to great acclaim.

The Arbellio Quartet attended the 'Young Virtuosi' festival in 2012, performing in several concerts in the Cougain Valley in the south of France. They were also selected to participate in the 7th Trondheim International Chamber Music Academy, where they studied intensively with founding member of the Alban Berg Quartet Hanno Beyerle and Quator Ebene, and performed with Raphael Merlin (Quator Ebene).

Recent performances include the London Soundtracks Festival and a recital at the Jacqueline Du Pré Hall in Oxford in 2013. This summer they will be performing for sponsors of the Mendelssohn on Mull Chamber music festival, which the quartet members have been privileged to attend as Young Professionals.

Next Recital

Friday 30 May 2014, 1:15pm, Somerville College Chapel

Peter Shepherd (organ)

Works by Schubert, Elgar, Walton, Buxtehude, Reubke and Brahms

Haydn (1732-1809), String quartet op 76 no 2 in D minor, 'Fifths'

Joseph Haydn (1732-1809) was born in Rohrau in Austria. He was one of the most influential composers of the Classical era, playing a major role in establishing the classical forms of the Symphony, String Quartet, Concerto and Sonata. He was also a great influence on many of the major composers of the Classical era, most notably Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert, who along with Haydn formed the so-called "First Viennese School."

The set of six op 76 quartets were written during Haydn's employment at the court of prince Esterhazy, and were completed in 1797. Dedicated to Count Erdödy, this was the last set of quartets Haydn composed. The second, *Opus 76 No. 2 in D minor*, is dubbed the *Quinten* or *Fifths*, which refers to the descending intervals announced by the first violin in the opening bars. This motif re-appears in all parts throughout this generally dark and fiery movement.

The second movement provides a light and delicate contrast to the first. It has elements of a theme-and-variation movement, with a modulating middle section, full of humour and surprise. This leads to an embellished return of the first theme, before more humour and charm in the instrumental dialogue brings the movement to a close.

This is followed by what is sometimes known as the *Hexenmenuett* or *Witches' Minuet*, presumably due to its angular and unstable nature. The theme is announced in the violins, with the cello and viola coming in a bar later with exactly the same material in the lower octaves. The unpredictable-sounding trio, which shifts from the minor key to the major suddenly and unexpectedly, forms the middle section of this movement before the reprise of the first section.

The D minor last movement provides a lively, humorous finale to the work. In a fast duple-time, it has some of the energetic, stomping-qualities of the Hungarian folk music that Haydn was so fond of, and imitated in much of his music. The opening theme returns *piano* in the key of D major and builds to a frantic and triumphant finish.

Mendelssohn (1809-1847), String quartet no 6 in F minor, op 80

Felix Mendelssohn was born in Hamburg to a wealthy and cultured Jewish family. Dubbed "the Mozart of the 19th Century" by his contemporary Robert Schumann, Mendelssohn showed great musical talent from a very early age, and by the time he was 13 was already an accomplished composer.

The *String Quartet No. 6 in F minor, Op. 80*, was the last of his 6 string quartets, completed in the year of his death in 1847. This work is so unlike any of his other string quartets, without any of the sunny optimism and youthful energy that is so abundant in the others, and which typifies his style as a composer. That year his much loved sister Fanny, herself a gifted musician and composer, had died suddenly – this work, so full of anguish and tragedy, can be seen as an elegy to her.

The first movement is tempestuous and intense, with a strong dotted motif first cried out by the violin, then repeated throughout the movement in all the parts. The stormy mood is broken only briefly with a more tender second subject as the movement hurtles towards a unison coda, where a new theme is introduced, but using the same dotted rhythm as before.

The second movement continues in a similar vein, still in F minor, with syncopated accompaniment giving much rhythmic instability and uncertainty. The dark trio section is introduced in octaves by the viola and cello in the lower registers, which works up to a return to the violent *scherzo*.

The slow movement, in A-flat major, finally provides some relief from the dark F minor key. It is however still tinged with tragedy and anguish, particularly in the opening bars. Despite the air of sadness though, there is much tenderness and lyricism in this gentle movement.

The stormy mood returns in the finale, with agitation from the outset in the accompaniment and nervous rhythm in the upper parts. Although without the positivity of his other works, the intense energy that defines Mendelssohn's style is extremely prevalent here; with the perpetual motion never ceasing, driving the work towards a dramatic conclusion.