

LSO St Luke's

CHAMBER MUSIC

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Friday 1 October 2021 6pm
Jerwood Hall, LSO St Luke's

Joseph Haydn:
String Quartet No 2, 'Fifths'
Ludwig van Beethoven:
String Quartet No 1 in F major

Aris Quartet

Recorded for future broadcast on BBC Radio 3

String Quartet No 2 'Fifths'

Joseph Haydn

- 1 Allegro
- 2 Andante o più tosto allegretto
- 3 Menuetto. Allegro ma non troppo
- 4 Vivace assai

Haydn spent the first thirty or so years of his working life in the service of the aristocratic Esterházy family, mostly at the family's principal seat of Eisenstadt Castle, or in the seclusion of their remote summer palace on the shores of Lake Neusiedler. Many of his fellow court musicians, cut off for months on end from their families in Vienna, found the isolation intolerable, but Haydn worked the system to his advantage.

He was able to experiment on his own terms, to "see what produced a good effect and what spoilt it... I was completely cut off from the world, there was no one to bother me, and so I was forced to become original".

One product of this musical laboratory was the string quartet. A few earlier composers had conceived the idea of writing divertimenti for two violins, viola and cello, but Haydn, having come across the form 'by accident' in the early 1760s, refined it over the next forty years into one of the most sophisticated and expressive forms of chamber music.

His magnificent achievement, totalling nearly 70 quartets, culminated in a set of six completed in the summer of 1797 and published two years later as his Op.76. The historian Charles Burney hailed these quartets as 'full of invention, fire, good taste, and new effects'.

No.2, in D minor, is known as the 'Fifths' Quartet, as its first movement is obsessively dominated from the start by pairs of falling fifths. The affable second movement has a serenade-like character, with a minor-key central section, while the third, a minuet and trio, is sometimes known as the 'Witches' Minuet'. It's constructed as a canon in two parts, with the two violins playing in octaves followed at a bar's distance by the viola and cello, also in octaves; while the trio section is closer to a witches' Sabbath than a village dance. Traces of bagpipe drones and animal noises inflect the gypsy-style finale, whose Central European flavour may well be a nod to the quartet's Hungarian dedicatee, Count Joseph Georg von Erdödy.

Next concert
Friday 8 October 1pm



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String Quartet No 1 in F major

Ludwig van Beethoven

- 1 **Allegro con brio**
- 2 **Adagio affettuoso ed appassionato**
- 3 **Scherzo: Allegro molto**
- 4 **Allegro**

In November 1792 the 21-year-old Ludwig van Beethoven arrived in Vienna from his native Bonn, specifically to study with Haydn. Their interaction as pupil and teacher lasted only a year before Haydn departed to London for the second time. Over the next few years their relationship became strained, with Beethoven crossly declaring that he had never learnt anything from his teacher. That statement was clearly untrue, since Haydn's 'London' symphonies evidently inspired Beethoven's first attempts as a symphonist, and he is known to have copied out movements of Haydn string quartets in order to study them.

Around 1798 Beethoven began work on a set of quartets of his own, which were eventually published as his Opus 18 in 1801, with a dedication to one of his aristocratic patrons, Prince Lobkowitz. Beethoven gave a manuscript copy of the first in the set, in F major, to a violinist friend, Karl Amenda. But he subsequently made some drastic alternations to it before it was published, telling Amenda that he had 'only now learnt to write quartets properly'. The opening movement of the F major Quartet is compact and resolute. In his alterations Beethoven amplified the tempo marking of the D minor slow movement, adding the qualification 'tenderly and passionately'. He told Amenda that it had been inspired by Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, and its anguished mood is subtly conveyed.

As the 18th century drew to its close, the customary Minuet and Trio of Haydn's time had been replaced by the more dynamic Scherzo, one of Beethoven's specialities. This one, however, is more genial than aggressive, while its Trio shows off his sly sense of humour. The rondo Finale, whose tempo marking Beethoven upped to Allegro, faster than its original Allegretto, demonstrates his impressive mastery of counterpoint.

Aris Quartet

Anna Katharina Wildermuth (violin),
Noémi Zipperling (violin), Caspar Vinzens (viola),
Lukas Sieber (cello)

Founded in 2009 in Frankfurt am Main, the musicians perform on the world's great stages: the Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, London's Wigmore Hall, the Philharmonie de Paris, Konzerthaus Wien, Amsterdam Concertgebouw, BBC Proms, and San Francisco Chamber Music Society will be presenting the Aris Quartet in the upcoming seasons.

The four musicians were brought together at a young age on the initiative of chamber music professor Hubert Buchberger – what began as an experiment at the Frankfurt University of Music soon turned out to be a stroke of good fortune. The succinct name was born spontaneously: 'ARIS' are the four last letters of the four musicians' first names.

After studying with Günter Pichler of the Alban Berg Quartet in Madrid, their international breakthrough came early on thanks to numerous first prizes at renowned competitions. The Aris Quartet attracted much attention after winning the highly endowed Chamber Music Prize of the Jürgen Ponto Foundation in addition to five prizes at the ARD International Music Competition in Munich. Having been named New Generation Artists by the BBC, ECHO Rising Stars by the European Concert Hall Organization, and winning the Borletti-Buitoni Trust Award, the Aris Quartet has also received some of the most prestigious international awards for young musicians.

They have released five highly acclaimed CD productions to date, the most recent in Autumn 2020 in cooperation with Deutschlandfunk and BBC Radio 3, featuring works by Johannes Brahms.

The Aris Quartet is sponsored by the Anna Ruths Foundation, the Wilfried and Martha Ensinger Foundation, and the Irene Steels-Wilsing Foundation.