

# Cathedral Concert Society

## The Dante Quartet

Krysia Osostowicz *violin*, Oscar Perks *violin*,  
Yuko Inoue *viola*, Richard Jenkinson *cello*



Monday 14 January 2019 | Ripon Cathedral

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# Cathedral Concert Society

Patron: Julius Drake

## Monday 14 January 2019 The Dante Quartet

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**Yuko Inoue** viola • **Richard Jenkinson** cello

### Programme:

**Joseph Haydn** **String Quartet in G, Op. 33, No. 5 Hob III:41**  
(1732–1809)

*Vivace assai*  
*Largo e cantabile*  
*Scherzo: Allegro*  
*Finale: Allegretto*

**Bedřich Smetana** **String Quartet No. 1 in E minor 'From my life'**  
(1824–1884)

*Allegro vivo appassionato*  
*Allegro moderato à la Polka*  
*Largo sostenuto*  
*Vivace*

– interval –

During the interval refreshments will be available in the South Transept.

**Ludwig van Beethoven** **String Quartet in F, Op. 59 No. 1 (Razumovsky)**  
(1770–1827)

*Allegro*  
*Allegretto vivace e sempre scherzando*  
*Adagio molto e mesto – attacca*  
*"Thème Russe": Allegro*

Haydn wrote his Op. 33 String Quartets during 1781 and dedicated them to Grand Duke Paul of Russia, thus earning the set the nickname of "Russian Quartets". This the fifth of the set also became known as the "How do you do" quartet, from the prominent rhythm and shape of a phrase in the first movement. The second, slow movement suggests some familiarity with Gluck's *Orfeo*: its opening melody appears to have been lifted straight from that work (which Haydn had directed in 1778). The first violin is the operatic soloist, the others the accompaniment. There is even a cadenza (though fully written out by Haydn). After the scherzo, the finale is a theme and variations in Haydn's typical hunting style.

Haydn, so far as is known, had reasonable hearing all his life: not so his companions in this programme. Smetana, the founder and leader of the patriotic Czech school of composition, went deaf at age 50. Beethoven from his late 20s. Smetana spent much of the first 30 years of his adult musical life writing and conducting opera, especially the new creature that was Czech opera, folk influenced and not at all Wagnerian. His conducting years ended with his loss of hearing and he turned more and more to composition, especially the six orchestral tone poems which became collectively known as *Má Vlast*. This string quartet of 1876 is overtly autobiographical in character, illustrating the composer's youthful enthusiasm for



his art, his friendships and loves and, in a change of mood, the onset of his deafness represented by a long-held high harmonic E in the final movement above ominous string tremolos. Smetana set down his intentions thus:

*My intention was to paint a tone picture of my life. The first movement depicts my youthful leanings towards art, a Romantic atmosphere, the inexpressible yearning for something I could neither express nor define, and also a kind of warning of my future misfortune. The long persistent note in the finale owes its origin to this. It is the fateful ringing of the high-pitched tones in my ears, which, in 1874, announced the beginning of my deafness. I allow myself this small joke, though [my loss of hearing] was ultimately disastrous.*

*The second movement, a sort of polka, recalls the joyful days of my youth when I composed dance tunes and was widely known as a passionate lover of dancing.*

*The third movement (the one which, in the opinion of the gentlemen who play this quartet, is unperformable) reminds me of the happiness of my first love, the girl who later became my first wife.*

*The fourth movement describes my discovery that I could incorporate national elements in my music, and my joy in following this path until it was terminated by the onset of my deafness, the outlook into a sad future, the tiny rays of hope of recovery; but remembering the promise of my early career, a feeling of painful regret.*

we get on with



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Beethoven, following Haydn, also dedicated his Op. 59 string quartets to royalty, this time to a distinguished Russian Diplomat Count Razumovsky (other spellings are possible) who was concerned in the Congress of Vienna after the Napoleonic wars. Published in 1808, these quartets mark a considerable expansion from his previous set (op. 18), being longer and more elaborate as well as requiring greater technical skill on the part of the players. The first movement is in an expansive sonata form, including a *fugato* in the development and even though it forgoes the usual repeat of the exposition lasts nearly twelve minutes. The opening cello melody is tonally ambiguous so that the home key of F major only occurs several bars into the movement, at the first cadence. Another feature of the first movement is the delayed recapitulation which became one of Beethoven's many tools for emotional manipulation: here he delays the recapitulation for several bars after the establishment of the tonic key

allowing Beethoven to heighten expectation of a definitive statement. In the *scherzo* Beethoven introduces short episodes of melancholy, but they are never allowed to overshadow the good-humoured overall mood. Unusually this movement also is in sonata form. The third movement, marked *Adagio molto e mesto*, again is a sonata without repeat. It opens in a desolate mood, very different from the first two movements. It moves without pause into the Finale. The Finale introduces a Russian theme, no doubt to entice his intended patron. A theme and variations would have been normal for this kind of movement, but once again it is in sonata form, this time with a proper repeated exposition. The somewhat elegiac character original folk tune didn't suit Beethoven's needs and he ignored its implications and used it as the basis for a particularly energetic and brilliant movement. He offers a nod to the original mood near the end of the movement before vigorously sweeping it away.

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### The Dante Quartet

The Dante Quartet, one of the UK's finest ensembles, is known for its imaginative programming and impassioned performances. The quartet was founded in 1995 and chose its name to reflect the idea of an epic journey. The Dante Quartet has been honoured with the Royal Philharmonic Society Award for Chamber Music and has also received international awards for its recordings. The wide age-range of the Dante Quartet's members creates a harmonious and exciting blend, marrying youthful enthusiasm with rich experience and consummate technical skill.

Frequently heard on Radio 3, the Dante Quartet has appeared many times at London's Wigmore Hall and Kings Place, as well as at the UK's foremost festivals and music societies. Abroad, the quartet has played in France, Germany, Holland,

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Spain, Switzerland, Finland, the Czech Republic and Poland, and has twice toured Japan.

The Dante Quartet has made a series of acclaimed recordings for Hyperion, winning the BBC Music Magazine Award and the French Diapason d'Or for its disc of quartets by Fauré and Franck. The quartet has also recorded for Signum with celebrated tenor Andrew Kennedy, and is currently recording the complete quartets of Stanford for the SOMM label, most of them unpublished and unjustly neglected. The first two of these discs have attracted enthusiastic reviews and the third will appear this year. The Dantes' latest recording of quartets by Howells will be released in March.

Last year the Dante quartet collaborated with playwright Clare Norburn (author of concert-drama "Breaking the Rules") on a dramatised version of Beethoven's

quartet cycle, featuring actor David Timson as the composer. This innovative format has proved popular, and “Beethoven’s Quartet Journey” has had many performances. Most recently, the Dantes have performed all 15 of Shostakovich’s string quartets in a single marathon weekend. Plans for 2019 include a Kings Place concert and a tour of China.

Committed also to teaching, the Dante Quartet has created an annual string quartet course in France and also gives masterclasses in Cornwall. The quartet has enjoyed close links with King’s College, Cambridge, collaborating with the celebrated King’s College Choir and creating a concert series combining music with poetry.

New music forms an important strand of the Dante Quartet’s repertoire: commissions and premieres include works by Matthew Taylor, Cheryl Francesco Hoad, Dmitry Smirnov, Elena and Alissa Firsova, Michael Finnissey and Roxanna Panufnik. In February 2017 the quartet gave the world premiere of a song cycle by Jonathan Dove for baritone and string quartet, titled “Who Wrote the Book of Love?”

In 2004 the Dante Quartet founded its own chamber music festival in the Tamar Valley, presenting classical quartet concerts alongside collaborations with international artists from other disciplines such as folk and jazz. Since then, the Dante Summer Festival has become a thriving annual event, attracting enthusiastic local audiences as well as visitors from all over the world.

### **Krysia Osostowicz, violin**

Krysia Osostowicz has given concerto and recital performances across Europe and made a series of award-winning recordings. From 1985-1995 she played with Domus, the pioneering piano quartet with its own travelling concert hall, a geodesic dome, winning a world-wide audience and two Gramophone Awards. Last year she created a new project, “Beethoven Plus!”, with pianist Daniel Tong, touring the UK with Beethoven’s complete violin sonatas plus ten newly-commissioned companion pieces. Their recording of the complete cycle has recently been released on SOMM Records.

Born in London of a Polish family, Krysia studied at the Yehudi Menuhin School and Cambridge University, and her teachers have included Yehudi Menuhin, Sándor Végh and Ferenc Rados. She is also principal violinist of the Endymion Ensemble and is much in demand as a teacher of violin and chamber music at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. As a chamber musician she has collaborated with artists such as Steven Isserlis, Huw Watkins, Thomas Adès, Ralph Kirschbaum and Radu Lupu.

### **Oscar Perks, violin**

Oscar Perks performs regularly as a soloist and chamber musician on both violin and viola. He teaches at the Yehudi Menuhin School and pursues an interest in composing and arranging. Oscar performs at many leading London venues and recently took part in the IMS Prussia Cove autumn UK tour. His string quartet *The Twin Towers* (2001)

won the BBC Guardian Young Composer Competition. Oscar is a founding member of the Perks Ensemble, a flexible chamber group cofounded along with his brother and sister. Oscar studied at the Yehudi Menuhin School, at Cambridge University and subsequently at the RCM with Lutsia Ibragimova.

### **Yuko Inoue, viola**

Yuko Inoue, winner of the 17th Budapest International Viola Competition, has performed worldwide with orchestras and as a soloist and chamber musician. She performs and records frequently with Britain’s most eminent chamber ensembles and has performed in festivals such as Lockenhaus, Kuhmo, Cheltenham, Bath and Aldeburgh. She has also guest-led at orchestras such as the BBC Philharmonic, London Philharmonia, English Chamber Orchestra and London Sinfonietta. Her solo CDs, *Romanze*, and Bach’s Gamba Sonatas (and the Chaconne) have

both earned much critical acclaim. Yuko teaches at the Royal Academy of Music, and at its Junior department, in London, where she curated a viola festival – British Viola “Romantic and Contemporary” 2011-12.

### **Richard Jenkinson, cello**

Richard Jenkinson joined the Dante Quartet in 2012, having been principal cellist with the Irish Chamber Orchestra and more recently the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. Chamber music has always been an integral part of his life and he is a founding member of both the Frith Piano Quartet and Innovation Chamber Ensemble, which he founded in 2000 and with whom he has made several recordings. Richard also gives frequent duo recitals with pianist Benjamin Frith. He studied with Florence Hooton and subsequently at the GSMD with Raphael Wallfisch and William Pleeth.

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