

Cathedral Concert Society

Chamber Concerts in Ripon
2017–18 season

Marlborough Piano Quartet

Anna Tilbrook *piano*, Boris Brovtsyn *violin*, Simone van der Giessen *viola*,
Guy Johnston *cello*, with Peter Buckoke *double bass*



Anna Tilbrook



Boris Brovtsyn



Simone van der Giessen



Guy Johnston



Peter Buckoke



Franz Schubert

Monday 8 January 2018, 7.30pm | Ripon Cathedral

With the generous support of the Mayor of Harrogate's Fund

www.riponconcerts.co.uk

Welcome

The Good Doctor had not returned from his travels in time to write this welcome to the New Year concert; so again it falls to me, on behalf of the Committee, to carry out the pleasant task.

We know that it is not always easy, in the bleak mid-winter, for all our members and supporters to don coat, gloves and scarf and brave the elements to get to the Cathedral for concerts. And we are therefore all the more grateful for your loyal support. There must be a temptation to stay at home, sit by the hearth and instead listen to CDs (hopefully some of which have been purchased from Roger Chapman's CD stall). But I hope that you agree that there is simply nothing to beat a live performance when you are in the presence of the musicians who, or so it seems, are exercising their skills just for you.

It is very good to have again, for today's concert, Anna Tilbrook, this time as part of the Marlborough Piano Quartet. The addition of Peter Buckoke and his double bass, necessary for the popular but insufficiently heard *Trout Quintet* of Schubert, means that we will also enjoy the even rarer Piano Quintet of Vaughan Williams, written for the same forces.

Finally a reminder that next month's celebrity performance of *Winterreise* by Roderick Williams and Iain Burnside is likely to be a sell-out. So if you are not a member and have not already purchased a ticket, you should do so now, to avoid disappointment.

We were very grateful to the 2016/17 Mayor of Harrogate, Cllr Nick Brown, for including the Cathedral Concert Society as one of his five nominated charities to benefit from the hugely successful Mayor of Harrogate's Magical Spring Ball. Its success was due to the very generous support of a number of individuals. As an acknowledgement of their contribution, we have invited them to join us tonight as guests for the concert and a reception.

Anthony Ogus, Treasurer

Cathedral Concert Society

Patron: Julius Drake

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PROGRAMME

Frank Bridge
(1879–1941)

Phantasy Quartet in F sharp minor

Ralph Vaughan Williams
(1872–1958)

Piano Quintet in C minor

Interval - during which refreshments will be served

Franz Peter Schubert
(1797–1828)

Piano Quintet in A D.667 'The Trout'

Piano by courtesy of Making Music and the North West Piano Centre



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Frank Bridge (1879–1941)

Phantasy Quartet in F sharp minor

Allegro moderato – Andante moderato – Allegro ma non troppo

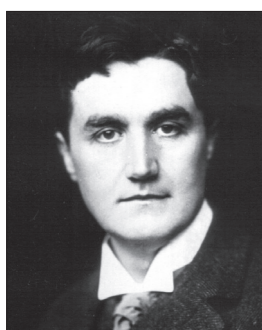
Since Frank Bridge's death in 1941 his music has been unduly neglected, although his name at least is recalled as one of the teachers of Benjamin Britten and as the author of the theme of the latter's *Variations on a Theme of Frank Bridge*. Bridge was born in Brighton in 1879 and studied violin and composition at the Royal College of Music in London, continuing the latter study under Stanford. As a performer he established a place

for himself as a violist, in particular in the English String Quartet, and as a conductor with the New Symphony Orchestra, at Covent Garden and in other important engagements with major orchestras in the English capital.

As a composer Bridge developed a voice of some originality. A series of chamber works and songs won a ready public in the early years of the twentieth century, with larger scale orchestral compositions, symphonic poems and suites. His style developed in a radical way after the 1914-18 war, the change marked by his *Piano Sonata*, written between 1921 and 1924. The influence of Schoenberg's pupil Alban Berg becomes apparent, reminding us that Britten had once hoped to be allowed to study with Berg. Bridge, however, retains an English element in his harmony and musical language, although the new form that his music had taken isolated him from the insular traditions of many of his established contemporaries.

The *Phantasy Quartet*, in F minor, was written in 1905 in response to Walter Wilson Cobbett, compiler of the useful *Cyclopaedia of Chamber Music* and an enthusiastic amateur violinist, who in 1905 established a prize for a phantasy string quartet, a single-movement sectional work analogous to the Elizabethan fancy or fantasy for a consort of viols. Bridge won a prize in 1907 for his *Phantasy Trio*, while other winners included Armstrong Gibbs, Herbert Howells and John Ireland. Bridge entered his *Phantasy Piano Quartet* of 1910 for the same award. The essential element in the traditional form that Cobbett was seeking to encourage was the use of a single movement with related but contrasting sections. (Bridge's entry barely satisfies the rules, arguably lacking the necessary Phantasy elements, the continuous contrapuntal development which Cobbett really expected and which Bridge was so successfully to achieve in his other two *Phantasy* works.)

The first section is marked *Allegro moderato* and opens emphatically with a bold gesture before the march-like tread of the first theme: this leads to idyllic music recalling the contemporary idiom of Ravel in texture, contour and feeling, in particular the latter's *Introduction and Allegro* in its octave doublings of melody. The *Andante moderato* has stronger suggestions of English idiom in its opening, while the final section, *Allegro ma non troppo*, has metamorphosed into a lighter mood allowing an element of romanticism that is remote from the world of Elizabethan consort music. Cobbett's chosen antiquarian title by now had other connotations, although the general language remains English.



Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958)

Piano Quintet in C minor

Allegro con fuoco

Andante

Fantasia, quasi variazioni

Vaughan Williams wrote a good deal of chamber music before his studies with Ravel (1908) when he found his own personal voice. As Michael Kennedy has noted, Brahms is the shadow looming over this three-movement *Quintet in C minor* for piano, violin, viola, cello and double-bass (the same instruments as are required for Schubert's 'Trout' Quintet). Vaughan Williams completed it in October 1903, revised it in August 1904 and again in September 1905, and the first performance was at the Aeolian Hall, London, on 14 December 1905. A performance has been traced as late as June 1918 after which the composer withdrew all his early works and embargoed further performance. It was not until November 1999 at the Royal College of Music that the work was performed again.

1903 is also the year Vaughan Williams started working on his *Sea Symphony* - despite the occasional awkwardness that besets the completed work his originality blazes out. In the Quintet, Brahms is a benevolent shade. Vaughan Williams uses the same instrumental line-up as the Schubert *Trout Quintet* with a double bass thickening the bottom line as opposed to a second violin as in the more traditional piano quintet ensemble.

The opening movement's expansive principal theme and its opulent treatment are strongly reminiscent of Brahms, whilst the gently lilting secondary idea is more characteristic of its composer's mature style. The central slow movement's eloquent main theme bears a resemblance to the song *Silent Noon*, composed in the same year. The finale takes the form of a set of five variations on a theme which has already been alluded to in brief but dramatic appearances in the previous two movements. Fifty years later, Vaughan Williams used a variant of it as the thematic basis for the variations-finale of his *Violin Sonata*. All three movements of the *Quintet*, a warmly attractive and quietly confident piece, end softly.

– interval –

Franz Peter Schubert (1797–1828)

Piano Quintet in A D.667 'The Trout'

Allegro vivace

Andante

Scherzo: Presto

Andantino

Allegretto

Allegro giusto

The *Trout Quintet* was composed in 1819, when Schubert was 22 years old; it was not published, however, until 1829, a year after his death. Its unusual line-up seems to have been imposed on Schubert by the circumstances rather than by the work itself: these were the available instrumentalists assembled at Steyr in Upper Austria to play an arrangement of a work by Hummel and who needed something else to play. This Schubert provided.

The piece is known as the *Trout* because the fourth movement is a set of variations on Schubert's earlier song *Die Forelle* (The Trout). The Quintet was written for Sylvester Paumgartner, of Steyr in Upper Austria, a wealthy music patron and amateur cellist, who also suggested that Schubert include a set of variations on the song. Schubert was pleased to comply. The rising sextuplet figure from the song's accompaniment is used as a unifying motif throughout the quintet, and related figures appear in four out of the five movements – all but the *Scherzo*. As in the song, the figure is usually introduced by the piano, ascending.

(Incidentally this is not the only piece in which Schubert included variations on one of his own songs: one such song is *Trockne Blumen* heard last season in *Die schöne Müllerin*.)

This is essentially music to enjoy rather than to be subjected to close analysis, something it will not survive (at least structurally - the harmony is always interesting and often unexpected). However a feature to note is the focus in the piano part in the upper register of the instrument. Not only would a contemporary piano be light in the lower register but here was the advantage of not only cello but also bass at the lower end. No wonder that double bass players love the trout.

*In a clear little brook,
there darted about in happy haste the moody trout
dashing everywhere like an arrow.
I stood on the bank
and watched, in sweet peace,
the fish's bath
In the clear little brook.*

*A fisherman with his gear
Came to stand on the bank and watched with cold blood
as the little fish weaved here and there. But as long as the water remains clear,
I thought, no worry,
He'll never catch the trout
With his hook.*

*But finally, for the thief,
Time seemed to pass too slowly. He made the little brook murky, And before I thought it could be,
So his line twitched.
There thrashed the fish,
And I, with raging blood,
Gazed on the betrayed one.*

Born in Hertfordshire, **Anna Tilbrook** studied music at York University and at the Royal Academy of Music with Julius Drake, where she was awarded a Fellowship and in 2009 became an Associate. She also won many major international accompaniment prizes including the AESS Bluthner prize and the award for an outstanding woman musician from the ROSL. Her recital partnership with James Gilchrist is internationally famous and they have made many acclaimed recordings of 20th-century English song for Linn records, including Vaughan Williams's *On Wenlock Edge* (a finalist in the Gramophone Awards 2008). In 2009 they embarked on a series of recordings for Orchid records of the Schubert Song Cycles and their disc of *Die schöne Müllerin* received great critical acclaim and was Editor's Choice in *Gramophone*, November 2009. Schubert's *Schwanengesang* along with Beethoven's *An die ferne Geliebte* was released early in 2011 and their recording of *Winterreise* was Record of the week in *The Independent* and was made recording of the month in the 2011 Christmas issue of *BBC Music Magazine*. She has collaborated with very many well-known artists both singers and instrumentalists. She is also a prominent chamber musician, performing with many prominent British quartets including the Sacconi and Heath quartets. She is a regular at the Wigmore Hall and at the British and overseas music festivals and is a sought-after operatic répétiteur and coach.

Boris Brovtsyn was born in 1977. After graduating from Moscow's Central Music School in 1994, he entered the Moscow Tchaikovsky Conservatory where he studied with Maya Glezarova. During his time there he became a laureate of international competitions, such as Georg Kulenkampf (1994, Cologne), Transnet (1996, Pretoria) and Yehudi Menuhin (1998), before graduating with top honours in 1999. He made his UK debut in 1998 with the BBC Philharmonic conducted by Rumon Gamba. He became a student of David Takeno at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in 2000 and since then has been spending most of his time in the UK. In 2004 he won the GSMD's highest award, the Gold Medal. He is a frequent concerto soloist with British and European orchestras and won the 2002 Tibor Varga International Violin Competition. He is an experienced and enthusiastic player of chamber music.

Simone van der Giessen was born in Amsterdam in 1984 and began violin studies at age 5. In 2002, Simone moved to the UK to continue her studies with Jan Repko at the Royal Northern College of Music. It was in Manchester that, as a founding member of the Navarra String Quartet, chamber music became the centre of her musical life. In 2004 she began studying viola with Predrag Katanic and after graduating in June 2006 with First Class Honours she won the RNCM's Cecil Aronowitz Prize for viola and performed Walton's Concerto for Viola with the RNCM Symphony Orchestra. In 2009 she performed in the Royal Festival Hall with pianist Amy de Sybel after receiving a Martin Music Scholarship. Outside of the Quartet, Simone is in much demand as a chamber musician and is frequently invited to perform with chamber orchestras and ensembles such as the Aronowitz Ensemble, Britten Sinfonia, Ensemble 360 and the Mahler Chamber Orchestra. Other chamber music partners have included Anthony Marwood, Paul Watkins and Richard Lester. She plays on a mid-19th Century English viola of unknown make.

Guy Johnston was born into a musical family. As a chorister at King's College, Cambridge, he recorded *Once in Royal David's City*, under Stephen Cleobury. As an instrumentalist he achieved important early successes through the *BBC Young Musician of the Year* title, the Guilhermina Suggia Gift, the Shell London Symphony Orchestra Gerald MacDonald Award and receiving a Classical Brit Award at the Royal Albert Hall. He has a busy career as an international soloist, chamber musician and guest principal and takes a keen interest in promoting music education. He has made many important debuts including at the First Night of the BBC Proms playing the Elgar Cello Concerto with the BBC Symphony Orchestra/Slatkin, the Brahms Double Concerto in the Berlin Philharmonie with the DSO Berlin/Valchua, Tchaikovsky *Rococo Variations* with the St. Petersburg State Capella Orchestra/Dmitriev in St. Petersburg, Elgar Cello Concerto with the Osaka Philharmonic/Otaka in Tokyo, and the Schumann Concerto in the Barbican Centre with the English Chamber Orchestra/Tilbrook. A founding member of the Aronowitz Ensemble, Guy is an enthusiastic chamber musician. His recordings include works by Bridge, Britten, and a new work by Mark Anthony Turnage with pianist Kathryn Stott for Orchid Classics, concertos by David Matthews and Edward Gregson for Chandos and recent recordings of relatively unknown cello works which have been overwhelmingly well-received in the press; *Gramophone* described Guy as 'an impeccable soloist' and *BBC Music Magazine* observed: 'Guy Johnston's playing is searchingly beautiful and accurate.' He plays a 1714 David Tecchler cello.

Peter Buckoke oversees the Alexander Technique provision at the Royal College of Music. He is also professor of double bass at the college and plays both modern and baroque bass with a number of chamber groups in London. He is a founder member of the Schubert Ensemble of London, winner of the Royal Philharmonic Society's 'Best Chamber Group' award, and is often invited to play with other small chamber groups when they need a bass player for larger repertoire, including the Nash Ensemble, the Albeni, Allegri, Arditi, Chilingirian, Coul, Dante and Endellion string quartets. Peter co-authored 'The Alexander Technique for Musicians' (Bloomsbury, London 2013) with his wife Judith Kleinman.



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And any others who have donated to the Society since this programme went to press.