

MUSIC IN THE VILLAGE

ST. MARY'S CHURCH,
Walthamstow
26th November 2008



The Fitzwilliam String Quartet

Lucy Russell and Jonathan Sparey, *violins*
Alan George, *viola*
Heather Tuach, *cello*

Quartet no. 1 in C major, Op. 49 (1938) Dmitri Shostakovich
(1906-75)
Moderato - Moderato - Allegro molto - Allegro

La Morte del Marchese Giuseppe Terzi (1819) Gaetano Donizetti
(1797- 1848)

Quartet in D major, Op. 76 no. 5 (Hob. III: 79) Franz Josef Haydn
(1732-1809)
Allegretto/Allegro
Largo (ma non troppo): cantabile e mesto
Menuet: Allegro (ma non troppo) - Finale: Presto

***** Interval*****

“Voces Intimae” quartet in D minor, Op. 56 Jean Sibelius
(1865-1957)
Andante/Allegro molto moderato
Vivace - Adagio di molto - Allegretto (ma pesante) - Allegro

MUSIC IN THE VILLAGE thanks

Apex Arts (The Arts Council for Waltham Forest) for its support
and **WalthamSoft.com**, who generously create and host our website:
<http://villagemusic.walthamsoft.com>.

We are also especially grateful for the kind support of generous audience members.

Forty years ago in June the Fitzwilliam made its public debut at the Sheffield Arts Festival, with a programme of Haydn, Tchaikovsky, and Shostakovich No.8. Tonight's concert is part of a series of events to celebrate the quartet's anniversary which, by a happy coincidence happens to coincide with Haydn's 200th anniversary. Since their previous concert here, last October, the quartet has been focussing its efforts on the Haydn anniversary, this reaching a climax with a complete cycle of his quartets at The Castle in Taunton, featuring ten ensembles from around the world, to which the Fitzwilliam contributed the major part. Since then the Haydn concerts have continued unabated, and at the end of August they completed their second trip to Slovenia with festival concerts and a radio

broadcast of a programme including a selection of his songs (the accompaniments having been arranged for them by Duncan Druce) as well as two of his most celebrated quartets. A month ago to the day they returned from a repeat of last Autumn's Martin Randall Travel archeological cruise from Crete to Istanbul, via Athens – this taking in a number of ancient amphitheatres en route. 2009 will be rounded off with more recording sessions for Linn Records, in which they will team up with Carolyn Sparey in the Bruckner string quintet.

Founded in 1968 by four Cambridge undergraduates, the Fitzwilliam first became well known through its close personal association with Dmitri Shostakovich, who befriended them following a visit to York to hear them play. He entrusted them with the Western premières of his last three quartets, and before long they had become the first ever group to perform and record all fifteen. These recordings, which gained many international awards, secured for them a world wide concert schedule, and a long term contract with Decca/London which embraced some byways of late Romantic repertoire (including Franck, Delius, Borodin, and Sibelius) before they embarked on a Beethoven cycle. Indeed, the Shostakovich set was included in Gramophone magazine's "Hundred Greatest-ever Recordings" in November 2005. Extremely generous private patronage has made possible their current collaboration with Linn Records, which began with Haydn's Seven Last Words, and has since continued with the Brahms clarinet quintet as well as a disc of 20th cent English songs with piano quintet (including Vaughan Williams's On Wenlock Edge), in which they collaborated with James Gilchrist and Anna Tilbrook (just released); the Bruckner string quintet will follow in December, and future plans include Purcell string music and the complete quartets of Tchaikovsky. They were Quartet-in-Residence at the University of York for twelve years and at the University of Warwick for three, as well as Affiliate Artists at Bucknell University, USA, since 1978. Nine years ago they began a new Residency at Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge, with similar associations at Bangor and London Royal Holloway following soon after. They are one of the few string quartets in the world using Classical instruments for the appropriate repertoire, and perhaps unique in that they perform on both historical and modern set-ups (sometimes within the same concert!). At the other end of the musical spectrum, a renewed interest in contemporary music has resulted in over thirty additions to the new century's repertoire, including a cycle of four annual commissions from the Swaledale Festival, each with strong Yorkshire connections. Since 2002 they have been collaborating with the German saxophonist Uwe Steinmetz, working extensively with his jazz group in Sweden, Switzerland and Germany – where their CD of Steinmetz's Bonhoeffer Suite has now been released. Other recent travels have taken them to Slovenia for the first time, as well as to Munich, where they took part in an international dance film featuring Shostakovich's last three quartets. There have also been four visits to Russia, which included sharing an all- Tchaikovsky programme with the St. Petersburg Klassika Symphony Orchestra, plus concerts in Pushkin's House, the Sheremetev Palace, the Summer Palace at Peterhof, as well as at Agora – former home of Modest and Pyotr Tchaikovsky.

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