

variations

Saturday
22 July 2023
at 7pm

HAYDN
String Quartet Op 20 No 5
DEBUSSY
String Quartet

The
Edinburgh
Quartet
with
Rosie Staniforth

Wednesday
26 July 2023
at 7:30pm

KODALY
String Quartet Op 10 No 2
BAX
Oboe Quintet 1922
RAVEL
String Quartet

two concerts at the
Macphail Centre,
Ullapool

 **EDINBURGH**
QUARTET

The Edinburgh Quartet in Ullapool with Rosie Staniforth, Oboe

Saturday 22nd July 2023 at 7.00 pm

Haydn String Quartet Opus 20 No. 5

Debussy String Quartet

Wednesday 26th July 2023 at 7.30 pm

With Rosie Staniforth, Oboe

Kodaly String Quartet Opus 10 No. 2

Bax Oboe Quintet 1922

Interval

Ravel String Quartet

Variations is a registered Scottish Charity number SC043152

The Edinburgh Quartet is a registered Scottish Charity number SC023256

Saturday 22nd July 2023 at 7.00 pm

Franz Joseph Haydn (1732 – 1809)
String Quartet in F Minor Opus 20 No. 5

Allegro moderato
Minuetto
Adagio
Finale: Fuga a due soggetti

Haydn was an early cultivator of the string quartet. His first works for the combination of instruments (two violins, viola, and cello) were lighter in tone, an intimate version of the serenades and divertimentos called on to accompany the events of life at the princely court where Haydn worked. The set of six quartets, Op. 20, finds the composer delving deeper, intensifying the music's emotional expression and adding layers of complexity not found in his previous quartets. (Beethoven made a copy of one of the Op. 20 quartets during his student days in Vienna.) This is the moment when the string quartet leaves the traces of its lighter origins behind and becomes a full-fledged genre of serious instrumental music to rank alongside the classical symphony. As the great musicologist Donald Tovey put it, "With Op. 20 the historical development of Haydn's quartets reaches its goal; and further progress is not progress in any historical sense, but simply the difference between one masterpiece and the next."

The autograph manuscripts for the six quartets are dated 1772. They were published as "Opus XX" by Chevardinière in Paris in 1774 and again by Hummel in Amsterdam five years later with an image of the sun on the title page, which explains the nickname carried by the set - the "Sun" quartets - and in the order still used today, with the F-minor quartet as No. 5.

The opening movement of Op. 20, No. 5, is a fascinating study in how harmonic shifts transform thematic material. The rather desolate opening theme, for example, gains tremendously in warmth and extroversion when rendered in the major mode at the beginning of the movement's development. We also encounter passages of virtuosic writing for the first violin, which would have been played by Luigi Tomasini, the gifted concertmaster of the court orchestra directed by Haydn. The austere minuet, with its trio of folk-like simplicity, precedes the A-flat-major slow movement, which unfolds in the manner of an operatic aria with the first violin taking the "sung" part. The finale, a densely argued two-part fugue, finds Haydn looking back to the Baroque, the heyday of the fugue, to underscore his vision of the string quartet as a place for profound musical expression.

*John Mangum, Los Angeles Philharmonic Association's Program
Designer/Annotator.*

Wednesday 26th July 2023 at 7.30 pm

Zoltan Kodály (1862 – 1967)
String Quartet Opus 10 no 2

Allegro
Andante quasi recitativ
Allegro giocoso

Kodaly's String Quartet No.2 was composed during the First World War and completed in 1918. It was premiered shortly thereafter to much confusion. Some critics thought the music too simple, others found it too complex and modern. However in many ways, it resembles his First String Quartet, especially in its use of folk melody. However, in other ways it is quite different. For one thing, its structure is no longer traditional but quite free formed. It is in two movements, but in reality each movement consists of several sections and the second movement might well have been divided into at least two if not more.

The opening Allegro is characterized by its use of interwoven melodies, none quite independent of the others. The second movement, Andante, is marked 'Quasi recitativ' and begins with the first violin playing a rhapsodic solo. The music proceeds in rather halting sections each strikingly different. Slowly the tempo picks up and the music morphs into an Allegro giocoso.

Zoltan Kodály and Bela Bartok are widely regarded as the two most important Hungarian composers of the 20th century. Kodály was born in town of Kecskemét and from his father, a keen amateur musician, learned to play the violin as a child. In 1900, he entered the Franz Liszt Music Academy in Budapest where he studied composition with Hans Koessler. After graduating, he began a serious study of Hungarian folk melody. In 1905, he started visiting remote villages and collecting folk songs. Folk melody plays an important part in his music. Kodály later went to Paris where he studied with Charles Widor and was greatly impressed by the music of Debussy and the French impressionists. He composed in most genres, and while he did not write a great deal of chamber music, what he wrote is invariably engaging.

String Quartet No.2 must be considered one of the more important early modern pieces of Hungarian chamber music, very different from what Bartok was doing and, as such, it deserves to be heard.

Arnold Bax (1883 – 1953)

Oboe Quintet (1922)

Tempo molto moderato

Lento espressivo

Allegro giocoso

Bax composed the Quintet for Oboe and Strings in the closing months of 1922, on the heels of his First Symphony. At the time, a piece for such forces was unusual; surely Bax was inspired to write the Oboe Quintet by the playing of the famous oboist, Louis Goossens, to whom the composer dedicated the piece. This was quite an honour for the young Goossens. (Bax would later compose the Nonet with Goossens in mind.)

Progress on the Oboe Quintet moved quickly; the piece was composed between November 1 and December 25, 1922. The quintet is in three movements in the fast-slow-fast pattern typical of a concerto. This aspect, plus the occasional orchestral texture of the string writing, may have prompted Sir John Barbirolli to program the Oboe Quintet at one time as a Concerto for Oboe and Strings. Although the melodies in the quintet are original, they sound like Irish folk tunes. This was surely a deliberate act on the part of the composer, whose emotional attachment to Ireland was the central emotional component of his life. Also, the flavour of the Irish Songs Bax had composed earlier in 1922 was still influencing his melodic thinking. Texturally transparent, the piece is lyrical throughout.

Beginning in G minor, the first movement, Tempo molto moderato, opens with a few introductory chords that give way to a plaintive theme in the oboe, which then swirls aloft into modal figures. The central section becomes more lively and verges on the "folkish," but Bax saves the blatantly folk song style for the finale. Throughout, Bax extracts a great variety of colour from the strings, requiring them to play sul ponticello and pizzicato at various times. Near the end of the central section, the oboe has an unaccompanied, rising line that introduces the return of the opening material, now transformed and played on muted strings. Pulsing G naturals on the cello under quiet strings and a final flourish on the oboe close the movement in G major.

We sense an atmosphere of lament in the second movement, Lento espressivo. Beginning in E flat major, the quiet first theme sounds in the first violin before a transition wanders to the striking key of B major for the secondary theme. New melodies follow one upon another until the oboe sounds a tearful, improvisatory line that creates a stark contrast to the opening material. Afterward, the opening tempo and material return.

Marked Allegro giocoso, the finale is based on a lively jig rhythm and begins in a blithe G major. Here, the principal theme is especially folk song-like, while

the secondary theme, performed on the oboe and first violin, is in a more serious E minor.

John Palmer

Further notes on the Bax Oboe Quintet from Rosie Staniforth

In its day Bax's Oboe Quintet was pioneering, for the oboe quintet was an unfamiliar form at the time. Bax was, of course, influenced by the playing of the celebrated oboist Leon Goossens, then in his mid-twenties, to whom the Quintet is dedicated, and Bax was probably the first big name composer to write such a piece for him. Goossens's distinctive artistry informed the writing of a generation of British composers, certainly Bax, and he later conceived the oboe part in his Nonet with Goossens in mind.

Bax wrote his Quintet very quickly, between the completion and the first performance of his epic first Symphony, in the autumn of 1922. (The Quintet's first movement is dated 1 November, all was completed by Christmas.) In a work ending with an Irish jig, Bax is again reflecting his engagement with Ireland. Moreover, Bax is surely no musical tourist here for the first two movements have the mood and atmosphere of the Irish songs that he had written earlier the same year, songs of more note for their heart-broken sorrow than their picturesque colour.

After an elegiac progression of chords, the oboe's first entry, an improvisatory tempo molto moderato, has a plaintive cast, indeed surely the reminiscence of Peter Warlock's despairing cor anglais in *The Curlew* is not far away from this music. The central section is vigorous, some commentators even finding it 'rustic', but Bax is certainly not evoking Irish folk music, as he is in the finale. The range of colour Bax extracts from his string quartet is amazing, at the outset having the first violin playing tremolando in octaves with that characteristic sound that comes from playing close to the bridge, the cello and viola playing pizzicato and the cello declaiming a bold repeated motif. Soon, while the oboe plays an upward-lying phrase unaccompanied, the strings quickly put on their mutes for the return of the opening, much transformed. The ending is magical as the strings play soft chords underpinned by threatening repeated Gs on the cello and a final distant flourish from the oboe.

The mutes are off for the slow movement which is the emotional heart of the work. It opens very quietly with a serenely beautiful folk-sounding tune sung out molto espressivo by the first violin, warmly accompanied by the strings. Eventually the oboe sounds a plaintive improvisation, reminding us how Bax once unexpectedly heard pipe-music in a London street and asked, in a brief verse, 'What aged war wouldst thou awake in me, / Thou subtle world-old bitter Celtic voice?'. This plangent tone contrasts poignantly with the beauty of the opening and is underlined and elaborated by the strings and oboe now together. Eventually the opening tempo returns and with it the violin's opening tune, now clouded by troubled shifting string textures, and the spectral effect

of the first violinist's *sul ponticello tremolandi*. Even the oboe's serene closing phrase is shadowed by the soft tremolando strings, and an uneasy repose is not achieved until the final chord.

The finale is an Irish jig, written by a composer who had seen and taken part in the real thing, though as far as is known the authentic-sounding themes were composed by Bax himself. Yet all too soon clouds cover the sun and the spectres return. The dance continues and although the ending is thrown off brilliantly we are aware that this is no mere Irish picture postcard. In 1922 no one, certainly not Bax, could fail to be torn by the horrors, the terror and the infinite sadness overshadowing the picturesque scene.

A final enigma. Does Bax quote a real folk-song in the finale when what sounds like the opening of the slow movement of Brahms's fourth Symphony makes a vigorous appearance? This idea also appears in Stanford's Irish Symphony, and the debate as to its origin has never been satisfactorily explained. What is quite certain is that Bax did not take it from Brahms, a composer he never warmed to.

The Quintet was not played until May 1924, when Leon Goossens and the celebrated Kutcher Quartet gave it at London's Hyde Park Hotel, in a concert promoted by Mrs Adela Maddison.

INTERVAL

Maurice Ravel (1875 – 1937) String Quartet in F (1903)

Moderato très doux
Assez vif-Très rythmé
Très lent
Vif et agité

Ravel's only string quartet dates from 1902-3 while he was still (aged 28) a student at the Paris Conservatoire. It was dedicated to his teacher Fauré and the first movement was submitted to the annual composition contest at the Conservatoire. The contest's judges rejected Ravel's work, and he was expelled for the third and last time. Fauré was more appreciative, though he did not like the last movement: "stunted, badly balanced, in fact a failure." Debussy was more prescient: "In the name of the gods of Music and for my sake personally, do not touch a note of what you have written." First performed in 1904, the quartet was not published until 1910 after Ravel had

in fact made some changes. Quite what these changes were, we don't know, since the original score is lost.

The opening is one of the most memorable in the quartet literature, transporting at least this listener to the balmy warmth of a French summer. The cello and second violin play a simple rising scale an octave and a third apart, while the viola with another rising figure fills out the harmonies to the first violin's simple tune. In the next four bars the three lower parts just go down a scale. But the overall effect? Magic!



The quartet has great thematic unity, with the two main themes of the first movement returning in various guises in the other three. But the treatment of the material is wonderfully varied – rhythmically, harmonically and in tone-colour. Notice particularly the second theme in the first movement with the first violin and viola two octaves apart (illustrated); the exciting pizzicato cross-rhythms of the second movement and the complex 5-beat rhythms of the last.



Chris Darwin

BIOGRAPHIES

The Edinburgh Quartet

Nicolas Dupont	Violin
Gongbo Jiang	Violin
Catherine Marwood	Viola
Mark Bailey	Cello

The Edinburgh Quartet has long been celebrated as one of Britain's foremost chamber ensembles, having appeared regularly at prestigious venues across the UK and toured extensively across Europe, the Far and Middle East, and North and South America.

In addition to a busy concert schedule the Edinburgh Quartet is frequently featured in radio broadcasts for the BBC and other stations. Recently this has included live appearances on Classics Unwrapped (BBC Radio Scotland) and Jazz Line-Up and In Tune (BBC Radio 3) as well as video recordings for Studio One Sessions, which appear on the BBC Radio Scotland website.

The Edinburgh Quartet is committed to nurturing talent and is resident at the University of Stirling and University of Edinburgh. As well as giving a regular classical concert series at each of these institutions, the players work with composition students, instrumentalists and student teachers. In addition to this the Edinburgh Quartet's outreach programme encompasses workshops for primary and secondary school children and tutoring adults on the Variations Summer School in Ullapool, and their annual tours around Scotland.

The Quartet has always been a champion of new music and has worked with many important and prolific composers of our age including James MacMillan, Michael Tippett and Howard Blake.

The Edinburgh Quartet has an extensive discography available on various labels such as Delphian, Linn, Meridian and RCA. Among their recordings are the complete string quartets of Hans Gál (Meridian), Kenneth Leighton (Meridian) and Mátyás Seiber (Delphian), as well as discs of Bartók, Robert Crawford, Haydn, Schubert and Thomas Wilson.

Their recent release "Postcard from Nalchik" featuring Haydn, Prokofiev and Shostakovich received a four star review in The Scotsman, with Ken Walton commending the playing as "perky and pristine in the Haydn, gutsy and attitudinal in the folk-inspired Prokofiev, movingly sustained in the grim delights of the Shostakovich... richly considered, rigorously balanced and, ultimately, a musical treat".

Nicolas Dupont - Violin



"With over 90 concerts a year, Nicolas Dupont (°1992) is one of the most active Belgian chamber musicians of his generation." (El Diario Montanes)

As a member of the Edinburgh Quartet, Kugoni Trio, Roeland Hendriks Ensemble, Ensemble K and Duo Andaluza, he has premiered over ninety

pieces in close collaboration with composers and has made recordings for Belgian, Danish, French, Swiss, Italian, English, Scottish and Dutch radio and television.

Based in Brussels since 2017, Nicolas frequently travels as a soloist or with his colleagues across Europe and beyond. Amongst the concert halls that have shaped his career, are Wigmore Hall, St Martin-in-the-Fields, Queen's Hall (VK), BOZAR, Flagey, deBijloke, AMUZ, deSingel, Concertgebouw Brugge (BE), la Seine Musicale (FR),...

Nicolas draws much inspiration from new musical collaborations and has performed alongside Yuzuko Horigome, Justus Grimm, Máté Szűcs, Mihaela Martin, Pascal Moragues, Daniel Blumenthal, Frans Helmerson, Rohan De Silva, Michel Arrignon, Gaby Van Riet, Michel Béroff, Gérard Caussé and Vineta Sareika.

Despite his young age, Nicolas' discography includes around twenty CD's with music by Brahms, Franck, Debussy, Saint-Saëns, Vasks, Piazzolla, Janáček, Poulenc as well as many Belgian composers.

Nicolas is currently the leader of the Ataneres Ensemble and has worked as guest concertmaster with Orchestre National de Lille, Symfonieorkest Vlaanderen, Antwerp Symphony Orchestra, Santander Festival Orchestra.

Nicolas Dupont's teachers have included Dejan Mijajev, Yuzuko Horigome (Royal Conservatory of Brussels), Itamar Golan (chamber music, duo, CNSM of Paris) and Rodney Friend (Royal Academy of Music, London).

Throughout his studies, Nicolas has worked on several occasions with Zakhar Bron and Mihaela Martin and he has participated in Master classes with Maxim Vengerov, Pierre Amoyal, Philippe Graffin, Ana Chumachenko and for chamber

music with A.R. El Bacha, Paul Badura-Skoda, Rudolf Buchbinder, Bruno Canino, Ralph Kirshbaum, Walter Boeykens,...and with quartets such as Talich, Chilingirian, Prazak, Danel, Enesco, Fine Arts, Ebène, Alban Berg etc.

Passionate about teaching, Nicolas has previously held teaching positions at King's College London and the Royal Conservatoire of Brussels (KCB) as the assistant to Mrs Yuzuko Horigome. He is now a violin professor at the Conservatoire Royal de Bruxelles (CRB).

Nicolas Dupont plays on a Giuseppe Petrazzini violin, generously on loan by a sponsor.

Gongbo Jiang – Violin



Born in China, Gongbo first picked up the violin at the age of five, initially taught by his father. At 12, he joined the Middle School of the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing, where he studied under Professor Weidong Tong. In 2009, Gongbo moved to Glasgow to study at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (RCS) under the tutelage of Gina McCormack, Leland Chen, Peter Lissauer and Mieko Kanno. He graduated with a Bachelor of Music (Honours); a Master of Music (distinction) and a Master of Music in Chamber Music.

During his studies at Scotland's national conservatoire, Gongbo toured India in 2014 with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra where he performed a duet with Nicola Benedetti MBE. He also performed for members of the Royal Family, including His Royal Highness

The Prince of Wales, patron of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. He led the RCS chamber ensemble which recorded Mahler's Symphony No.4 under the baton of Peter Manning, which was released by Nimbus in December 2015.

Gongbo's award wins include the Walcer prize for solo violin in 2012 and 2013, the Hilda Bailey prize for violin in 2010, the audience prize at the 2010 Ian D

Watt Award for string players and pianists, and he was a finalist in the Postacchini International Violin Competition in 2010.

He led the Aurea String Quartet from 2009 to 2015 which won all possible chamber music prizes at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland between 2010 and 2011. Aurea won joint first prize at the Cavatina Intercollegiate Quartet Competition in London in 2011 and were finalists in the first International Sándor Végh String Quartet Competition in Budapest in 2012, where they were awarded a special prize for their performance of Lajtha String Quartet No.7.

In 2014, Aurea won the St. Martin's-in-the-Fields Chamber Music Competition in London, leading to numerous concert opportunities throughout the UK, and in the same year, were selected for the Enterprise Music Scotland Residency Project 2014-16. Aurea were St. John's Smith Square Young Artists 2014-15, and resident quartet for the 2015 Wye Valley Chamber Festival.

Gongbo has received violin masterclasses from Ilya Gringolts, Robin Gallardo, Leland Chen, Kristóf Baráti, and Peter Manning. Chamber masterclasses have included Alban Berg Quartet, Quatuor Mosaïques, Brodsky Quartet, Carducci String Quartet, Wihan Quartet, Chilingirian Quartet and Johannes Meissl.

In 2016, Gongbo and his wife, violinist Wen Wang, established the London Bridge International Music Academy, an annual summer school, to bring together string students and teachers from China and the UK.

Gongbo is currently the second violin of the Edinburgh Quartet, also holding a teaching position at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland as lecturer in violin and chamber music.

Catherine Marwood – Viola



Catherine Marwood studied at the Royal Academy of Music and spent the following nine years playing with the Fairfield String Quartet with whom she toured Europe and recorded for the Hyperion label. She also explored the oboe quartet and string trio repertoire with her siblings in the Marwood Ensemble and together they recorded a disc of the music of Jean Francaix.

In 1988 she was appointed principal viola with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, a position she held for ten years. She appeared many times as soloist with the orchestra collaborating with such artists as Joseph Swensen, Yuri Bashmet and Ernst Kovacic and in the SCO's chamber series she worked with Michael

Collins, Stephen Isserlis, Peter Donohoe and many others. She also premiered and recorded Sir Peter Maxwell Davies Strathclyde concerto no 5. She was principal viola in the Scottish Ensemble with whom she recorded under the prestigious Wigmore Live label, frequently broadcast on Radio 3 and toured extensively in this country and abroad.

Catherine works with many other chamber groups and orchestras and in 2009 she was appointed principal viola of the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra. She has been a member of the Hebrides Ensemble for over 20 years and values the opportunity to showcase contemporary music alongside more traditional repertoire. She joined the Edinburgh Quartet in 2017 and is loving the return to the pinnacle of the chamber music form and the challenges it brings. Catherine also examines for ABRSM both in the U.K. and in the Far East.

Mark Bailey - Cello



Born in London, Mark Bailey has performed all over Europe, the UK, USA & Canada, the Far East and Middle East, both as soloist and cellist of the Edinburgh Quartet. The quartet is one of the UK's longest running chamber ensembles and celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2010. In 2007 the Edinburgh Quartet received the much coveted Gramophone Editor's Choice for their recording of the complete string quartets of Hans Gal.

Mark studied at the Royal College of Music on a Foundation Scholarship where he won all the major cello prizes, including the top concerto and recital prizes. He was then invited by Paul Tortelier to study with him in France for two years, attracting scholarships from the British Council, The Countess of Munster and Suggia Trusts and the Martin Musical Scholarship Fund. There he was awarded the Premier Prix de la Musique de Chambre de Nice. Later he worked with

William Pleeth and Jacqueline du Pré, as well as performing in master classes with, amongst others, Zara Nelsova and Johannes Goritzski.

As soloist he has broadcast for French & Spanish Radio and recorded recitals for the BBC. Works have been recorded under Meridian, Naxos, Delphian and The Divine Art labels. In the course of his distinguished career he has given recitals at the Purcell Room, Wigmore Hall and has appeared as soloist in many leading British festivals.

Mark teaches cello and coaches chamber music at the Universities of Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Glasgow, and Stirling – where the Edinburgh Quartet is in Residence.

Rosie Staniforth – Oboe



Rosie grew up in Yorkshire and began playing the oboe at the age of nine. She studied Modern Languages at Oxford University before winning a postgraduate scholarship to the Royal College of Music, where she was a pupil of Michael Winfield and John Anderson. She won the RCM oboe prizes and gave the London premiere of the Horowitz Oboe Concerto.

She subsequently gained a fully funded place at the Geneva Conservatoire to study with Maurice Bourgue, her musical idol! Rosie graduated with a distinction and won a place on the prestigious “Troisieme

Cycle” course at the Paris Conservatoire, where she able to further hone her skills with the same mentor.

Whilst still a student Rosie was offered the position of Sub-Principal Oboe with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, a post which she retained for 21 years. During this period, she also freelanced as Principal Oboe both locally-with the RSNO, BBCSSO, Scottish Opera and Scottish Ballet- and nationally, with orchestras such as The Philharmonia, The Halle, Northern Sinfonia and BBC National Orchestra of Wales. She also taught at The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland for sixteen years and tutored the National Youth Orchestra of Scotland.

She has enjoyed many opportunities to work as a soloist, performing concertos by Strauss, Vaughan Williams, Bach, Mozart and Macmillan amongst others. Rosie loves chamber music, although is not a big fan of the wind quintet!

Despite the pandemic, Rosie has still managed to get her fix of foreign touring with the Chamber Orchestra of Europe and the Mahler Chamber Orchestra together with teaching and examining at the London colleges.

As an opera lover, Rosie was thrilled to be offered her dream job as Co-Principal Oboe with the English National Opera in 2019. She now lives between London and the Cotswolds, where she enjoys rambling, horse-riding and feeding the local sheep!

About the Variations Chamber Music summer school at the Macphail Centre

The professional concert musicians you're hearing this evening form the coaching team for the annual Variations summer school. Established in 2005, it has now become an integral part of Ullapool's musical calendar. The summer school attracts up to 60 amateur musicians, of all ages and abilities, for an intense week of chamber music playing under the guidance of the tutors. Typically, participants come as members of string or wind quintets, quartets or trios. Many arrive as players in preformed chamber groups, but some come as individuals. Many live in Scotland but others travel from as far as France, Germany, Canada and the USA.

The Variations Chamber Music summer school ran every year from 2005 through to 2019 but sadly the 2020 and 2021 courses had to be cancelled because of the Covid pandemic. However, we were all delighted to run the course again in 2022 and now are back in Ullapool for our 2023 music making.

This year the Edinburgh Quartet and Rosie Staniforth are joined by Philip Burrin as tutors at the summer school and Variations is immensely privileged to enjoy the inspiration and guidance of this outstanding team.

We hope you enjoy this wonderful opportunity to hear them perform at the Macphail Centre.