

Programme Notes - Weds Oct 15th 2025

Talland String Quartet

Dylan Edge (Violin)

Orla McGarrity (Violin)

Rebecca Stubbs (Viola)

Nathan Jackson-Turner (Cello)

Biographies

Dylan Edge, raised in Staffordshire, started the violin aged 9 through Staffordshire Performing Arts. He went on to study under the tutelage of Catherine Yates at the Junior department of the Royal Northern College of Music. He furthered his studies at the RNCM, graduating with a First-Class Honours degree and a Masters with Distinction under the mentorship of Cecily Ward. As an orchestral musician, Dylan regularly freelances with the BBC Philharmonic, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic and Manchester Camerata. Dylan plays on a 1778 George Gemünder Violin. Asides from music, he enjoys trying out new cake recipes and teaching Nathan how to play scrabble.

Orla McGarrity is an Irish violinist based in Manchester where she graduated from the RNCM with a First-Class Honours Degree, studying with James Clark. She is currently pursuing a Masters under the tutelage of Cecily Ward and Pavel Fisher also at the RNCM, and has performed in masterclasses for Arabella Steinbacher, Nathaniel Vallois and Vera Vaidman. She plays on a 1920 Carlo Carletti violin generously loaned to her by the Harrison Frank Family Foundation and is grateful to be supported by the William and Frances Dobie Charitable Foundation. When not playing violin, Orla can be found evicting slugs from her allotment or reading a good book.

Rebecca is a viola player from West Yorkshire. She completed her Master's degree at the Royal Northern College of Music, where she studied with Vicci Wardman, Alex Mitchell and Susie Mészáros. Here she was awarded the RNCM Viola Prize and in 2022 became the Junior Fellow in Viola. Rebecca regularly freelances with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, Manchester Camerata and the BBC Philharmonic. She teaches upper strings and is a workshop coordinator at the North of England Centre for Music and Arts. Rebecca plays on a Niccolò viola by Chris Tayler. In her spare time, Rebecca enjoys kickboxing and playing Dungeons and Dragons.

Nathan is currently studying for a masters in cello performance with Jen Langridge and Eddie Pogossian at the RNCM, where he graduated recently with a First-Class Honours degree. He has completed the BBC Philharmonic Professional Experience Scheme and the Hallé's String Leadership Scheme, leading to regular work within both orchestras. With a keen interest in chamber music, Nathan has been fortunate to perform in the Hallé's annual chamber music series alongside members of the cello section. He currently plays a Robin Aitchson Cello generously loaned to him by the RNCM. Outside of Music Nathan loves a long bike ride, beating Dylan at scrabble and plane spotting.

Programme

W A Mozart	String Quartet No. 19 in C Major "Dissonance", K456
Pavel Fischer	String Quartet No. 3 "Mad Piper"
Interval	
Fanny Hensel-Mendelssohn	String Quartet in E Flat Major

Notes

W A Mozart (1756-1791)

String Quartet No. 19 in C Major "Dissonance", K456

Adagio-Allegro

Andante cantabile

Menuetto. Allegretto

Molto allegro

In 1781 Joseph Haydn published his six "Russian" Quartets, Op. 33, which revolutionised the medium, previously largely a matter of first violin plus accompaniment. The democratic involvement of all four instruments in thematic give-and-take and the liberation of thematic elaboration from confinement in the "development" section of a movement was a radical breakthrough, and one quite congenial to Mozart, newly arrived in Vienna after his own personal liberation from Salzburg.

Mozart began work on six quartets of his own, which he completed in January 1785. He dedicated the set to Haydn, writing: *"Behold here, famous man and dearest friend, my six children. They are, to be sure, the fruit of long and arduous work, yet some friends have encouraged me to assume that I shall see this work rewarded to some extent at least, and this flatters me into believing that these children shall one day offer me some comfort. You yourself, dearest friend, have shown me your approval of them during your last sojourn in this capital."*

The sixth of these "Haydn" Quartets, No. 19 in C, K. 465 was nicknamed "Dissonant" because of its fascinatingly chromatic Adagio introduction, which finally explodes into a dramatically driven Allegro in bright C major. The middle movements contrast the elegant eloquence of the Andante cantabile – truly a "singing" movement – with an uncommonly bumptious Minuet. The Finale is a thoroughly Mozartian riff on the fleet, tricky, and witty finales of Haydn.

This composition opening was so shocking at the time, that Mozart's publisher is said to have returned the score to the composer under the assumption that there were multiple copying errors. Later, an irate Hungarian count accused his musicians of incompetence before shredding the score. Franz Joseph Haydn, who had yet to write his oratorio, *The Creation*, with its similar depiction of chaos coalescing in the purity of C major, declared, "if Mozart wrote it, he must have meant it."

Pavel Fischer (1965-)

String Quartet No. 3 "Mad Piper"

Mad Piper
Carpathian
Sad Piper
Ursari

Pavel Fischer was born in Zlín (Czech Republic) in 1965. He hails from a musical family background, his father, Eduard Fischer, being a well-known composer and conductor. Pavel studied at both the Prague Conservatoire and Prague Academy of Performing Arts between 1979 and 1989 under the guidance of Professor Nora Grumlíková. Pavel Fischer was a founder member and leader of the Škampa Quartet and after an extremely successful performing career, has turned increasingly to teaching and composition. After leaving the Skampa Quartet Pavel has dedicated himself to his teaching activities. In 2008 he became a violin tutor at the RNCM in Manchester and Chetham's School of Music.

His String Quartet No.3 was written in 2011 and demonstrates his fascination with integrating elements of music from different parts of the world into his work. The 'Mad Piper' of the title (and the first movement), evokes the Canadian bagpiper Bill Millin who continued to play while under fire on Sword Beach during the initial stages of the D-Day Landings in 1944.

After a fast, aggressive opening (the heat of battle, perhaps, a plaintive viola melody leads to a reprise of the initial material, followed by a serene coda. The second movement, 'Carpathian', is a vigorous folk dance with an unceasing, breathless drive. The slow movement, 'Sad Piper', was inspired by the plaintive song of a Bulgarian piper, here transformed into an eloquent viola solo, supported by quiet sustained chords. The title of the finale, 'Ursari' recalls the nomadic Romani bear handlers of Eastern Europe, in particular their bear dances (Bartok also composed a 'Bear Dance' for piano which he later orchestrated). Here the quartet takes on the role of a percussion section as well as string instruments, the music driving forwards until a brief respite for a reflective passage before the dance is taken up again with renewed energy.

Acknowledgement : Nigel Simeone

Fanny Hensel-Mendelssohn (1805-1847)**String Quartet in E Flat Major**

Adagio ma non troppo

Allegretto

Romanze

Allegro molto vivace

In her youth Fanny Mendelssohn revealed a musical talent just as precocious as that of her younger brother Felix. Both received the same rigorous musical training: keyboard instruction from pianist Ludwig Berger (1777-1839), a student of Muzio Clementi, and lessons in counterpoint and composition from composer Carl Friedrich Zelter (1758-1832). In 1824, Zelter noted in a letter to his friend Goethe that Fanny, barely 19 years of age, had already composed no less than 32 fugues.

But while Felix might be free to pursue a musical career, Fanny, as the daughter of a well-to-do family of high social standing, was not. Her path in life, according to the social conventions of the time, was to be a wife and mother, a role she fulfilled when in 1829 she married, in a love match, the court painter Wilhelm Hensel (1795-1861). With the support of her husband, though, she continued to compose throughout her life, producing over 125 piano pieces and 250 lieder, as well as various chamber works. But nevertheless, many of her early compositions (including one of Queen Victoria's favourite songs) had to be published under her brother's name, and the vast majority of her almost 450 completed works remained unpublished during her lifetime.

Frau Fanny Hensel née Mendelssohn did, however, have a private musical career, continuing to take part in the Sunday musicale concerts that had been held weekly in the Mendelssohn family's elegant Berlin home since 1823 with audiences of up to 200 guests. A list of composers she programmed for these concerts in the period from 1833 until her death from a stroke in 1847 reveals much about her musical ideals and the models she used in her own compositions. Topping the list were 40 works by her brother, Felix Mendelssohn, followed by Beethoven (38), Bach (16), and Mozart (13). Her admiration for these composers is easily discernible in her String Quartet in E flat major written in 1834, which may well count as the first quartet by a female composer in the Western canon.

Fanny's only String Quartet dates from 1834 but has its origins in an earlier piano sonata from 1829. That was never completed but its first two movements were reworked as the Adagio and Scherzo of the present quartet which was given its first performance at her Berlin salon in 1834. The formal freedom of this quartet is one of its most remarkable features, beginning with an intense, fantasia-like Adagio that begins in C minor before gradually working towards the home key of E flat by the end of the movement. The Scherzo in C minor, with a Trio section in C major, has something an elfin quality, whereas the following Romanze is a deeply-felt movement that shifts between G minor and major with some surprising detours into remote keys. The finale is a Rondo whose main theme (in tumbling thirds on the violins) dominates this movement, an exciting *moto perpetuo*.