



KLEIO QUARTET

📅 Saturday 6 July 🕒 11.15am – 12.15pm 📍 St John's Church

Yume Fujise
Katherine Yoon
Jenny Lewisohn
Eliza Millett

Violin
Violin
Viola
Cello

First Prize and Commission Prize winners at the Carl Nielsen International Chamber Music Competition 2023, the Kleio Quartet has been described by Alina Ibragimova as 'a wonderfully dedicated group of musicians who bring assuredness and freshness to everything they play'. Formed at the Seiji Ozawa International Chamber Academy in 2019, they have performed in major international venues from Wigmore Hall to the Black Diamond in Copenhagen. This season, they have held a Residency at Snape Maltings' Britten-Pears Festival in Aldeburgh and look forward to a series of residencies hosted by the Strijkkwartet Biënnale Amsterdam from 2023-2025. They have been selected to join the MERITA platform (2023-2025) and hold the Hattori Foundation Senior Award.

Chorale: 'O Mensch, bewein dein Sünde gross' (O man, bewail your great sin), BWV 622

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

Chorales, the hymns of the Lutheran church, feature prominently in Bach's sacred music, as commentary during works such as the St Matthew and St John Passions and the *Christmas Oratorio*, and the basis of many of his church cantatas and much of his organ music.

Many chorale-based organ works, by Bach and other composers, had a mainly functional role, to introduce the congregational singing of the chorale itself, to accompany it, or as interludes between the verses. Others were intended simply as recital pieces. Whatever the immediate intention, they were informed by a vigorous tradition of improvisation. Bach's organ chorales probably originated as improvisations, and as Bach scholar John Butt notes, 'it is highly likely that his notated repertory of organ chorales ... may represent only the tip of a vast improvised iceberg'.

'O Mensch, bewein' dein' Sünde gross', a hymn for Passiontide (the lead-up to the commemoration of Jesus' crucifixion), appears in Bach's *Orgel-Büchlein* (Little Organ-Book), a manuscript collection of forty-three preludes (one of which is incomplete) dating mostly from 1713 to 1715. It also forms the basis of the chorus ending Part 1 of Bach's *St Matthew Passion*.

String Quartet No. 2 in D minor, Op. 76, 'Fifths'

1. Allegro; 2. Andante o più tosto allegretto; 3. Menuet. Allegro ma non troppo; 4. Finale. Vivace assai

Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)

Haydn's six String Quartets, Op. 76, were composed between 1796 and 1797, commissioned by Count Joseph Erdödy, a member of a music-loving aristocratic Viennese family whose precise relationship to Haydn is unclear.

No. 2 takes its nickname from the first violin's opening four notes – a pattern of falling pairs, each spanning the interval of a fifth. The tone is serious, occasionally edgy, with that fifths figure acting as a springboard for some exploratory writing, whether it is in the foreground or part of the accompanying textures. Even for Haydn this is an unusual degree of concentration on a small amount of material.

The quartet is dominated by the tension between D minor and D major. The elegant D major *Andante* takes a form which Haydn often used in slow or moderately slow movements: the second of the three sections is a minor-key variation of the first, and the third returns to the major, with a highly elaborate version of the melody. The movement lightens the mood, before the D minor Minuet.

The Minuet is a strict canon (one part copies the other exactly) between the upper and lower pairs of instruments. The result has a roughness which earned it the nickname 'Witches' Minuet', and reminds us that Haydn was not always the urbane, refined figure we often take him for. The central section lays open the D minor/D major tension in the clearest way possible, starting in the minor and switching directly to the major.

In the finale, in D minor again, earthy peasant-dances are absorbed into a movement full of energy and nervy intensity. It culminates with Haydn bringing back the main theme, then immediately running it again in D major, heading for the emphatic final bars.

String Quartet No. 13 in G major, Op. 106

1. Allegro moderato; 2. Adagio, ma non troppo; 3. Molto vivace; 4. Andante sostenuto – allegro con fuoco

Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)

Composed in November and December 1895, Dvořák's G major Quartet, Op. 106, is the first new work he began after finally returning to his native Bohemia after his three years as director of the National Conservatory, New York.

The first movement's opening theme combines leaping energy and relaxed, buoyant freshness. The first violin brings in a gentler new theme, which Dvořák dwells on for some time. Phrases from all three ideas are combined in the build-up to the central climax, then the opening theme returns, as chirpy as before. This time, Dvořák moves straight to the third of the main themes, saving the second one for the imposing final bars.

The second movement is a theme and variations, which follow one another seamlessly. The theme itself is terse and subdued at first, but later flowers into a broad, singing line that eventually arrives at a powerfully sonorous climax. The theme in more or less its original form leads the music to its gentle close.

The brisk, dance-like scherzo that follows includes a more flowing section, bringing a new idea for the viola and first violin, before the dance returns. The slower central section is relaxed, sunny and lyrical. The dance, without the earlier flowing episode, rounds the movement off.

After a slow introduction, a fast, lively theme launches the main part of the finale. The first violin adds a second theme, starting with an upward leap and a more gradual descent. A change of key brings a new theme, initially for the viola and cello. The first quick theme returns, then the pace slackens again, and a more sombre episode recalls themes from the first movement. The viola/cello theme restores the quick tempo, but a meditative episode soon follows, based on the viola/cello theme and the third main theme from the first movement. The tempo picks up again for one last time, and the finale's main theme rounds the quartet off in high spirits.