

## Badke Quartet

*...a beautifully balanced sound...countless felicitous details testified to the group's excellent preparation and unquestionable qualities...*

The Strad – December 2007

The Badke Quartet, formed in 2002, is widely recognised as one of Britain's finest young string quartets. Winners of the **1st prize** and audience prize at the **5th Melbourne International Chamber Music Competition in 2007**, the Badke Quartet has received widespread acclaim for its energetic and vibrant performances.

The Quartet currently hold the Senior Leverhulme Chamber Music Fellowship at the Royal Academy of Music, which involves them giving a concert series and coaching chamber music.

The Quartet regularly performs at festivals in the UK and abroad, including the Aldeburgh, Verbier and Bellerive Festivals, Belfast Festival at Queen's, Chichester Festivities and the London String Quartet Week. The Quartet has performed in some of the UK's most prestigious chamber music venues such as the Wigmore Hall, St. George's Bristol, St. David's Hall Cardiff, Bridgewater Hall, St. John's Smith Square, and the Royal Festival Hall.

All graduates from the RAM, they have worked with some of the world's finest string quartets. They regularly study with Gabor Takács-Nagy at IMS Prussia Cove and in 2006-2008 they were accepted onto the Alban Berg Quartet's chamber music class in Cologne, where they travelled once a month for a period of intensive study.

In 2007/08 the Quartet took on a touring residency with Britten-Pears in Aldeburgh, and returned to perform at Verbier Festival as well as being the main coaches in the Amateur Chamber Music Week. They also performed at many summer festivals such as Lichfield, Montreux, Mecklenburg and West Cork Chamber Music Festival in Ireland.

This season the Quartet has made their Musikverein debut in Vienna, will perform with Mark Padmore and Julius Drake in France, tour Scotland and in March 2009 they return to Ireland for a Music Network Tour.

2009 also sees the Quartet return to the Wigmore Hall twice and perform at London's newest chamber music venue King's Place.

No strangers to the airwaves, the Quartet has broadcast live on Classic FM, Lyric FM (Ireland), ABC Classic FM (Australia), the European Broadcasting Union and most recently performed live on BBC Radio 3.

The Badke Quartet is most grateful to the Hattori Foundation, Musicians Benevolent Fund, Nicholas Boas Charitable Trust, Fidelio Charitable Trust, Tillett Trust and several private sponsors for their continued support.

The Quartet play on a fine set of instruments on loan from the Royal Academy of Music's Collection including two Gagliano violins, a Grancino viola and the Segelman Stradivarius cello.

[www.badkequartet.co.uk](http://www.badkequartet.co.uk)

# Stour Valley Arts & Music

Fifty-eighth  
season  
2008-9

4.00 pm  
Sunday  
22 March 2009

St. Mary's Church  
East Bergholt



SVAM is a member of Making Music  
and a Registered Charity (No 276640)

## Badke Quartet

Heather Badke – *violin*  
Emma Parker – *violin*  
Eniko Magyar – *viola*  
Jonathan Byers – *cello*

**Joseph Haydn (1732 -1809)**  
String Quartet in D major, Op 76 No 5

*Allegretto - Allegro*  
*Largo cantabile e mesto*  
*Menuetto Allegro*  
*Finale Presto*

**Robert Schumann (1810 - 1856)**  
String Quartet in A major, Op. 41 No 3

*Andante espressivo*  
*Allegro molto moderato - assai agitato*  
*Adagio molto*  
*Finale Allegro molto vivace*

## INTERVAL

**Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 -1827)**  
String Quartet in C major, Op 59 No 3

*Andante con moto – Allegro vivace*  
*Andante con moto quasi Allegretto*  
*Menuetto (Grazioso)*  
*Allegro molto*

## Programme Notes

In 1797, **Haydn** was sixty-five years old. Two extended visits to England had made him a wealthy man, and he was now the most famous musician in Europe. His position as Esterházy Kapellmeister was far less onerous than before, because Prince Nicolaus II had largely abandoned the country palace at Eszterháza: Haydn's primary duty was to supply a mass each year for the name-day (8 September) of Maria Hermenegild, Nicolaus's consort. The fame and fortune acquired during his London years gave Haydn what we would now call star status in Vienna. Many of his works of this period originated in collaboration with the cultural-political establishment and were staged as 'events' of social and ideological as well as musical import. The key figure was Baron van Swieten, the imperial librarian and censor and the resolutely high-minded leader of the *Gesellschaft der Associirten*, an organization of noble patrons who subsidized large-scale performances of oratorios and the like. Haydn's compositional orientation changed fundamentally. He composed little instrumental or orchestral music, but was persuaded by Swieten to begin work on *The Creation*. In support of the imperial cause, he wrote his 'Emperor's Hymn' – one of the world's great melodies from the moment it left his pen. The only instrumental genre he actively cultivated was the string quartet: Op.76, dedicated to Count Joseph Erdödy, was completed in 1797 and published in 1799. Having contributed nearly eighty examples, across almost forty years, to the genre he had himself pioneered, it is no surprise that these pieces show Haydn's mastery of every aspect of quartet writing. Op 76 No 5 opens with a theme and variations, though they are far from conventional, bringing plenty of surprises in both tonality and tempo. The sustained, minor key second movement is probably the emotional heart of the work, ranging through many remote keys. The finale is a classic example of Haydn's understated wit – elegant and refined in language, it invariably provokes the listener to an inner smile.

Until he was past thirty, **Schumann** was probably better known as a critic than as a composer, though the situation began to change with the publication of the First Symphony and the Piano Quintet. In 1842, whilst his wife Clara was on tour giving piano recitals, he put himself through exercises in counterpoint and fugue writing, and also began studying the quartets of Mozart and Haydn. Soon he was working on the String Quartets in A minor and F (op.41 nos.1 and 2), which were sketched and elaborated as a pair in June and early July. Today's quartet was composed later in July – in just two weeks. As a critic, Schumann made two principal demands of the prospective composer of string quartets. First, the 'proper' quartet style should avoid 'symphonic furor' and aim rather for a conversational tone in which 'everyone has something to say'. Secondly, the composer must possess an intimate knowledge of the genre's history, but should strive to produce more than mere imitations of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. Both aspects of this aesthetic are aptly reflected in Schumann's own quartets, which he proudly described in a letter to Härtel of December 1847 as the best works of his earlier period. They are the only three of his chamber compositions which lack the physical presence of his own instrument, the piano, though its spiritual presence is quite often perceived in the music's melodic shapes and figurations. Schumann suffered from bouts of depression – it is thought

that he would nowadays be diagnosed as bipolar. Critic Stephen Johnson, a sufferer from the same disorder, claims to recognise 'manic' qualities in some of the piano music, but at the same time points out that it was musical activity which probably protected Schumann from the worst effects of his condition. The A major quartet certainly displays intensity, but it is sustained by a deeply-felt and always persuasive lyricism.

The year 1806 was one of the most fertile of **Beethoven's** entire career. It saw the emergence of the three 'Rasumovsky' quartets, the *Appassionata* Sonata, the Fourth Symphony, the Violin Concerto, and in all essentials the Fourth Piano Concerto. They were enthusiastically received, though the first two quartets were thought 'difficult'. For reasons which are not quite clear, no such reservation was expressed about the third. The dedicatee was the Russian ambassador to Vienna, and so each quartet was supposed to include a Russian melody. The importation of folksongs produced some moments of unevenness in the first two quartets, but in the third, Beethoven gave up the idea of incorporating pre-existing tunes and instead made his tribute to Rasumovsky by writing the haunting, A minor second movement in what he must have conceived to be a Russian idiom. The quartet also shows the influence of Mozart: its finale combines a number of seemingly inconsequential musical fragments into a dazzling display of contrapuntal energy, much as Mozart had done to end his 'Jupiter' Symphony. Also, Beethoven's sketches for the quartet's mysterious introduction reveal him to be recalling the corresponding section of Mozart's 'Dissonance' quartet. The overall scheme of Beethoven's quartet – harmonically dark introduction giving way to a bright major-key main movement; minor key second movement, eventually reaching a quicksilver finale full of energy – can be read, like Mozart's quartet, as an example of the Enlightenment concept evident in many of Beethoven's works, of 'striving from darkness to light'. On the other hand, composer and musicologist Robert Simpson approaches the work differently, with an intriguing series of questions: "Would it be going too far to suppose a connection between this extraordinary work and Beethoven's advancing deafness? Could that painfully groping introduction seem like someone trying to hear something? Could the ensuing brilliant C major *Allegro* be a rush of relief that the inner ear is unimpaired? Could the obsessive A minor second movement with its stabbing accents suggest the solitary imprisonment of deafness? Could the minuet (not a *Scherzo*) recall the kind of music Beethoven once heard most perfectly? Could the irresistible force of the finale be defiance of the affliction? The last question we can answer with 'yes', for Beethoven wrote on its sketches: 'Make no secret of your deafness, not even in art'. It is surely not impossible that the whole work is an account of his coming to terms with the specific tragedy. But even without interpretation of this kind, the work is astonishing in its coherence when its startling variety is considered; there are many subtle musical reasons for this, but they may have been generated by a deeply unified resolution of emotional stresses."

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A Diary Note with the 2009-10 SVAM events is available today