

## The Carducci String Quartet

Prize-winners in no less than 7 International Chamber Music Competitions, the Carducci Quartet is recognised as one of Europe's top young string quartets. Prizes include 1st prize at the 2004 Kuhmo International Chamber Music Competition, special prizes in the Bordeaux, Osaka and London International String Quartet Competitions and most recently winners of the 2007 Concert Artist Guild Competition in the USA.

Graduates of the top music conservatoires in Britain and Ireland, they have studied with members of the Amadeus, Chilingirian, Takacs and Vanbrugh quartets and are the current Richard Carne Junior Fellows at Trinity College of Music. As part of the ProQuartet professional training programme in France they have studied with Gyorgy Kurtag, Valentin Erben of the Alban Berg Quartet and Paul Katz.

Following on from their critically acclaimed 2006 Purcell Room and Wigmore Hall debuts for the Park Lane Group, the quartet have been invited to perform at numerous contemporary music festivals and societies, including The "Second Glance" Festival in London, and the Cheltenham Contemporary Music Society.

They recently established their own record label 'Carducci Classics', launched with a CD of Haydn String Quartets. A further three discs featuring C20th works by G. Whettam, J. Horowitz and B. Boydell will follow by the end of the year. The Carduccis have also recorded (Vivaldi and Piazzolla) with the Katona Twins Guitar Duo for Channel Classics.

Tours abroad have taken the quartet to France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Belgium, Spain and Italy, where after performing numerous concerts at the Castagnetto-Carducci Festival, the quartet adopted the name "Carducci" with the blessing of the Mayor.

Highlights last season included a residency at Aldeburgh, the launch of their own festival in Highnam (Gloucestershire) and performances in the Verbier, Kilkenny, Three Choirs, Exeter and Kings Lynn festivals. Future projects include their Carnegie Hall debut, further performances at the Wigmore Hall and tours in Portugal and Japan.

The quartet's educational work continues with performances for school children sponsored by the Cavatina Chamber Music Trust and West Cork Music. They also run their own music courses in France for young musicians and have a strong link with the Gloucester Academy of Music. They were recently appointed 'Quartet-in-Residence' at the Cork School of Music in Ireland.

### Forthcoming events

Sunday 16 November 2008 at 4 pm – St. Mary's Church, East Bergholt  
**Adam Walker flute and Sally Pryce harp.**

Friday 12 December 2008 at 8 pm – Constable Hall, East Bergholt  
**Katie Stillman violin and Victoria Simonsen cello.**

Saturday 10 January 2009 at 7.30 pm – Constable Hall, East Bergholt  
**Supper Concert with the Canteloube Trio** – Tickets £15 to include supper.  
Telephone 01206 299448 or buy tickets here today.

# Stour Valley Arts & Music

Fifty-eighth  
season  
2008-9

4.00 pm  
Sunday  
19 October 2008

St. Mary's Church  
East Bergholt



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

## Carducci String Quartet

Matthew Denton – violin  
Michelle Fleming – violin  
Eoin Schmidt–Martin – viola  
Emma Denton – cello

**Joseph Haydn (1732 -1809)**  
String Quartet in D major, Op 50 No 6

*Allegro spiritoso*  
*Poco Adagio*  
Menuetto: *Allegretto*  
Finale: *Allegro con spirito*

**Philip Glass (b.1937)**  
String Quartet No 4 ('Buczak')

*(Three movements)*

### 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*

*Generously sponsored by*  
*Lady Anne Wake-Walker*

*The Annual General Meeting, open to all*  
*members, will be held following the concert.*

## Programme Notes

During the 1780s, **Haydn** appears to have renegotiated part of his contract with Prince Nikolaus Esterhazy, thereby acquiring much greater freedom to publish music in his own right and to retain the proceeds. By now he was known across Europe, and publishers in several countries were keen to secure new compositions: his pen could scarcely keep pace with the demand. He had contemplated new quartets, but events delayed the composition of the six which make up Opus 50 until 1787. Two years earlier, he had encountered the set dedicated to him by Mozart, over which the latter claimed to have taken considerable trouble. The two men had established friendly contact in Vienna: Mozart's set owes much to Haydn's earlier example, and now Haydn's new quartets display a reciprocal debt to Mozart. Opus 50 was dedicated to Frederick William II of Prussia, the cello-playing king for whom Mozart was later to write his three so-called Prussian Quartets. But whereas they give the cello continuous melodic prominence, Haydn's set doesn't go so far. As in all his mature works, each of the four players make full and equal contributions to the musical discourse. The first movement of No 6 is strikingly monothematic: the opening motif, a long note followed by four quickly descending ones, pervades a great deal of the argument. The minor key *siciliano* rhythms of the slow movement establish a striking contrast of mood. Some remote keys are explored, leading eventually to a statement of the melody in a major key. Haydn's works have often attracted nicknames - this one has had, at various times, no fewer than three. *The house on fire* and *The row in Vienna* have largely fallen into disuse and their origins into obscurity, but *The frog* is still used. It derives from the opening motif of the finale, which has the same note repeated rapidly on alternating adjacent strings, by a bowing technique known as *bariolage*. The effect was thought to resemble the sound of a frog croaking – entirely possible, given that there are, worldwide, over four hundred different species of frog, each with its own unique sound. As in the first movement, the distinctive opening idea plays a prominent role through much of the finale.

**Philip Glass** has written eight string quartets: three student works, long discarded, and the five numbered quartets now in print. The first of these originates from 1966, shortly after Glass had finished two years of study in Paris with Nadia Boulanger. He was becoming interested in the cyclic repetitions and additive processes of Indian music, to which he had been introduced by Ravi Shankar, and the quartet contains a series of short sections comprised of tiny repeated motives. It is thus a precursor of the minimalist technique Glass was soon to develop, and for which he was to become famous. Over the next seventeen years he produced a large body of music for dance, theatre and film, as well as four operas, not returning to quartets until the 1980s. The fourth was composed in memory of artist Brian Buczak, who died of AIDS in 1988. The first of its three movements begins with a sequence of chords in slow, regular succession, which are followed by a series of variations that explore arpeggio figurations, reaching a restrained climax before

receding into repeated-note patterns. The slow central movement begins with an imaginatively scored melody, high and slow in the violins, against thick, decorated chords in viola and cello – some commentators have seen this as a representation of the spirit leaving the body. A new chord sequence begins the third movement, leading to less ethereal melodic shapes derived from scale patterns.

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."