



Sunday July 16, 2023, at 20:00

Quatuor Ébène

Pierre Colombet, violin / Gabriel Le Magadure, violin / Marie Chilemme, viola / Yuya Okamoto, cello (replaces Raphaël Merlin on this tour)



Henry PURCELL (1659 – 1695)

Selection from “Fantasias and In Nomines” (1682), 37’

- No. 4 in g minor, Z735’
- No. 5 in B-flat major, Z736
- No. 6 in F major, Z737
- No. 8 in d minor, Z739
- No. 11 in G major, Z742

Robert SCHUMANN (1810 – 1856)

String Quartet No. 1, Op. 41 No. 1 (1842)

- I. *Introduzione. Andante espressivo - Allegro*
- II. *Scherzo. Presto*
- III. *Adagio*
- IV. *Presto*

György LIGETI (1923 – 2006)

String Quartet No. 1, “Métamorphoses nocturnes” (1954), 22’

- I. *Allegro grazioso*
- II. *Vivace, capriccioso*
- III. *Adagio. Mesto*
- IV. *Presto con sordino*
- V. *Allegro molto vivace*

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10:00 Artist talk
15:30 Andreas Borregaard, solo performance
20:00 Quatuor Ébène



Quatuor Ébène

The French string quartet Quatuor Ébène was formed in 1999 when the members of the group were studying at the Boulogne-Billancourt Conservatory near Paris. The quartet visited Hindsgavl in 2017 but the four members have changed since then. In 2017 – after the Hindsgavl-visit - Toulouseian Marie Chilemme took over the viola place from Adrian Boisseau. And on this tour, cellist Raphaël Merlin is replaced by 29-year-old Yuya Okamoto, graduated 2013 in Tokyo with subsequent studies in Munich.

Ébène is the French word for ebony, the hard black wood, often used for making musical instruments, including string instruments.

Quatuor Ébène is known for not only playing the normal string quartet repertoire, but also for mixing the genres – from jazz to pop, rock

music as well as world music. Their discography not only includes music by Mozart, Beethoven, Debussy and Bartok etc., but also albums with jazz standards and original compositions (“Fiction”) from 2010.

As well as wanting to create new ways of performing the string quartet repertoire, Quatuor Ébène is dedicated to give inspiration to the coming generations of musicians by giving masterclasses and workshops all over the world.

The quartet has received several important awards for their recordings, including BBC Music Magazine Awards and Gramophone Award for Chamber Music and belongs to the leading and fascinating chamber music ensembles of today.

Dina Bodé

Revised and translated by Susanne Lange

About the Music ..

Henry Purcell (1659–1695): *Fra 'Fantasias and In Nominees' (1682)*

Before composers in the 1700s began writing string quartets as we know them today, chamber music for gambe was a widespread instrumental genre. In Britain, composers such as William Byrd and Thomas Tallis wrote impressive polyphonic works for three, four or five strings in the late 1500s. Purcell became the last great British composer to explore gambe chamber music a century later, during the period when the gambe instrument family had to give way to the modern instruments of northern Italian violin makers.

With its X-ray transparent sound universe, Purcell's gambe works do surprisingly well for a modern string quartet. The polyphonic work is inspired by the Italian style, but the melodies are arch-British and taken from the popular folk songs of the time.

The work 'Fantasias and In Nomines' *consists of 12 four-part fantasies, one whimsical movement with a theme of just one note (!) and two so-called In Nomines* – a term for polyphonic instrumental music used in Britain in the 15th and 1600s. This concerto's five movements are all *Fantasies*.

György Ligeti (1923–2006): Strygekvartet nr. 1 "Métamorphoses nocturnes" (1954)

Ligeti fled his Hungarian homeland in the aftermath of the 1956 Uprising. As a later Austrian citizen, he used the term 'The Prehistoric Ligeti' to describe the music of his own youth in Hungary. Microtonality, spherical soundscapes and avant-garde achievements, which from the 1960s were to make Ligeti famous, are not part of the 'Prehistoric Ligeti's' style. As a Hungarian composer, the inspiration was Bartók's six groundbreaking string quartets. In a snide remark, fellow contemporary György Kurtág even called Ligeti's first string quartet 'Bartók's 7th'.

The title "*Métamorphoses nocturnes*" refers to both compositional technique and mood. However, the nocturne atmosphere is not romantic and picture-perfect. It is inspired by the night music style that had made Bartók famous. An eerie atmosphere that mimics the sounds of the night, the call of animals and the hiss of the wind using, among other things, the so-called Bartók pizzicato – an aggressive flick of the strings.

The metamorphosis is a softer form of musical variation technique. The music gradually moves further and further away from the starting point. Therefore, there are no rate breaks either. The work's total of 17 sections are connected in one unbroken sequence, which originates from a small chromatic motif and is transformed into a virtuoso and inventive sequence, which heralded that 'The Prehistoric Ligeti' would have a glorious future.

Robert Schumann (1810–1855): String Quartet No. 1, Op. 41 No. 1 (1842)

In 1842, Schumann's wife Clara was away on tour, and Schumann wrote to her: "*I sit with Beethoven's string quartets, and am so haunted by quartet thoughts.*" Clara immediately wrote back: "*If Beethoven could, so can you. Do Beethoven the art after!*" And so he did, Schumann. Within weeks, he had written his first three (and last!) string quartets.

Beethoven dedicated his first string quartets to his model, Haydn. Schumann did the same. His string quartets are dedicated to Felix Mendelssohn, who had created the German romantic ideal that Schumann adored.

String Quartet No. 1 is precisely core romantic. The first movement's dreamy introduction ushers in the colossal emotions that later come to life with Schumann's characteristic quirky accents. The second movement is an energetic scherzo of Mendelssohnian proportions, while the slow third movement is reminiscent of Beethoven's sorrowful yet strong-willed ditto. The vitality of the finale is overwhelming, not least in the unexpected bagpipe-inspired *Musette*, which arrives shortly before the end and marks eccentric Schumann's successful debut in the string quartet genre.

Matthias Hammer
(machine translated)

Enjoy the concert!

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