

Lammermuir Festival

13 September 2021, 3:00pm | Dunbar Parish Church

Maxwell Quartet

Colin Scobie violin I • George Smith violin II
Elliott Perks viola • Duncan Strachan cello

Joseph Haydn String Quartet in C Major, Op. 74, No 1

Herbert Howells Fantasy String Quartet, Op. 25

Antonin Dvořák String Quartet in G Major, Op. 106



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Lammermuir Festival 2021

Welcome to the 12th Lammermuir Festival — we're so glad to be back!

Two years ago, when we celebrated the landmark of our 10th festival we (perhaps fortunately!) had no inkling of what would unfold only a few months later. Then last year we mounted a small online festival and were grateful for the enthusiastic support, not only of our regular audience, but of many new Lammermuir followers around the world.

This year feels like both a celebration and a rebirth — not quite 'business as usual', but very much a festival that we have yearned, through many bleak months, to bring back to this beautiful part of Scotland and to share with you.

We have made a virtue of the new reality of international travel restrictions by inviting many old friends among our distinguished artists, but there are new faces too — headed by our Artist in Residence, the American pianist Jeremy Denk, and by vocal ensemble The Gesualdo Six. We explore a rich variety of repertoire and offer unique projects such as Hugo Wolf's *Italian Songbook*, an anniversary tribute to Dennis Brain, an intriguing afternoon chez the Wagners and a recital dedicated to a great British piano duo. We are delighted to welcome Scottish Opera back and look forward to BBC Radio 3's series of live vocal recitals.

For Covid-safety reasons we have concentrated many of our events in the larger venues in order to retain social distancing of one metre in our audience seating.

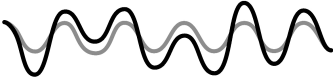
We are most grateful to Creative Scotland for their continuing support and to EventScotland for generously supporting our online streaming programme which will add a new and, we hope, permanent dimension to the festival.

We are fortunate indeed to have a number of generous individual donors, trusts and sponsors who, along with the support of our Friends of the Lammermuir Festival, make the festival possible. We thank each and every supporter most warmly, for without them we simply would not exist.

Hugh Macdonald and James Waters
Joint Artistic Directors

Next year's Lammermuir Festival dates:

9-19 September 2022



Lammermuir Festival

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Our valued supporters are at the very heart of our festival, helping it flourish, prosper and reach out so that as many people as possible can enjoy it every year.

To ensure that we can continue to bring people together in celebration of beautiful music in beautiful places, we need your support and invite you to become a Lammermuir Festival Friend.

To learn more about the benefits of becoming a Festival Friend and to sign up, please visit www.lammermuirfestival.co.uk/friends.

Welcome to Dunbar Parish Church

Dunbar Parish Church, Gillespie Graham's grand red sandstone gothic church of 1821 stands proudly looking out to sea.

Damaged by fire in 1987, its spacious interior was restored with a colourful mix of ancient and modern features including an elaborate early 17th Century monument to the Earl of Dunbar and some fine 1990 stained glass by Shona McInnes and Douglas Hogg.

Lammermuir Festival is grateful to the Minister and Kirk Session of Dunbar Parish Church for making the church available for this concert.

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Programme notes

Joseph Haydn String Quartet in C Major, Op. 74, No. 1
I. Allegro • II. Andantino grazioso • III. Minuetto: Allegro–Trio • IV. Vivace

While Joseph Haydn has often been referred to as the 'father of the symphony', his paternal influence on the genre of the string quartet is arguably even greater. Haydn composed 68 string quartets, concentrating on the genre at focused intervals throughout his career. His approach to the quartet thus evolved in line with the latest musical developments, as well as his own compositional priorities. After hearing his Op. 64 quartets performed to a large audience in London in 1791, Haydn returned to Vienna and composed six quartets with plans to return to England. As it happened, only two of these (though we don't know which) were actually performed in London. But Haydn dedicated the quartets to Count Anton Apponyi, and subsequently published them in Vienna, in two groups of three, as his Opp. 71 & 74, in 1795 and 1796 respectively.

The **String Quartet in C Major, Op. 74, No. 1** is the first of the latter trio. In comparison with Haydn's early and even middle-period quartets, it is clear that these works are a different thing altogether. No longer intimate and introverted, they are very much a public genre, intended to impress a large audience. Like its companions, the *Allegro* of this C-major quartet opens with two loud, statement chords, in an almost orchestral manner, signalling that something worth listening to is about to be heard. Haydn then introduces the first theme, an effervescent melodic line that calls upon the first violin to act as soloist, which subsequently becomes liquidated and transformed in an almost exhaustive manner in the development. When the customary recapitulation finally arrives, however, Haydn toys with our expectations. At one point the four instruments imitate one another in strict counterpoint, before a kind of lateral inflection through the unanticipated key of A-flat major, with the movement finally concluding in a brash unison, as the quartet ascends chromatically to the final cadence.

The *Andantino grazioso* that follows is more intimate, with the main melodic line often foregrounded by having it doubled in octaves, first by the two violins, and then with the viola and cello. The minuet refers back to the opening movement (particularly in the second phrase), and its pivot to A-flat, which makes the A-major trio sound even brighter. However, the *Vivace* finale brings back the home key in explosive style, with a tuneful subject that is successively broken down into bravura passages of rapid semiquavers and toyed with in a series of contrapuntal games, before being eventually drawn out over deep drones in the viola and cello and wrapped up in a thrilling close.

Herbert Howells Fantasy String Quartet, Op. 25

Herbert Howells was born in Lydney, Gloucestershire, the youngest of six children. After winning a scholarship to the Royal College of Music, where he studied with C.H.H. Parry and Charles Wood, he came to the fore as one of Britain's most promising composers,

and would go on to become an influential teacher in his own right. For much of the latter twentieth century, his reputation largely rested on the extensive body of church music he composed. However, in recent years, there has been an increased interest in his earlier orchestral and chamber music, which blends together an unusual mix of influences in a highly original manner. Howells's earlier works combined his interests in Tudor music and modal counterpoint, while incorporating a kind of exploratory approach to harmony that demonstrates the influence of his French contemporaries, most notably Ravel.

The **Fantasy String Quartet** was composed between 1916–17. The 'phantasy' or fantasia became something of an obsession for English composers in the early twentieth century, culminating in the institution of an annual competition in 1995 by Walter Cobbett and the Worshipful Company of Musicians, to promote their composition. The idea was for a kind of 'modern analogue' to the Tudor and Stuart viol fantasies, in which composers were able to allow their imaginations free rein and produce unconventional instrumental musical forms in a single movement.

Howells's quartet works through a series of quintessentially English folksong-like themes, subjecting them to various processes of variation and transformation, in a seemingly whimsical manner led by the lyrical flow of the music. However, while it is tempting to draw comparisons with Ralph Vaughan Williams (particularly the *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis*), Howells subjects his materials to an audibly more advanced harmonic treatment, and the way that he reconciles these two characters in such a convincing way demonstrates real technical nous and originality. Howells's quartet was, in fact, the winner of Cobbett's 1917 competition, but he would revisit the phantasy genre at various points in numerous of his later works.

Antonin Dvořák String Quartet in G Major, Op. 106
I. Allegro moderato • II. Adagio ma non troppo • III. Molto vivace
IV. Finale: Andante sostenuto—Allegro con fuoco

In 1892, Antonín Dvořák took up the post of Artistic Director and Professor of Composition at the National Conservatory of Music in New York. Writing to a friend, Dvořák described:

The Americans expect great things of me. I am to show them the way into the Promised Land, the realm of a new, independent art, in short a national style of music! ... This will certainly be a great and lofty task, and I hope that with God's help I shall succeed in it. I have plenty of encouragement to do so.

His annual salary in New York was \$15,000 — almost 25 times what he earned at the Prague Conservatory. However, although he revisited Europe on holiday, Dvořák struggled to settle in the USA and three years later, in April 1895, he resigned his position and went back to Bohemia permanently.

Completed shortly after his return, the **String Quartet in G Major** is cast in four movements. Dvořák had been a violist by training, and he retained a real passion for

writing chamber music, even when his orchestral music was in such high demand. The first movement is characterised by a concentration on short melodic phrases, which are inventively recombined in a variety of different ways. The second is based on a similar process, which Dvořák uses to generate a highly unusual form that seems to continually gain forward momentum. Marked *Molto vivace*, the Scherzo is a thrilling ride that generates a post-Beethovenian intensity from its unmistakably Czech ingredients. And after a quiet introduction, the final movement launches into an ebullient *Allegro con fuoco* (*Allegro* 'with fire').

Neither this quartet, nor its companion Op. 105, bears evidence of any lasting American influences on Dvořák. Instead, there is just a palpable sense of the unbridled energy and joy — which reaches a climax in the final coda of this quartet — prompted in the composer on his return to his native land.

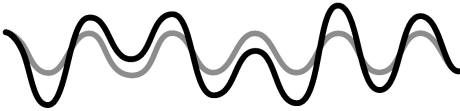
David Lee

The **Maxwell Quartet** has been praised as 'brilliantly fresh, unexpected and exhilarating' by *The Herald*, and for its 'superb storytelling by four great communicators' by *The Strad* Magazine. Having won first prize and the audience prize at the 9th Trondheim International Chamber Music Competition in 2017, the Maxwell Quartet is now firmly regarded as one of Britain's finest young string quartets, with a strong connection to their folk music heritage and a commitment to bringing together wide-ranging projects and programmes to expand the string quartet repertoire.

The quartet performs regularly across the UK and abroad, at venues including London's Wigmore Hall, Purcell Room, and St Martin-in-the-Fields, with performances through the Park Lane Young Artist Programme, the Tunnell Trust Awards Scheme, and the Kirckman Concert Society programme. After their success at Trondheim in 2017, the quartet has toured widely across Europe, including performances in the Tivoli Concert Hall Series, the Amsterdam String Quartet Biennale, Stavanger Festival, Trondheim Chamber Music Festival, Schiermonnikoog and Wonderfeel Festivals in the Netherlands, Lammermuir Festival and Music at Paxton in Scotland, and more. Its debut tour of the USA in January 2019 garnered critical acclaim from the *New York Times* ('eloquent performers who bring the same sense of charisma and sense of adventure to their programming'), and performing to sold out venues in New York, Florida, California and Washington. Collaborations have included working with the Danish String Quartet to perform Scottish and Danish folk music, and working on a new commission for clarinet quintet with composer/clarinettist Mark Simpson. The Quartet's debut CD on Linn Records, featuring string quartets by Haydn alongside the quartet's own compositions based on Scottish traditional folk music, received glowing reviews from international press.

The Quartet is formed of four close friends, who grew up playing folk and classical music together in youth orchestras and music schools across Scotland. The group officially began in 2010 at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, where its founding members met as postgraduate students. In 2011, the Maxwell Quartet was named as Residency Artists for Enterprise Music Scotland 2011-2013, which saw several acclaimed concert tours over their two-year tenure. Performing widely across Scotland, the quartet established a reputation for delighting audiences with their 'unaffected enthusiasm' (*North Highland Times*) and their 'panache and conviction' (*Strathearn Herald*). The quartet has since held residencies at Oxford University, Perth Concert Hall and many chamber music festivals across the UK, including their own festival Loch Shiel in the west highlands of Scotland, and a new self-curated concert series at Guardswell Farm in Perthshire. The quartet currently holds the position of Associate Artist at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in Glasgow, and at Music at Paxton Festival in the Scottish Borders.

Passionate about collaborating with musicians and other artforms, the quartet has worked with a global roster of artists and institutions including Cryptic Theatre, Wintour's Leap, Royal Ballet School, Lunir, cinematographer Herman Kolgen and many more. The quartet has also worked with some of the UK's most dynamic composers including commissions by Anna Meredith, Tom Harrold, Mark Simpson and Colin Broom. In addition to a busy concert diary, the quartet regularly feature in broadcasts for BBC Radio 3 and BBC Radio Scotland, as well as regularly giving schools workshops and concerts for children.



Lammermuir Festival

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David Lee

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