

# Lammermuir Festival

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

## Navarra Quartet

**Benjamin Marquise Gilmore** violin I

**Laia Valentin Braun** violin II

**Sascha Bota** viola

**Brian O'Kane** cello

## Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

String Quartet No. 14 in G Major, K. 387

## Béla Bartók

String Quartet No. 3

## Ludwig van Beethoven

String Quartet No. 2 in G Major, Op. 18, No. 2



LOTTERY FUNDED

# 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.

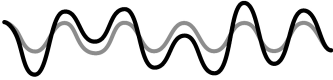
We are most grateful to Creative Scotland for their continuing support and to EventScotland for generously supporting our online streaming programme which will add a new and, we hope, permanent dimension to the festival.

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

### Become part of the Lammermuir Festival Family

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](http://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.*

Visit [www.lammermuirfestival.co.uk](http://www.lammermuirfestival.co.uk) for information about all events and to join our mailing list.

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## Programme notes

**Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart** String Quartet No. 14 in G Major, K. 387  
I. Allegro vivace assai • II. Menuetto • III. Andante cantabile • IV. Molto allegro

The first of a set of six dedicated to Joseph Haydn, Mozart's **String Quartet in G Major, K. 387** dates from late 1782, not long after the twenty-six-year-old composer had relocated to Vienna. Though Mozart was already familiar with the genre, each of the half-dozen in this collection shows the increased influence of Haydn's quartet writing on Mozart, in their engagement with more complex formal structures and a greater emphasis on counterpoint. Haydn, after hearing a performance of the first three of the set, is reported to have told Leopold Mozart (the composer's father), 'Before God, as an honest man, I tell you your son is the greatest composer known to me either in person or in name. He has taste, and more, the most profound compositional mind.'

The opening movement immediately demonstrates Mozart's new focus on composing extended melodies. Gone are the simple, pleasingly symmetrical figures of his early chamber music. These are replaced by more complex themes that seem to grow organically and move beyond the cadences that they anticipate. In the central development, Mozart explores the full range of different textures and sonorities available from his four instruments, with each briefly foregrounded as a soloist, as the composer develops his materials through a series of increasingly daring tonal regions. The minuet that follows is an overt homage to Haydn, in the way that it plays with the triple-time dance metre and cuts across the barlines. The slow movement, however, is pure Mozart — the singing melody heard in the first violin could easily have been lifted straight from one of his operas. The closing movement brings everything together, as Mozart takes an ostensibly facile-sounding five-note subject and from it builds a mesmerising fugal texture, around which he continues to introduce darting syncopations and deeply satisfying suspensions. The sounds that Mozart generates from just four instruments here is truly amazing, with this final movement pointing toward the kinds of ending that would, in time, characterise Mozart's mature symphonies.

**Béla Bartók** String Quartet No. 3

Béla Bartók's **String Quartet No. 3 in C-sharp Minor** was written in 1927. Supported by an award from the Musical Fund Society of Philadelphia, it was premiered by the Waldbauer-Kerpely Quartet at the Wigmore Hall. The most succinct of Bartók's six quartets, it is made up of two sections — marked *prima parte* and *seconda parte* — which are followed by a *Recapitulazione della prima parte*. Despite its relative brevity, Bartók calls on the players to employ a comprehensive series of extended techniques including plucking the strings, using the wood of the bow to tap the strings percussively, and putting

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on mutes, as well as asking the players to play near both the bridge and fingerboards of their instruments.

The *prima parte* opens with a lyrical melody in the first violin, before moving through a series of short duos and chordal sections, which come in and out of more melodically led passages. As it nears its conclusion, the *prima parte* suddenly dissolves, leading straight into the following section — a primitive *Allegro* that shows the profound influence of folk music on Bartók, with its insistent, primordial rhythmical drive. However, despite the primitive appearance of the music, Bartók is unable to help himself, playing out a series of subtle compositional games as he progressively transforms his materials leading toward the blistering climax. While the recapitulation acts as a sort of coda, its main function was essentially to emphasise the two different modes of the quartet — and the two different characters of its composer.

### **Ludwig van Beethoven** String Quartet No. 2 in G Major, Op. 18, No. 2

I. *Allegro* • II. *Adagio cantabile* – *Allegro* – *Tempo I*

III. *Scherzo: Allegro* • IV. *Allegro molto, quasi presto*

Like Mozart's quartet heard at the opening, Ludwig van Beethoven's **Quartet in G Major, Op. 18, No. 2** also bears unmistakable resonances of Haydn. Beethoven's six Op. 18 quartets were published in 1799 and are very much the product of their time — when Beethoven had fully mastered the techniques of the Viennese Classical style, while, at the same time, was still finding his own original voice.

The G-major quartet is an uplifting work, demonstrating the humour of the early-period Beethoven. A graceful opening theme is punctuated by a succession of surprising pauses, with a recurring unison figure that draws the four instruments together as one, before breaking off into a series of characteristically inventive passages. However, Beethoven's development section here is more exploratory than obsessive, as it would be in the later quartets; he seems content to play rather than exhaust, and tease out motivic fragments from the two themes of the exposition, before bringing back the recapitulation. The slow movement features a beautiful *cantilena* melody, with the first violin taking the role of soloist, increasingly growing in confidence with more elaborate (though written-out) ornamentation. The *Scherzo* is essentially based on a recurrent rhythmical figure that gains a sort of perpetual motion, before it is stopped in its tracks by the more prosaic trio in C major. The finale opens with a solo for the cello, encouraging its companions to join in. In some ways echoing the opening, this movement is filled with humour, with lots of close imitation as the instruments chase and interrupt one another, and interject with statements of the theme in increasingly outlandish keys. This was the work of a Beethoven filled with the joys of life, oblivious to the trials that would lie ahead for him.

David Lee

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**Laia Valentin Braun** violin II

**Sascha Bota** viola

**Brian O'Kane** cello

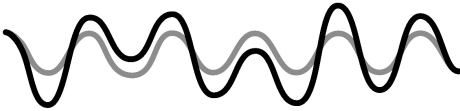
The **Navarra Quartet** has built an international reputation as one of the most dynamic and poetic string quartets of today. Selected for representation by the Young Classical Artists Trust (YCAT) from 2006 to 2010, they have been awarded the MIDEM Classique Young Artist Award, a Borletti-Buitoni Trust Fellowship, the prestigious Dutch Kersjespreis, a Musica Viva tour, and prizes at the Banff, Melbourne and Florence International String Quartet Competitions.

The Navarra String Quartet has appeared at major venues throughout the world including the Wigmore Hall, Manchester's Bridgewater Hall, the Sage Gateshead, Kings Place, Amsterdam Concertgebouw, Esterházy Palace, Luxembourg Philharmonie, Berlin Konzerthaus, the Laeiszhalle in Hamburg and international festivals such as Bath, Aldeburgh, Lammermuir, Presteigne, Bergen, Grachten, Sandviken, Schwetzingen, Rheingau, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Aix-en-Provence, Bellerive, Harrogate Chamber Music and the BBC Proms.

The Quartet collaborates with artists such as Tom Poster, Mark Simpson, Guy Johnston, James Gilchrist, Mathias Kjølner, Simone Young, Li-Wei, Mark Padmore, Allan Clayton, Francesco Piemontesi, John O'Connor, Simone Young and the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain. New commissions by Simon Rowland-Jones, Joseph Phibbs and Manuel Hidalgo are dedicated to the Navarra Quartet and feature in eclectically crafted programmes.

Highly-acclaimed recordings include Haydn's *The Seven Last Words* for Altara Records and a disc of Pēteris Vasks' first three String Quartets for Challenge Records, which they recorded whilst working closely with the composer himself. The recording was described by critics as 'stunning', 'sensational' and 'compelling', and was nominated for the prestigious German Schallplattenkritik Award. More recently, the Navarra Quartet recorded a disc for NMC Records featuring the music of Joseph Phibbs, and future recording plans include Schubert's Late Quartets and the complete Britten quartets. Their latest recording, *Love & Death*, released on Orchid Classics in July 2020, received excellent reviews as 'an illuminating programme' (*Gramophone*).

The Quartet plays on a variety of fine instruments which include an unknown, old English viola and a Grancino cello made in Milan in 1698, generously on loan from the Cruft-Grancino Trust, which is administered by the Royal Society of Musicians.



# Lammermuir Festival

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## **PROGRAMME EDITOR**

David Lee

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