

Lammermuir Festival

18 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

with **Scott Dickinson** viola*

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

String Quartet No. 16 in E-flat Major, K. 428

Ivan Moseley

Ah Robin

Antonín Dvořák

String Quintet in E-flat Major, Op. 97 (‘American’)*



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.

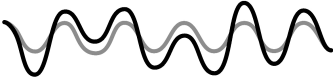
We are most grateful to Creative Scotland for their continuing support and to EventScotland for generously supporting our online streaming programme which will add a new and, we hope, permanent dimension to the festival.

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

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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

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart String Quartet No. 16 in E-flat Major; K. 428

I. Allegro non troppo • II. Andante con moto

III. Menuetto & Trio • IV. Allegro vivace

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's **String Quartet in E-flat Major, K. 428** is the third of Mozart's so-called 'Haydn quartets', which were written in 1783, when Mozart was still a relatively new face in Vienna. And like K. 387, heard in yesterday's programme, it demonstrates the significant influence that the elder composer exerted on Mozart's quartet style. However, in this quartet, Mozart also showed that he was quickly developing his own highly idiomatic approach to chamber music.

The first movement opens with a slightly cautious-sounding introduction with the four instruments in unison, in a theme that begins with prominent rising octave. This is followed by two angular descending leaps, separated by rising semitones. This 'false introduction' is a classic example of Haydn's influence, and when Mozart finally introduces the first theme-proper, it comes as a relief to feel grounded in the home key of E-flat. However, Mozart doesn't waste any of his materials from the introduction. He reuses fragments of it over the course of the movement — particularly in the development section, where he plays out this ambiguity between stable tonalities and chromatic inflexions. In the development section, he introduces a short but ingenious canon, with the four instruments imitating one another strictly with a certain comic effect.

The Andante con moto that follows continues this exploration of the notes between the cracks. The first violin opens with a beautiful lyrical melody in A-flat, the subdominant (a 'gentle' key). However, Mozart quickly calls on the inner voices of the second violin and viola to colour this harmonically, in a series of increasingly unlikely ways, and combine in a series of bittersweet suspensions. While the minuet is far more Classical and distinctly Haydnesque, the trio is unmistakably Mozart, with its minor key and bass pedal notes injecting some drama into the proceedings. But the finale, marked *Allegro vivace*, is brimming with laughter, as Mozart redeploys the two-note figure from the opening in a series of entertaining combinations and musical games between the four members of the quartet.

Ivan Moseley *Ah Robin*

Ivan Moseley studied composition privately with Hans Heimler and then — forty years later — with Anthony Gilbert at the Royal Northern College of Music, which he attended at the same time as the founder members of the Navarra Quartet. His music has been performed at concerts in Britain, Holland and the United States, included in recordings issued in Germany and Mexico, and broadcast on BBC Radio 3 and Radio Suffolk. His most recent premiere was in June of this year, when the Elias String Quartet played *Fourscore* at Wigmore Hall.

Ah Robin is based on a song by William Cornysh (1465-1523), which has virtually obtained folksong status. It consists of a series of developments of the very characteristic material, leading towards the end to crunching dissonance, while the spirit of the piece is retained. It ends by disappearing into thin air.

Antonín Dvořák String Quintet in E-flat Major, Op. 97 ('American')
I. Allegro non tanto • II. Allegro vivo • III. Larghetto • IV. Finale: Allegro giusto

In September 1891, Antonin Dvořák moved to New York City to take up the position of Director at the newly founded National Conservatory of Music. While the post offered a significant increase in earning potential to Dvořák (his salary was almost twenty-five times what he had been paid in Prague), it was to be a difficult time for the composer. He found the business of the city wearisome and suffered intense homesickness, often finding it difficult to write music. In 1895, he would eventually return to his beloved Bohemia.

However, in 1893, Dvořák travelled with his family to Spillville, Iowa to enjoy a summer holiday. The small farming town had become a centre for the Czech emigré community since the early 1850s. Dvořák found the trip incredibly restorative, describing in a letter to a friend how excited he was to have 'heard the singing of birds for the first time in eight months!'

On his return to New York, Dvořák immediately sketched two important chamber works — the first was his String Quartet, Op. 96, the second, this **String Quintet in E-flat Major, Op. 97**. Both works became known by the nickname 'American'. This was to be Dvořák's second quintet featuring two violas. This scoring — the same as that preferred by Mozart and Brahms — with the two violas, creates a rich texture with added tenorial warmth at the centre of the ensemble.

Although marked *Allegro ma non tanto*, the quintet opens with a slow introduction, out of which the first main theme eventually emerges and the Allegro really begins. Dvořák manages this transition very carefully — there is no indication of a tempo change; instead, it is effected by simply moving gradually from longer note values to shorter ones. The result is a sense of organic emergence rather than sudden transition. The movement grows through a sequence of bold modulations, before swelling toward the climax as Dvořák brings back the main theme in octaves with the violins at the recapitulation. At this point, he really takes full advantage of the extra instrument to create an almost orchestral sonority.

In the following movement, Dvořák uses the second viola to introduce a single-note *ostinato* (i.e. a repeated rhythmical figure), heard almost as a drum-beat that drives the ensemble forward. In the slower section, marked *Un poco meno mosso* ('A little less motion'), the first viola takes centre-stage, with a beautiful lyrical melody. However, it is the third movement — the *Larghetto* — in which Dvořák really shows off his melodic gifts. The lower strings introduce a brooding, minor-mode melody, which is then used as the subject for a series of elaborate variations. Dvořák goes beyond the conventional, Classical processes of variation, which tended to focus primarily on melodic elaboration. Instead, he works his material through a comprehensive sequence of transformations of texture, character and tone — all the while retaining the original theme as an audible means of unification.

After such a carefully worked movement, the finale comes as a simple but thrilling ride. Dvořák plays out the apparent tension between the insistent dotted figure and the intervening suave, legato episodes — but it is the former that eventually wins out, as the quintet hurtles raucously to its final barline.

David Lee

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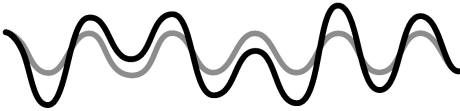
The **Navarra Quartet** has built an international reputation as one of the most dynamic and poetic string quartets of today. Selected for representation by the Young Classical Artists Trust (YCAT) from 2006 to 2010, they have been awarded the MIDEM Classique Young Artist Award, a Borletti-Buitoni Trust 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 Kjølter, 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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David Lee

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