

# Seaford Music Society

Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> February 2026, at 3.00 pm

## London Mozart Players Chamber Ensemble

**Simon Blendis** (*violin*) joined LMP as leader in 2014. He was a member of the Schubert Ensemble for twenty-three years, from 1995 until the group retired in 2018, leaving a legacy of over 80 commissions, 25 CD recordings and a large library of live performances on YouTube. Simon is in demand as a guest-leader and has appeared in this role with most of the UK's major orchestras. He has also appeared as a guest-director with orchestras such as the Academy of St Martin in the Fields, the English Chamber Orchestra, the Amsterdam Sinfonietta and the Scottish Ensemble. Since 1999 he has shared the position of leader of Orchestra Ensemble Kanazawa in Japan, with whom he has recorded Vivaldi's Four Seasons for the Warner label. As a soloist he has appeared with orchestras including the Philharmonia, the RPO and the CBSO.

Increasingly sought after as a teacher, Simon is a professor of violin at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

**Antonia Kesel** (*violin*) graduated from the Royal Academy of Music with a First Class honours degree in 2015 and then continued at the Academy as a chamber music fellow. She has won many prizes as a chamber musician with Trio Derazey, including the St Martin's Chamber Music Competition and the Malta International Music Competition.

Besides her position as Second Violin with the London Mozart Players, Antonia has a busy freelancing career in London, working for orchestras such as The Academy of St Martin in the Fields, Aurora Orchestra and the London Contemporary Orchestra. She plays on a François Fent violin from Paris, circa 1780.

Glaswegian **Christine Anderson** (*viola*) joined the Hallé Orchestra in 2015, shortly after graduating from the Royal College of Music, where she studied with Simon Rowland-Jones. Last year she moved to London, where she enjoys a varied freelance career as an orchestral and chamber musician. Her orchestral work includes performing with Aurora Orchestra, the Philharmonia, and the RPO. She recently joined the Gildas Quartet, and also regularly plays with ground-breaking chamber ensembles such as Manchester Collective, Twelve Ensemble, the United Strings of Europe and Her Ensemble.

Christine plays on a beautiful English viola, made by David Milward in 2011.

**Judith Busbridge** (*viola*) graduated in Music from Birmingham University and completed her viola studies with Thomas Riebl in Salzburg. Whilst there, she was Principal Violist in the Camerata Academica for five years, under the directorship of Sándor Végh. She is currently one of the Principal Violas in the Orchestra of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, and has a busy schedule there, playing for the opera season as well as for productions of the Royal Ballet.

As a former member of two multi-award-winning chamber music ensembles, the Dante String Quartet and Ensemble 360, Judith has performed at major concert halls and festivals throughout the UK and Europe, regularly broadcasting on BBC Radio 3 and winning the prestigious Royal Philharmonic Society Award for Chamber Music in both 2007 and 2013.



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She is currently Principal Viola in the London Mozart Players and in Sir John Eliot Gardiner's Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique, which performs repertoire of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries on period instruments.

**Kate Gould** (*cello*) formed the celebrated Leopold String Trio at the Royal Academy of Music in 1991. They recorded extensively for Hyperion Records and were BBC New Generation Artists and selected for the ECHO 'Rising Stars' series worldwide. The prestigious Borletti-Buitoni Trust Award enabled Kate to curate a 12-concert series at Wigmore Hall and the trio went on to win the Royal Philharmonic Society's Award for Chamber Music.

Kate is Artistic Director of the flourishing Winchester Chamber Music Festival in her hometown. She regularly plays at other festivals, including Penarth, Corbridge and Peasmarsh and the Festival de los Siete Lagos in Argentina. She is much in demand as a guest principal cellist for most of the UK chamber and symphony orchestras, as well as many gut-string ensembles.

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## Wolfgang Amadeus MOZART (1756-1791)

### Quintet in C minor, K.406/516b

- I *Allegro*
- II *Andante*
- III *Menuetto in canone*
- IV *Allegro*

In 1782 Mozart was commissioned to write a *Serenade*, possibly for one of the Princes Liechtenstein. This *Serenade in C minor* was a wind octet for oboes, clarinets, horns and bassoons. There is no record of its having been performed, but Mozart made sure that his efforts were not wasted, and five years later, during the winter of 1787-88, he arranged the piece as a string quintet for two violins, two violas and cello.

The work sits on the strings so well that the listener would not think of it as an arrangement, and the layout takes on beautiful colour when the violins are silent and the plangent tones of the violas are revealed as the top of the texture. Particularly rich, too, are the momentary phrases when the two violas double the two violins an octave below.

The first movement starts with an imposing set of chords that rise through a C minor arpeggio and fall by a diminished seventh – a most Baroque-like beginning, although perhaps rather less majestic than the wind octet version. Thereafter, the usual alternation of minor and major-key subjects is found in the exposition, but it is worth noting how the transition is made by the brief first-violin solo, since this apparently formal phrase is wonderfully expanded in the recapitulation. Perhaps to help emphasise this very feature, Mozart kept the development paragraph short – just under a minute.

The *Andante* uses a theme characterised by descending suspensions held over the bar lines, providing a melting tune reminiscent of a serenade in an opera scene. In this movement, the two violas, whether at the top of the texture or high within it, lend much colour to the beautiful proceedings. The *in canone* of the *Minuet's* title refers to the direct imitation of the top voice by the bottom one, one bar away in time and two octaves in pitch. Still more learnedly, the Trio is *al rovescio*: the imitating voice is inverted, i.e. upside down. Not only that, but there are *two* such canons, the second violin inverting the first, and the cello inverting the first viola, this pair using a different tune.

The last movement retains the minor mode for its theme and four variations. The fifth variation uses a neighbouring major key, the two violas imitating two horns. The music soon reverts to the home key of C minor, but the last variation, instead of coming to a conclusion, hesitantly leads into a C major paragraph. However, Mozart ends the movement, not with a C major chord, but with a bare fifth – neither major nor minor.

## Benjamin BRITTEN (1913-1976)

### Three Divertimenti

- I *Alla Marcia*
- II *Waltz*
- III *Burlesque*

Britten's *Three Divertimenti* began life as three movements from a projected five-movement work for string quartet that Britten started in 1933 but never finished. This piece, called *Alla Quartetto Serioso*, was intended to be a suite containing portraits of the composer's friends. At this formative stage in his career – he was still only in his early twenties – Britten was especially self-critical. His diaries indicate that the suite gave him particular trouble, but he reluctantly agreed to allow the three movements to be performed on 11<sup>th</sup> December 1933 at a Macnaghten-Lemare concert.

Two years later he revised the pieces for a performance by the Stratton Quartet on 26<sup>th</sup> February 1936 at the Wigmore Hall. They were now retitled *Three Divertimenti*. Britten noted at the time that the performance was greeted with sniggers and what he termed a “pretty cold silence”. This reaction, coupled with the fact that the work also received a hostile press, probably explains why Britten put the *Three Divertimenti* aside, and they were not published until after his death.

Despite the bad press and the composer's disillusionment, the *Divertimenti* contain some attractive music, reminiscent of the *Bridge Variations*. In this work Britten was able to reconcile classical form with styles which owe their impact to colour rather than design, and a real feeling for the string medium is revealed.

The three movements as we now have them are entitled *March*, *Waltz* and *Burlesque*. The *March* is bracketed by two sections containing glissandi. The *March* proper is made up of two themes, the second of which makes pleasing use of chains of thirds. The second movement is a seductive *Waltz* full of *rubato* and elegant sophistication. As a complete change of mood, a *moto-perpetuo* tarantella-like theme, typical of Britten's later years, is the basis of the *Burlesque*, which has a fine passage marked *Cantabile ed exultate*, shortly before the Coda.

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### INTERVAL 15 MINUTES

There are toilets in the lobby at the back of the church, and downstairs via the stairs beside the stage or, **on request**, via the lift next to the entrance foyer. **No refreshments will be served during the interval, but we invite you to join us downstairs for tea, coffee and biscuits after the concert ends.**

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## Ludwig van BEETHOVEN (1770-1827)

### String Quintet in C major, Op.29 ('Storm')

- I *Allegro*
- II *Adagio molto espressivo*
- III *Scherzo - Allegro*
- IV *Presto*

Beethoven's C major String Quintet was written in 1801, around the same time as the *Moonlight* sonata. It may well have been modelled on Mozart's Quintet in C major, K.515. Like Mozart's, Beethoven's work is on a large scale and has plenty to say for itself. The nickname *Storm* was not original but was given to the piece during Beethoven's lifetime, probably owing to the dramatic nature of the finale, with its “stormy weather and flashes of lightning”, to quote a contemporary writer.

The luxury of an extra instrument, in this case another viola, adds greatly to the sense of amplitude with which the first movement unfolds. It is not simply a bigger sound in the *fortes*, though there are plenty of

examples of this. As soon as the broad first theme is restated the accompanying quavers are given in octaves in the middle of the texture (an Elgarian effect before its time) and there is still room for the first violin to add a descant above. A connecting passage generates triplets which are subsequently prominent, especially in the development where they scurry up and down to brilliant effect. The design is a broad one, and this breadth leads to a corresponding richness in the development section in both tonal excursions and dynamic build-up which more than foreshadows the “big” Beethoven middle-period style. The onset of the recapitulation is signalled by a *fortissimo* chord giving way to a solo violin.

The slow movement is luxuriantly scored, and elaborately varied in its repetitions. It, too, has a sizable middle section, initiated by two bars of solo violin. The music here is rendered dramatic by trembling of the lower strings, and these recur in the quite substantial tailpiece. The mood of the *Scherzo* is robust and what Beethoven was apt to call “unbuttoned”. Its contrasting Trio brings a moment of high assertion from the first viola, and its mainly downward figuration balances the upward thrusts of the *Scherzo*.

The quicksilver brilliance of the last movement has two surprises in its middle section: the two beats in a bar are divided into three by some instruments and into two by others, and a sudden pause leads to a capricious minuet of quite startling irrelevance were it not repeated in the home key towards the end.

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**We warmly invite you to join us downstairs after the concert for a cup of tea or coffee**

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### **Our next concert**

**Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2026, 3.00 pm, at Seaford Baptist Church, Belgrave Road, Seaford**

The **Fibonacci Quartet** make a very welcome return to Seaford, playing quartets by Haydn (his lyrical ‘Lark’ Quartet), Debussy and Schumann.

Membership of the Society grants you free entry to this and all the remaining concerts this season, without additional charge. A limited number of children and young adults (under 26) may also attend without charge (children under 16 must be accompanied by an adult).

If you are not a member and would like to join, see our Treasurer, Paul Moore, at the desk in the entrance foyer. There will be a reduction in your annual membership subscription because you are joining after the start of the season, and the cost of your ticket for today’s concert will be credited towards your subscription.

For non-members, single-concert tickets cost £21, and can be purchased in advance from **Newberry Tully Estate Agents** in Church Street, Seaford; **Seaford, Newhaven and Lewes Tourist Information Centres**; online through **TicketSource**; or from **our Treasurer, Paul Moore**.

### **Additional benefits for members of Seaford Music Society**

Members may bring one guest to any of the concerts in our 2025-26 season of concerts, at a reduction of £3 off the single-ticket price, subject to the concert not having sold out.

On presentation of their current membership card, members also enjoy the following benefits:

- A reduced price of £14 at any Haywards Heath Music Society concert in their 2025-26 season
- A reduced price of £17 at any Nicholas Yonge Society concert in their 2025-26 season
- A discount of £3 off the price of any Uckfield Music Club concert in their 2026 season

Tickets at these reduced prices are available at the door, on concert days only. Details of the concerts can be found on each organisation’s website:

<b>Uckfield Music Club:</b>	<a href="http://www.uckfieldmusicclub.uk">www.uckfieldmusicclub.uk</a>
<b>Haywards Heath Music Society:</b>	<a href="http://www.haywardsheathmusicsociety.org.uk">www.haywardsheathmusicsociety.org.uk</a>
<b>Nicholas Yonge Society:</b>	<a href="http://www.nyslewes.org.uk">www.nyslewes.org.uk</a>