

Seaford Music Society

Sunday 9th February 2025, at 3.00 pm

London Mozart Players Chamber Ensemble with Timothy Lines

Timothy Lines (*clarinet*) studied at the Royal College of Music with Michael Collins and now enjoys a wide-ranging career as a clarinettist. He has played with all the major symphony orchestras in London as well as with chamber groups including London Sinfonietta and the Nash Ensemble. From 1999 to 2003 he was principal clarinet of the London Symphony Orchestra. In 2004 he was appointed clarinet section leader of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, a position he held until 2006, when he left to focus on his freelance career. He plays on original instruments with the English Baroque Soloists, the Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and is also frequently engaged to record film music and pop music tracks. Timothy is professor of clarinet at both the Royal College of Music and the Royal Academy of Music.

Ruth Rogers (*violin*) studied with Itzhak Rashkovsky and Herman Krebbers. Described as “the finest of the younger generation of violinists” (*Musical Opinion*), Ruth is in great demand as soloist, leader and chamber musician. She was awarded the Tagore Gold Medal, the Royal College of Music’s highest accolade, and appears regularly at such prestigious venues as The Wigmore Hall with Aquinas Piano Trio, with whom she has made many recordings, including releases by Naxos which have been very well received by the critics. Ruth was appointed Leader of the London Mozart Players in 2015 and Leader of the Brighton Philharmonic Orchestra in 2022. She previously worked as Co-Leader of the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and now appears as a guest leader of many other major UK orchestras. Ruth is proud to have played to orphans, landmine victims and malaria patients in refugee camps on the Thailand-Burma border.

Antonia Kesel (*violin*) graduated in 2015 from the Royal Academy of Music with a First Class honours degree, having studied with international soloist Jack Liebeck for four years. Since her graduation she has been a chamber music fellow at the Royal Academy of Music and has won many prizes, including the St Martin-in-the-Fields chamber music competition and the Malta International Music Competition. Antonia enjoys working in the West End as a member of the band at Phantom of the Opera, as well as being a freelance violinist in London, playing for commercial recording sessions and for orchestras such as the Academy of St Martin-in-the-Fields, Royal Opera House and Britten Sinfonia. Antonia plays on a François Fent violin from Paris, circa 1780.

Judith Busbridge (*viola*) graduated in Music from Birmingham University and completed her viola studies with Thomas Riebl in Salzburg. In 2013 she joined the Orchestra of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, as one of their principal violas. 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. Her varied freelance career includes being principal viola in the London Mozart Players as well as playing guest principal viola with the English Chamber Orchestra, the Philharmonia Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra and The Academy of St Martin-in-the-Fields.



Seaford Music Society gratefully acknowledges the support of Newberry Tully Estate Agents

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Born in London, **Sebastian Comberti** (*cello*) studied in Italy with Amedeo Baldovino and later with Derek Simpson and Sidney Griller at the Royal Academy of Music, from where he graduated in 1977. In 1976 he became a founder member of the Bochmann Quartet, giving concerts throughout the UK and in Europe. In 1983 he was appointed principal cello with the London Mozart Players, since when he has appeared on numerous occasions as soloist, as well as being an active member of the LMP Chamber Ensemble. As a member of several chamber groups, including the re-formed Divertimenti, which performs works written for two-cello quintet, he has recorded for many record labels. A keen interest in historically informed performance has resulted in participation with several of London's period instrument groups, and research into early cello repertoire has led to recitals being recorded by the BBC. It has been this interest that has led to the founding of Comberti's record label, Cello Classics, on which he has released several acclaimed recordings in recent years.

Wolfgang Amadeus MOZART (1756-1791)

Allegro in B flat major, K.516c, for basset clarinet and string quartet

Fragment completed by Professor Timothy Jones

Unlike Beethoven, Mozart did not leave extensive sketches for his most important compositions. Indeed, it seems that he usually had at least the broad outlines of a work clear and settled before committing anything to paper. However, there do exist some compositions that were abandoned and left incomplete. Most of them date either from about 1779 (just before he left Salzburg for Vienna) or from the last few years of his life. These sketches range in length from a few bars to half a completed movement. In some cases it is clear that Mozart discarded them for something better, but usually the reasons for abandoning a composition are unclear. Some of these snippets may have been discarded in a spirit of self-criticism, but others are so good and promising as to suggest other reasons for their incompleteness – pressure of more urgent work, perhaps, or lack of an immediate performance opportunity.

The unfinished *Allegro in B flat* has been given conjecturally the date 1787, though the style of the music and the use of the basset clarinet suggest perhaps a time nearer to the quintet of 1789. It has affinities with other triple-time opening movements in B flat, such as the *String Quartet K.589*, and the *Divertimento K.287*. The opening section, which consists of the exposition, part of the development, and its completion, are written for the clarinet with lower register extending down to written C (sounding B flat).

Edwin York BOWEN (1884-1961)

Phantasy-Quintet, Op.93

- I *Allegro moderato – Animato – Tempo 1 –*
- II *Poco piu mosso – Animando –*
- III *Poco animato – Calando – A tempo –*
- IV *Poco Sostenuto e a piacere – Poco Mosso – Tranquillo –*
- V *Allegro con spirito, non troppo –*
- VI *Tempo 1. allegro moderato ma piu tranquillo –*
- VII *Piu sostenuto, tranquillo*

York Bowen's mother gave him his first piano and harmony lessons as his talent for music soon revealed itself. He won a scholarship to the Royal Academy of Music aged 14 and was a very successful student. It was said that he could play every instrument of the orchestra and he had an amazing ability really to understand what each instrument could do. He was elected a Fellow of the Academy aged 23 and became a Professor there two years later, remaining until his death. During the First World War he served as a horn player in the regimental band of the Scots Guards.

Often referred to as ‘the English Rachmaninov’, he was an outstanding pianist, making the first recording of Beethoven’s *Piano Concerto No.4* and composing his own set of *24 Preludes*. He was a prolific composer (four symphonies, concerti for various instruments – notably for viola – and much chamber music), but his romantic style fell out of favour as the century progressed and his work became neglected, remaining out of print or even unpublished.

Little is known either of the history of the *Phantasy-Quintet for Bass Clarinet and String Quartet* or why Bowen chose to write for this beautiful instrument. When combined with a string quartet its timbre balances the viola, adding depth and an extra dimension to the ensemble. The work was composed around 1932 and clearly derives in structure from the Cobbett Phantasy Competitions that were initiated in 1905 to further the cause of British chamber music through a short one-movement piece.

As the markings for the quintet reveal, even within each of seven short sections (the total work lasts only fourteen minutes) there are distinctive changes of character, but the whole is blended together seamlessly with great skill. The first section, corresponding perhaps to the first movement of a sonata, presents two themes in a ternary arrangement like a sandwich. The middle section, which is introduced by a quasi-recitative passage for bass clarinet, is followed by a linking passage featuring a lovingly crafted viola solo, and corresponds to a second movement. The third, a brilliantly driven *Allegro con spirito*, represents a finale. The whole piece is rounded off with a sustained *tranquillo* coda which returns to the mood of nocturnal reverie of the opening bars.

INTERVAL 15 MINUTES

There are toilets in the lobby at the back of the church.

No refreshments will be served during the interval, but we warmly invite you to join us downstairs for tea, coffee and biscuits after the concert ends.

Johannes BRAHMS (1833-1897)

Clarinet Quintet in B minor, Op.115

- I *Allegro*
- II *Adagio*
- III *Andantino*
- IV *Con moto*

In 1890 Brahms completed his *String Quintet in G major, Op.111*, and announced that this would be his final work as, at 57, he was giving up composing. Around this time many of his old friends died and, with a feeling of depression, he became obsessed with his own mortality. Fortunately, he received a new stimulus, and the decision was reversed. For that we owe a debt to one man. In March 1891 Brahms visited Meiningen to hear one of the greatest orchestras of the day, under its new conductor Fritz Steinbach. He was immediately impressed by the playing of the orchestra’s clarinetist Richard Mühlfeld and a firm friendship soon developed between the two men. It was Mühlfeld who provided the stimulus for Brahms to write his last four great chamber works: the *Clarinet Trio*, the two *Clarinet Sonatas*, and the *Clarinet Quintet*.

The quintet was written in 1891 at Brahms’s summer retreat of Ischl in the Salzkammergut, and it was first performed in December of the same year at one of Joachim’s concerts in Berlin, when the critics declared it to be the finest work for clarinet since Mozart’s. It is, indeed, a work of autumnal beauty, introspection and quiet melancholy. While Brahms created a feeling of rhapsodic freedom, he also ensured a unity of emotion, tonality and thematic content, and it is noticeable that the clarinet adopts not a solo role, but more that of an equal.

The two violins open the first movement with a sensuously beautiful theme which contains the seeds upon which the whole work is built, including the second idea introduced by the clarinet.

The clarinet opens the *Adagio*, with a tender, dream-like melody which is Brahmsian romanticism at its zenith. A rhapsodic middle section, with echoes of his beloved gypsy music, precedes a return to the opening mood. The clarinet also introduces the *Andantino* with a broad melody, a faster, delicate *Presto* taking over to continue the movement with many references to the germinal theme.

Reflecting the motivic content previously encountered, a theme with five variations forms the final movement. The variations continue the underlying tranquillity of mood, except that, in the second, the gypsy character of the *Adagio* again comes to the fore. Hints of each of the movements are to be found in the closing passages, in particular a chilly *dénouement* as the principal theme of the opening *Allegro* combines with that of the variations.

All programme notes courtesy of Making Music

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

Our next concert

Sunday 16th March 2025, 3.00 pm, at Seaford Baptist Church, Belgrave Road, Seaford

A step back in time to the Baroque period, when **Trio La Follia** (violin, cello and harpsichord) offer us a rich variety of music by Handel, Telemann, Corelli and Jean-Marie Leclair.

Membership of the Society grants you free entry to this and all the remaining concerts this season, without additional charge. 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. The subscription is reduced for those joining mid-season, and the cost of your ticket for today's concert will be credited towards your membership subscription.

For non-members, single-concert tickets cost £20, and can be purchased in advance from Newberry Tully Estate Agents in Church Street; Seaford Tourist Information Centre; 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 2024-25 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 2024-25 season
- A reduced price of £17 at any Nicholas Yonge Society concert in their 2024-25 season
- A discount of £3 off the price of any Uckfield Music Club concert in their 2025 season (exact price to be confirmed)
- A discount of £2 off the price of any concert at the 2025 Lewes Festival of Song (subject to confirmation)

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:

Uckfield Music Club:	www.uckfieldmusicclub.uk
Haywards Heath Music Society:	www.haywardsheathmusicsociety.org.uk
Nicholas Yonge Society:	www.nyslewes.org.uk
Lewes Festival of Song:	www.lewesfestivalofsong.co.uk