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A “virtual” Music in Adderbury Concert recorded at the Parish Church of Ss Peter and Paul, Deddington

Released on Sunday November 15, 2020 at 11:15

The Adderbury Concerts Trust is a registered charity no 1095242.

A huge thank you to all our Patrons, Friends and Supporters.

We very much hope you enjoy this concert. If you would like to become a patron of Music in Adderbury or make a donation to help support our “virtual” concerts, please get in touch with us via the contact page at musicinadderbury.com.

This is the second of the concerts recorded in Deddington and normally streamed from our YouTube channel at 19:15 on Sunday evenings over the following months. (In this case, however, the video was streamed from 11:15 on Sunday morning for the benefit of the Oxford Coffee Concerts audience, who would otherwise not have had a concert to enjoy at that time. All these recordings will be available for a limited time after release as well and, of course, there are more to come.)

The Adderbury Ensemble

**Martyn Jackson (violin), Jenny Sacha (violin), Vanessa McNaught (viola),
Chris Windass (viola), Jane Fenton (cello)**

- **Vaughan Williams: Phantasy Quintet**
- **Mozart: String Quintet no 4 in G minor, K 516**

Formed in 1986 by a group of the UK’s finest young freelance musicians, the Adderbury Ensemble have always had a flexible line-up, mixing and matching different players to deliver performances primarily as quartets, quintets or small chamber groups and occasionally adding further instruments to play symphonies and concertos by the likes of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Mendelssohn or Brahms – with or without a conductor.

Everyone who performs as part of the Adderbury Ensemble is an eminent instrumentalist, usually a principal player with one or more of the leading orchestras of Europe. From their early years playing Sunday evening concerts in the beautiful village of Adderbury in north Oxfordshire, the

group have gone on to develop a global reputation. They perform regularly throughout Britain and other European nations and played their first concerts in the United States in Spring 2016. They also helped found the world-famous Oxford Coffee Concerts at the Holywell Music Room, the oldest purpose-built music venue in Europe.

The Adderbury Ensemble have released ten recordings in their own right since their first CD was released in 1997, and individual members have recorded many more, either as soloists or as members of other groups.

More information:
www.adderburyensemble.com

Phantasy Quintet **by Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)**

1. Prelude. Lento ma non troppo; 2. Scherzo. Prestissimo; 3. Alla sarabanda; 4. Burlesca – Allegro moderato.

One of the most important figures in British chamber music in the early years of the twentieth century was not a composer, nor a performer, but a promoter. Walter Wilson Cobbett (1847-1937) was a wealthy businessman and amateur musician with a particular enthusiasm for chamber music. He supported performers and publications, commissioned new works, and compiled the Cyclopaedic survey of chamber music which bears his name. In 1905 he instituted a series of composers' competitions.

Cobbett was especially keen on reviving the fantasia form of the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods, in which a single movement embraced a number of contrasting sections based on a common theme. As a result, works composed as competition entries, or commissioned by Cobbett, tended to be either in a single movement following this sectional plan, or in four linked movements. Bridge, Ireland, Howells and Britten were among the many who took up the challenge.

Vaughan Williams' Phantasy quintet was written in response to a commission from Cobbett and dates from about 1912. It is therefore roughly contemporary with the first versions of the *Fantasia on a Theme of Thomas Tallis* (which applies a similar

principle in the orchestral field) and *A London symphony*.

The Quintet plays continuously, without a break. The slow, meditative Prelude opens with a rising theme for the first viola, unaccompanied, which is answered by a descending idea for the first violin. The viola theme reappears in the three later movements. The Scherzo is an energetic, nimble piece in 7/4 time, begun and ended by the solo cello, and whose energy runs down at the end, leading into the Sarabande. The gently introspective heart of the work, this is scored for the violins and violas only, muted.

The cello starts the Burlesca with a somewhat gawky dance tune which it repeats a number of times as the upper instruments join in. They then speed up the tune into something livelier, followed by an even quicker section, before a sonorous andante passage, with the cello playing a slower version of its opening theme. The viola theme that launched the whole work returns answered, as before, by the first violin, which has a brief cadenza, a little pre-echo of *The Lark Ascending*. A snatch of the quick music leads to in the quiet closing bars, with the first viola echoing the cello theme that launched the movement.

String Quintet in G minor, K516 by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

1. Allegro; 2. Menuetto. Allegretto; 3. Adagio ma non troppo; 4. Adagio - allegro.

Apart from an early work in B flat, K174, written in 1773, Mozart's string quintets all date from the last years of his life. We don't know why he returned to this unfamiliar medium after such a long interval. It has been suggested that he was following the example of Boccherini, recently appointed Court Composer to the cello-playing King Frederick 2nd of Prussia. One problem with this theory is the fact that Boccherini, the leading cellist of his generation, generally added a second cello to the string quartet, while Mozart preferred to enrich the middle of the texture with an extra viola (an instrument he himself enjoyed playing). It may be that he was simply responding to a new challenge and hoping that the quintets' novelty-value would bring some much-needed income. Sadly, this turned out not to be the case; a proposed subscription publication of the first of the mature quintets, K515 in C, failed to attract enough support.

Mozart found the string quintet an easier medium to handle than the quartet, and his four mature works in this form are among his greatest achievements in the field of chamber music. The G minor Quintet was composed immediately after the C major Quintet in the spring of 1787. This was not the first time, nor the last, that he wrote a pair of contrasting works – one in a major key, one minor – for the same medium in quick succession. The

suggestion that opposing sides of his personality were demanding near-simultaneous expression is hard to resist.

Like his other important works in G minor, K516 is a sombre, tragic piece. The opening allegro, like that of Symphony no 40, in the same key, written the following year, is tense and restless. Mozart heightens the mood by staying in G minor for the start of the second main theme, delaying the move to B flat major which his contemporaries would have expected at this point.

The minuet, with its jabbing, off-beat accents, maintains the tension – intensifies it, even. The central trio section, in G major, lightens the mood briefly. The adagio is in E flat, a key that usually draws from Mozart music of radiant warmth and richness. So it is here, although there is still an uneasy undercurrent. The instruments are muted, which gives a withdrawn, veiled quality to the sound.

With the extended slow introduction to the finale – almost an extra movement in itself – we are back in the dark G minor world we thought we had left. The G major rondo which follows is restrained in its cheerfulness, as though chastened by the earlier emotional turmoil.

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Coming up at Music in Adderbury...

Sunday November 22, 2020

Aquinas Piano Trio

- Faure Piano Trio
- Mozart Piano Trio K502

Sunday December 13, 2020

Adderbury Ensemble

- Schubert String Quintet
- Purcell Fantasia