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

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This is the last of our autumn virtual concerts recorded in Deddington. These recordings will be available for a limited time after release and, of course, there are more to come.

The Philharmonia Quartet

**Benjamin Marquise Gilmore (violin), Rebecca Chan (violin),
Yukiko Ogura (viola) and Richard Birchall (cello)**

- **Haydn: String Quartet in A major, op 20, no 6**
- **Janáček: String Quartet no 2 (“Intimate Letters”)**

Benjamin Marquise Gilmore (violin)

Philharmonia Orchestra concert master Benjamin Marquise Gilmore grew up in England and studied with Natalia Boyarskaya at the Yehudi Menuhin School and Pavel Vernikov at the Vienna Conservatory, as well as with Julian Rachlin, Miriam Fried, and members of the Artis quartet and Altenberg trio. His father was the musicologist Bob Gilmore and he is the grandson of conductor Lev Markiz.

Benjamin was awarded first prize at the Oskar Back violin competition in Amsterdam, and was a prizewinner at the Joseph Joachim competition in Hannover and the Mozart competition in Salzburg. As a soloist, he has performed with the Amsterdam Sinfonietta, the NDR Hannover, the Rotterdam Philharmonic and the Munich Chamber Orchestra.

A member of the Chamber Orchestra of Europe since 2011, Benjamin was appointed leader of the Scottish Chamber Orchestra in 2016. He performed with the SCO as soloist and director on several occasions and has been involved in the SCO’s chamber music series at the Queen’s Hall in Edinburgh. He has also appeared as guest leader with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic and City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, and as leader and director with the Camerata Salzburg.

Rebecca Chan (violin)

Philharmonia associate leader Rebecca Chan was born in Melbourne and studied violin with Alice Waten at the Australian National Academy of Music and Sydney Conservatorium and with William Hennessy at Melbourne University, where she also completed degrees in Medicine and Arts.

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Rebecca has played as soloist with many of Australia's major orchestras, including the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra; Adelaide, Tasmanian and Canberra Symphony Orchestras; Orchestra Victoria; Melbourne Chamber Orchestra; and the Australian Chamber Orchestra. She has been the winner of the string section, and Nelly Apt Scholarship in the ABC Young Performers Awards, the ANAM concerto competition and the Australian Concerto and Vocal Competition, and was a prizewinner at the International Citta di Brescia Violin Competition.

As a chamber musician, Rebecca has toured Australia, Europe and Asia, and has played in numerous festivals around the world. She is a member of the Australia Piano Quartet and the Hamer Quartet (winners of the first prize, the audience prize and Musica Viva award in the 2009 Asia Pacific Chamber Music Competition).

Yukiko Ogura

Principal viola with the Philharmonia Orchestra Yukiko Ogura was born in the beautiful and historic city of Nara in western Japan. Having studied the violin at Kyoto City University of the Arts, she won a position as a member of the Kobe City Chamber Orchestra, which specialises in string repertoire.

Encouraged by Nobuko Imai, Yukiko became more interested in the viola, eventually giving up the violin completely in order to study with Mazumi Tanamura in Tokyo. She emigrated to the USA in 2000 and continued her studies there with Li-Kuo Chang at Roosevelt University in Chicago. She became the violist of the Eusia String Quartet, which subsequently won the gold medal at the Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition in 2001. In the same year,

Yukiko was appointed a member of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Her passion for the chamber music repertoire has remained the mainspring of her life.

Richard Birchall (cello)

Philharmonia cellist Richard Birchall read Music at Cambridge University and studied as a postgraduate cellist at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London under Louise Hopkins. He later completed studies in film music composition at Goldsmiths College.

Richard pursues a varied and colourful career as cellist, composer, arranger and orchestrator. As a member of the Philharmonia Orchestra he performs regularly in the great concert halls of the world. He has appeared as Guest Principal cello with the Philharmonia, Royal Philharmonic Concert Orchestra, Northern Sinfonia and Irish Chamber Orchestra, and as concertmaster of the London Cello Orchestra. Richard's solo and chamber work has ranged from Wigmore Hall to the catwalk at London Fashion Week. He is a founder member of cello octet Cellophony – now firmly established as the UK's leading cello ensemble – and cellist of the Minerva Piano Trio.

Richard's arrangements and compositions have been performed at the BBC Proms, Royal Festival Hall, Wigmore Hall, The Purcell Room, The Sage Gateshead and throughout the UK, and have been broadcast on BBC Radio 3, Classic FM and French and German national radio. Richard has completed numerous transcriptions for Cellophony's core repertoire, and has produced commissioned arrangements for the Doric, Barbirolli, and Tippett quartets (including Psycho Suite, subsequently released on the Signum label), the London Cello Orchestra and the Ernest Read Symphony Orchestra.

String Quartet in A major, op 20, no 6 by Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)

1. Allegro di molto e scherzando; 2. Adagio; 3. Menuet; 4. Fuga con 3 soggetti. Allegro.

Haydn's Op 20 string quartets are sometimes collectively known as the 'Sun' Quartets, from the engraving which illustrates the title page of an edition published in 1779. Dating from 1772, they mark the culmination of a five-year period, in which Haydn also wrote his Op 9 and Op 17 quartets, in which his quartet style reached, very nearly, its full maturity. It was to be nine years before he returned to the medium in the six quartets of Op 33, which he claimed were written a "new and special manner", but the elements of that manner are all in place in Op 20, to be refined and polished in later works, but not substantially altered. Some scholars go so far as to claim that Op 20 not only marks the first maturity of Haydn's quartet style but also establishes the Viennese classical style itself.

The Op 20 set also comes at the end of the period in which Haydn produced some of his most turbulent music, notably that extraordinary series of stormy, minor-key symphonies he composed between 1768 and 1772. They are generally known as his 'Sturm und Drang' (Storm and Stress) symphonies, from the title of a contemporary play, which became applied to a wider movement, particularly in German literature, towards greater expressive intensity.

The emotional range of Op 20 as a whole is remarkably wide, including not just one minor-key work, as in Haydn's other sets of quartets, but two. Structurally, he is working on a larger scale than before, and there is a new emphasis on interweaving contrapuntal lines. Finales take on a new importance in their own right, balancing the first and the slow movements; three of the quartets – Nos

2, 5 and 6 – end with imposing fugal movements. All four instruments play a more or less equal part in the dialogue. In particular, the cello is freed to take on a more openly melodic role than had been the case in the earlier sets.

No 6 is the most relaxed and playful of the set. The first movement, with its frisky 6/8 metre, contains a first violin part of considerable brilliance, full of double-stopping (playing on two strings at the same time). This is a stylistic echo of Haydn's Op 9 and Op 17 quartets of a few years earlier, which included several similar passages, written with the playing of Luigi Tomasini – leader of the court orchestra of Haydn's employer, Prince Nicholas Esterházy – in mind.

The first violin is also prominent in the adagio, taking on, at times, something of the role of a concerto soloist. The movement flows along amiably, as does the Minuet. Neither movement springs any great surprise, though the Minuet's central trio section is notable for two things. First of all, the second violin drops out completely, making it a trio not only in name but also in texture. Secondly, Haydn asks for the three instruments to play the section entirely on their respective bottom strings, creating a strikingly warm, husky sound.

To dismiss the quartet as a slight work at this point is to reckon without Haydn's dazzling ingenuity in the concluding fugue "with three subjects". It wears its learning deceptively lightly, balancing the breezy first movement with its own kind of good humour. Haydn asks for the entire movement to be

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played quietly, marking it *sotto voce*, literally, “under the voice”. Towards the end he turns

the first fugue subject upside down with disarming nonchalance, and he brings the work to an end in the same spirit.

String Quartet no 2 (“Intimate Letters”) by Leoš Janáček (1854-1928)

1. Andante; 2. Adagio; 3. Moderato; 4. Allegro

The last twelve years of Janáček’s life saw a remarkable upsurge of creative activity, prompted by three major events. In 1916 his opera *Jenůfa* was finally staged in Prague for the first time, and two years later, Czechoslovakia achieved political independence. But the most important of these three catalysts was undoubtedly the occasion in 1917 when he first met Kamila Stösslová, a woman nearly forty years younger. His infatuation with her, though largely one-sided, triggered a huge wave of emotional energy which found expression in most of the music for which he is best-known. The Second String Quartet was Janáček’s last completed work, written in January and February 1928; he heard private performances of the work, but it was first played in public only in September of that year, a month after his death. Originally entitled “Love Letters”, it is a frank confession of his feelings for Kamila.

Janáček first scored the work with a viola *d’amore* instead of a conventional viola. The viola *d’amore* has, in addition to the main strings, a set of ‘sympathetic’ strings which are not played directly but are allowed to vibrate freely - ‘in sympathy’ with the others - adding a silvery resonance to the sound. The quartet was tried out this way at the first rehearsal, but it was found to be impracticable. Janáček reluctantly agreed to substitute a normal viola, which is how the work is nearly always played today. “Our life is going to be in it”, Janáček wrote to Kamila, describing the first movement as “my

impression when I saw you for the first time”. That impression is conveyed in the two opening ideas, which dominate the first movement: a vigorous chordal motif for the two violins and a more sinuous theme on the viola, played *sul ponticello* (with the bow next to the bridge) to strange, unearthly effect. The second movement’s main theme begins as a simple statement on the viola, eventually blossoming in a passionate, full-textured climax. A sequence of mysterious short descending scales on the second violin introduces, first, a nervy *presto* section in 5/8 time, then the return of the main theme. This, in turn, is interrupted by the first movement’s two principal ideas, before it rounds off the movement.

The third movement begins in a gently rocking 9/8 metre, like a lullaby. The underlying rhythm, on the viola, quickens to introduce a beguiling waltz-tune (a synthesis of ideas from the first two movements), which the first violin raises to a peak of emotional intensity before flying off into a volatile, rhapsodic solo. Brief, wistful reminiscences of the 9/8 theme and the waltz are heard before a blunt three-bar concluding gesture.

An energetic polka-like tune launches the finale, but it is the second violin’s leaping triplet figure which is to become more important as the music proceeds. Following the serene central episode the figure becomes a wild cadenza for the second violin, and eventually brings the quartet to its forceful ending.

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