

## PRESS RELEASE

20 September 2018

**SNAPE  
MALTINGS**

# Snape Maltings' Britten Weekend: The String Quartets 19-21 October 2018

This year's Britten Weekend at Snape Maltings takes place from **Friday 19 – Sunday 21 October** and explores the composer's String Quartets. For a composer whose mature career was dominated by opera and vocal writing, they are fascinating, pivotal moments that span four decades, from the 1930s to the very end of his life and provide intriguing snapshots of his influences both musical and biographical. The String Quartets are extrovert works, distinguished by the composer's trademark rigour and ingenuity but also by a vitality and an engaging emotional directness. From the elegant pastiche of the *Divertimenti* and the expansive openhearted *First Quartet* to the gentle ebb and ambiguity that concludes the Third, these are heart on sleeve works.

At the invitation of Snape Maltings, the outstanding **Doric Quartet** perform the complete works over the three days, fresh from spending the week recording the same repertoire on site, for later release on the Chandos label. Their viola player **Hélène Clément** brings an extra special dimension, performing on Britten's own instrument: given to him by his mentor and friend, composer **Frank Bridge** in April 1939 before Britten left for America. The viola is on loan from the Britten-Pears Foundation and was made by Giussani in 1843.

They are joined throughout the weekend by three guest instrumentalists: oboist **Olivier Stankiewicz** (20 Oct, 11am) and pianists **Alice Chenyang Zu** (19 Oct, 7.30pm & 20 Oct, 5.30pm) and **Alasdair Beaston** (19 Oct, 7.30pm & 21 Oct, 11am) as well as emerging chamber music ensembles from both sides of the Atlantic, in the **Britten-Pears Young Artist Programme's** 'Transatlantic Encounters' masterclass course.

Britten wrote his charming *Three Divertimenti* in 1936, five years before his first String Quartet. This is set alongside Korngold's richly romantic Piano Quintet and the European premiere of John Woolrich's *Quartet No. 2 Badinerie from A Book of Inventions*, performed by the American **Tesla Quartet** (19 Oct, 7.30pm). *Badinerie* is one of a set of six string quartets that John Woolrich is writing and this is the first one to be performed having received its world premiere this summer in New York.

Britten was bewitched by Purcell and his *String Quartet No. 2* was written in homage to the composer 250 years after his death. It is heard alongside Purcell's *Fantasias* transcribed for string quartet (**20 Oct, 11am**). Britten's last quartet was completed in the final year of his life and the Doric Quartet performs the work twice in the venue where it was premiered. The first time, the audience surrounds the quartet on the darkened stage of Snape Maltings Concert Hall and it is accompanied by an original short story by **Henry James**, often an inspiration for the composer. The story is adapted by playwright **Robin Brooks** into a short drama for two actors. The music is performed a second time after the interval (20 Oct, 9pm). The weekend rounds-off on **Sunday 21 October** with a performance of Britten's *String Quartet No. 1*, paired with Elgar's *Piano Quintet* (21 Oct, 11am).

## Listings

### **Britten & America: Transatlantic Encounters**

**Friday 19 October, Britten Studio, 7:30pm**

**Doric Quartet**

With **Thalea and Tesla Quartets**

**Olivier Stankiewicz** oboe

**Alice Chenyang Xu** piano

**Alasdair Beatson** piano

**Copland** Movement for String Quartet

**Britten** Temporal Variations for oboe and piano;  
Three Divertimenti

**John Woolrich** Quartet No.2 Badinerie from A  
Book of Inventions (Snape Maltings commission,  
European Premiere)

**Korngold** Piano Quintet

### **Britten and Purcell**

**Saturday 20 October, Britten Studio, 11am**

**Doric Quartet**

**Olivier Stankiewicz** oboe

**Purcell** Fantasias (transcribed for string quartet)

**Britten** Phantasy Quartet; String Quartet No.2

### **Britten-Pears Young Artists I**

**Saturday 20 October, Britten Studio, 2:30pm**

**Merz Trio**

**Trio Isimsiz**

**Thalea Quartet, Isabel Charisius**, viola

**Mozart** Piano Trio in B-flat major K 502

**Britten** Phantasy in F minor

**Korngold** Piano Trio

### **Britten-Pears Young Artists II**

**Saturday 20 October, Britten Studio, 5:30pm**

**Danny Koo** violin

**Alice Chenyang Xu** piano

**Isabel Charisius, Hélène Clément** viola

**Castalian Quartet**

**Britten** Elegy for solo viola

**Britten** Suite Op.6

**Mozart** String Quintet

### **Britten Quartet No.3**

**Saturday 20 October, Snape Maltings Concert Hall, 9pm**

**Doric Quartet**

**Britten** String Quartet No. 3 (performed twice)

### **Britten & Elgar**

**Sunday 21 October, Britten Studio, 11am**

**Doric Quartet**

**Alasdair Beatson** piano

**Britten** String Quartet No.1

**Elgar** Piano Quintet

## Tickets

Online at [www.snapemaltings.co.uk](http://www.snapemaltings.co.uk) | Tel: 01728 687110

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