

## Maxwell Quartet

Programmes

### September–December 2023

*// Milestones //*

**Joseph Haydn** String Quartet in E Flat, Op 20 No. 1 (25')

**Maxwell Quartet** Worksongs, Part I (folk music from Scotland) (20')

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**Ludwig van Beethoven** String Quartet in C sharp minor, Op. 131 (45')

Haydn's Opus 20 Quartets are perhaps considered one of the most significant milestones in the history of western composition – they are the birthing ground of Haydn's compositional techniques that were to define the string quartet medium for the next 200 years and beyond. One of the pinnacles of string quartet repertoire (and perhaps the most astonishing and extreme work that he composed) Beethoven's String Quartet Opus 131 is another monumental milestone in the history of the string quartet, which is astounding in its ambition and experimentalism, causing Schubert to ask "after this, what is left for us to write?" In between these two works, the quartet showcase some of the traditional work songs of Scotland's historic industries of Jute and Tweed.

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### January–May 2024

*//What Remains//*

**W.A Mozart** String Quartet no. 16 in E flat, K.428 (25')

**Joey Roukens** What Remains (String Quartet No. 4) (2019) (30')

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**Felix Mendelssohn** String Quartet no. 6 in F minor, Op. 80 (27')

The Dutch composer Joey Roukens' Fourth String Quartet, What Remains, is an exploration of memories, fragments of the past, and echoes, woven together as a kaleidoscope of shifting harmonies and textures. It is a substantial work, and here it is poignantly placed in between two great works by classical music's prodigies, both of whom only lived until their mid-thirties – but both left behind a miraculous body of work, true gifts to the world. Mozart's sense of playfulness and inventive creativity contrasts Mendelssohn's last completed work, the turbulent and dramatic F minor quartet written after his beloved sister's death.

**September–December 2024**

*// In Memoriam //*

**Joseph Haydn** String Quartet in B Flat, Op. 64 no 3 (25')

**Maxwell Quartet** Worksongs, Pt II (20')

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**Erwin Schulhoff** Five Pieces for String Quartet (14')

**Dmitri Shostakovich** String Quartet No. 8 in C minor, Op. 110 (23')

Dmitri Shostakovich's eighth string quartet was dedicated to 'the victims of fascism and war'; Erwin Schulhoff, whose career was prematurely terminated by the rise of the Nazi regime in Germany, composed five short pieces for string quartet, each evoking different cultural dance forms from Viennese Waltzes to Tango. Haydn was known for being greatly supportive of his musicians and their fair treatment by their employers; we pair one of his most inventive quartets with the latest installment of our ongoing "Worksongs" project, exploring the songs and cultures of the hardworking people of Scotland's historic industries.

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**January–May 2025**

*//Hymns//*

**Trad (arr. MQ)** Gaelic Psalms of the Western Isles of Scotland (10')

**Edmund Finnis** String Quartet no. 1 "Aloysius" (20')

**William Byrd (arr. MQ)** Ave Verum Corpus (5')

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**Ludwig van Beethoven** String Quartet in A minor, Op 132 (45')

Hymns form the thematic backdrop for our 2025 programme, culminating in Beethoven's otherworldly String Quartet in A minor, Op 132, which features the breath-taking *Heiliger dankgesang* ("Holy song of thanksgiving"); The first half features some of Scotland's holiest music, arrangements of the beautiful Gaelic Psalms of the Western Isles of Scotland, and William Byrd's Ave Verum Corpus; Byrd's religious music forms the inspiration of Edmund Finnis' own five-movement String Quartet No 1 "Aloysius", which in turn mirrors the movement structure of Beethoven's Op 132.

**September–December 2025**

*//Folksongs//*

**Haydn** String Quartet Op 33 no 4 in B minor

**Grazyna Bacewicz** String Quartet no. 4

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**Maxwell Quartet** Folk music from Scotland

**Zoltan Kodaly** String Quartet no 1

Music from Eastern Europe dominates our programme; Hungarian Zoltan Kodaly's first string quartet was one of his first works to incorporate some of the folk music research he had just undertaken with Bela Bartok. Bacewicz' fourth string quartet draws on Polish folk song, and Haydn's Opus 33 no 4 is a deeply Hungarian/"Zingarese" inspired work, notable for its folk-like harmony and textures. We combine these works with our own exploration of folk music from Scotland.

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**January–May 2026**

*//Dance//*

**Henry Purcell** Chacony (4')

**Gabriel Prokofiev** Bogle Move (4')

**Benjamin Britten** Three Divertimenti (12')

**Eleanor Alberga** New Commission (20-25')

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**Donnacha Dennehy** STAMP (to avoid erotic thoughts) (4')

**Joe Cutler** Folk Music (Daithi's Dumka) (4')

**Sergei Prokofiev** String Quartet no. 2 (25')

Our 2026 programme brings together several short works by British composers past and present, all inspired by the overarching theme of Dance. Purcell and Britten explore older dance forms; Dennehy and Cutler look to folk dance forms for their inspiration; and Gabriel Prokofiev's "Bogle Move" shares a Jamaican influence with our newly-commissioned string quartet by Jamaican born British composer, Eleanor Alberga. The programme ends with one of the greatest ballet composers of the twentieth century, Sergei Prokofiev, whose second string quartet is a whirlwind showcase of Kabardinian folk and dance music.

**September–December 2026**

*//Influence//*

**Joseph Haydn** String Quartet Op 54 no. 2 in C major

**Maxwell Quartet** Folk Music from Scotland

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**Johannes Brahms** String Quartet no. 2 in A minor Op 51 no. 2

Brahms famously struggled with the string quartet as a medium, owing to the oppressive influence of Beethoven on the composer. He was greatly inspired by Haydn, and both composers took inspiration from Hungarian folk music in these quartets. In this programme we marry two lyrical and expressive works with folk music from Scotland, bringing together Scottish folk music traditions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with present day.

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**January–May 2027**

*//Beethoven Reflected//*

**Ludwig van Beethoven** String Quartet no 1 in F, Op 18 no 1

**Igor Stravinsky** Three Pieces for String Quartet

**Linda Buckley** Beethoven Reflected

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**Maxwell Quartet** Songs of Robert Burns

**Ludwig van Beethoven** String Quartet no 16 in F, Op 135

Designed to celebrate the incredible legacy of Ludwig van Beethoven, this programme brings together Beethoven's first and last quartets – both in the same key – with some reflections on the composer's genius and innovation. Stravinsky's Three Pieces completely eschew previous form and conceptions of what a string quartet 'should be', not unlike Beethoven's later compositions for the same genre. Contemporary Irish composer Linda Buckley reflects on Beethoven's world in a personal way in her own quartet; and the Maxwell Quartet reflect on classic songs by Robert Burns, a nod to Beethoven's own writings when he was commissioned to arrange Scottish songs by Edinburgh publisher George Thomson.