



The Frith Piano Quartet



David Le Page – violin, Robin Ireland, Viola, Richard Jenkinson – cello, Benjamin Frith – piano.

The Frith Piano Quartet was formed in 2001 by a group of like-minded musicians who wanted to explore the wealth of wonderful music written for the piano quartet medium. The group's founder members included the pianist Benjamin Frith and cellist Richard Jenkinson. More recently they were joined by David Le Page and Robin Ireland and all are distinguished soloists and chamber musicians in their own right. The quartet's first concerts were at the CBSO's Centre Stage, Birmingham, where they performed the complete piano quartets of Beethoven, Brahms, Fauré, Mendelssohn and Mozart. The quartet have now performed at many prestigious venues festivals around the U.K. including Kings Place and the Wigmore Hall in London. The Frith Piano Quartet has appeared on BBC Radio 3 and their recordings also demonstrate their love for unjustly neglected repertoire which are not frequently heard in the concert hall. The quartet are also committed to contemporary works and frequently perform repertoire by Mark-Anthony Turnage, Ian Venables, Matthew Taylor and Richard Roderick Jones (also recording) and Michael Finnessey.

David Le Page – violin

Born on the channel island of Guernsey, David Le Page began playing the violin at the age of seven. He was offered a place at the Yehudi Menuhin school aged twelve and has since forged a diverse career as a performer, composer, producer and arranger. Le Page's violin playing has a natural, warm tone and an instinctive, improvisatory style, while his eclectic approach to writing, arranging and performing has been formed by an interest in many musical genres; from baroque and folk through to jazz, contemporary classical and experimental rock, pop and electronica. A passion for audience inclusion and a readiness to blur the edges of musical boundaries have contributed to his unique approach to programming. This combines a rare ability to present audiences with something new and challenging whilst allowing them to feel relaxed and engaged. He appears regularly as a soloist, chamber musician and orchestral leader and has formed his own groups, the Le Page Ensemble, The Harborough Collective, Subway Piranhas and Mysterious Barricades. He is leader of the Stratford-Upon-Avon based Orchestra of the Swan and is currently president of the European String Teachers Association (UK). His involvement with new music has led to participation in numerous commissions and world premieres that have included working closely with composers such as John Woolrich, Thomas Adès, Douglas Cuomo, Paul Moravec, Tansy Davies, Gerald Barry, John McCabe, Huw Watkins, Joe Cutler, Joe Duddel and Errollyn Wallen. He plays on a violin made in 1874 by Jean-Baptiste Vuillaume.

Robin Ireland - viola

Robin Ireland is Head of Chamber Music at the Birmingham Conservatoire. He was violist with the celebrated Lindsay String Quartet between 1985 and 2005, and with the Primrose Piano Quartet from 2007 till 2015. He now performs as a soloist and freelance chamber musician. In 2017 and 2018 he stepped in to play with the Elias Quartet over the course of several months and gave two performances of the Walton Viola Concerto with the Birmingham Philharmonic Orchestra. He specialises in playing the great unaccompanied works for violin and cello on his beautiful Amati viola, using a baroque bow. Robin Ireland was a student at Cambridge University and at the Eastman School of Music, Rochester, New York. He had a short spell as leader of the Las Palmas Symphony Orchestra and subsequently became a founder member of the Piano Quartet, Domus, which toured with its own portable concert hall (a geodesic dome) as well as having great success in more conventional venues. He has broadcast as a soloist on BBC Radio 3, performed Mozart's Sinfonia Concertante with the Liverpool Philharmonic and the London Mozart Players, and has in his repertoire most of the major works for viola. His orchestral experience includes working as guest principal viola with the CBSO, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, RLPO and Opera North.

Richard Jenkinson – cello

Richard Jenkinson's musical education began at the age of five when he started to play the 'cello and was awarded a scholarship by Derbyshire County Council to study with Florence Hooton and William Pleeth. Whilst in the sixth form, Richard began his conducting studies with Michael Salter at Repton School. In 1990 he won a scholarship to the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, studying 'cello with Raphael Wallfisch and William Pleeth and conducting with Alan Hazeldine. He graduated with Distinction

in 1994 and was awarded the Guildhall's coveted Gold Medal for a performance of the Dvořák 'Cello Concerto in the Barbican. In 1995 he was awarded a top prize at the Vittorio Gui Chamber Music Competition in Italy and was invited to be part of the Countess of Munster recital scheme. This has led to a very productive partnership with the pianist Benjamin Frith, including recitals at London's Wigmore Hall and South Bank Centre and several recordings. Richard has given concerto performances with the BBC Concert Orchestra, C.B.S.O., Irish Chamber Orchestra and Venezuelan Symphony and has performed the Elgar Concerto in the Queen Elizabeth Hall in London and the Dvořák Concerto in the Dvořák Hall of the Rudolfinum in Prague. In 1995 Richard became principal 'cello with the Irish Chamber Orchestra and from 1998-2016 he was principal 'cello with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. In 1995 Richard became principal 'cello with the Irish Chamber Orchestra and from 1998-2016 he was principal 'cello with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. In May 2012 Richard joined the Dante String Quartet and has performed at the Wigmore Hall, King's Place and also given several live BBC Radio 3 broadcasts. The quartet's 'Beethoven journey' was also featured on BBC Radio 4's Today programme. As the cellist of the Dante Quartet he has recorded Kodály's String Quartets for Hyperion, Herbert Howells Quartets for Naxos and Stanford's Complete String Quartets on the Somm label. The quartet has performed several cycles of the complete Beethoven Quartets and toured Japan in 2016. During 2018 the Dante Quartet played a cycle of Shostakovich Quartets and undertook tours of France and Japan. Away from the cello he is Musical Director of the British Police Symphony Orchestra and the Orchestra of St John, Bromsgrove. In 2019 Richard conducted the B.P.S.O. at Symphony Hall, Birmingham and the Royal Albert Hall, London in a Gala Concert celebrating the orchestra's 30th anniversary involving fanfare trumpets, troupes of bagpipers and massed choirs from around the United Kingdom which involved over 600 performers. Richard completed a Ph.D. on the music of Zoltán Kodály at the University of Birmingham in 2019 where he was awarded a Bramall scholarship and will give recital lectures in Hungary during 2020.

Benjamin Frith – piano

Life student of Dame Fanny Waterman, Benjamin Frith embarked on his career by winning the Dudley National Concerto Competition, aged fourteen, performing Saint-Saens 2nd Piano Concerto, subsequently making his Young Musician's recital debut at the Harrogate International Festival. His many awards culminated in joint top prize at the Busoni International Piano Competition in Bolzano, then in 1989, the Gold Medal at the Artur Schnabel Piano Master's Competition, where he was also awarded the Chamber Music Prize. Many engagements with world renowned orchestras followed, such as IPO (Mehta), Warsaw Philharmonic (Atzmon), the Halle under John Wilson and Sir Mark Elder with recital tours from India, Kazakhstan, Israel and Egypt to the Far East and North America. He soon made recording contracts with ASV, then with Naxos, for whom he made a best-selling John Field Concerto Cycle with the Royal Northern Sinfonia, recently reissued with the complete Nocturnes and Sonatas. His solo recording of Schumann's highly personal Davidsbundler op. 6 received the top recommendation on Radio Three's programme, "CD Review". In 2019 Frith returned to China and Japan for recital tours, giving Masterclasses in this emerging and exciting pianistic environment. During the latter half of his career there has been a concentration on the chamber repertoire, principally as pianist in the Gould Piano Trio, which has made regular tours to N. America being described recently in the Washington Post as 'near musical perfection'. The trio has performed the complete cycles of Schubert, Beethoven and Dvorak at London's Wigmore Hall. He has also formed the enterprising Frith Piano Quartet and recently

been guest pianist of the Nash Ensemble together with previous appearances alongside the Lindsay, Elias, Emperor, Endellion, Chilingarian, Wihan and Dante quartets. Frith's recording of C.V.Stanford's 2nd Piano Concerto with BBCNOW coupled with his Dante Rhapsodies for solo piano was warmly received by BBC Music Magazine and chosen by the Gramophone's critic, Jeremy Dibble, as his 'Disc of the Year 2016' In 2019 Frith returned to China and Japan for recital tours, giving Masterclasses in this emerging and exciting pianistic environment. Recent Concerto appearances included The Emperor with Manchester Camerata at Selby Abbey and Rachmaninoff's 2nd Piano Concerto at Symphony Hall, Birmingham. In 2020 he will take the cycle of Mendelssohn's Songs Without Words to Japan. Benjamin Frith is an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama.