



Danish
String Quartet

Thursday, March 31, 2022

Amelia Plantation Chapel | 36 Bowman Road | Fernandina Beach, FL

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The Amelia Island Chamber Music Festival is nationally recognized as one of the foremost music events of its kind. The Festival is a not-for-profit, tax-exempt organization under Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.



All venues for Amelia Island Chamber Music Festival in-person concerts are handicap accessible.

PROGRAM

—March 31, 2022—

DANISH STRING QUARTET

Frederik Øland, *violin*
Rune Tonsgaard Sørensen, *violin*
Asbjørn Nørgaard, *viola*
Fredrik Schøyen Sjölin, *cello*

Three Divertimenti

March
Waltz
Burlesque

BENJAMIN BRITTEN

(1913 - 1976)

Various *‘An alleged suite’, a curated suite of dances:*

Prelude, Charpentier: Prelude
Allemande, John Adams: Pavane: She’s so fine
Gavotte, John Adams: Stubble Crochet
Sarabande, Felix Blumenfeld: Sarabande

Courante: Traditional: Polska
Gigue 1, Charpentier: Gigue Francaise
Gigue 2, John Adams: Toot Nipple

INTERMISSION

String Quartet No. 14 in D minor, D. 810

“Death and the Maiden”

Allegro
Andante con moto
Scherzo. Allegro molto - Trio
Presto

FRANZ SCHUBERT

(1797 - 1828)

The Danish String Quartet has recorded for ECM, DaCapo and CAVI-Music/BR Klassik

SPECIAL TRIBUTE



This concert is being dedicated to the memory of Susan Wilson Goldman, a founding member of the Amelia Island Chamber Music Festival. Susan was a tremendous supporter of the arts on Amelia Island. She met Christopher Rex, General and Artistic Director of the Festival, when he performed for a women’s group called Centered Ladies. Susan, along with four other volunteers, took on the project of supporting Mr. Rex’s vision of producing a Chamber Music Festival on Amelia Island. Susan became President of the Board of Directors, a job she held for five years and then continued to be a supporter and advocate of the Festival throughout her life.

“Thanks to Susan’s leadership, energy and enthusiasm The Festival has grown to become a signature event for Amelia Island bringing internationally acclaimed artists to our community,” said Emma Mills Bledsoe, President of the Amelia Island Chamber Music Festival’s Board of Directors. “To say she will be missed is an understatement, but her legacy lives on, and we are forever thankful for her inspiration and support of the arts community. It is genuinely our pleasure and appropriate to honor Susan by dedicating the performance of the talented Danish String Quartet to her memory,” added Ms. Bledsoe.

PROGRAM NOTES

BENJAMIN BRITTEN

Three Divertimenti

“If wind and water could write music, it would sound like Ben’s.”

~ *Yehudi Menuhin, violinist and conductor*

Edith Britten believed the birth of her child on St. Cecilia’s Day, the feast-day of the patron saint of music, November 22, 1913 in Lowestoft, England to be a good omen. She desired for her son to be a great musician ultimately earning him the title of “the fourth B”...after Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms. That son, Edward Benjamin Britten, did indeed grow to be one of the greatest British 20th century composers as well as a gifted conductor and pianist. He was the first composer to be honored with a life peerage and became Baron Britten of Aldeburgh in the County of Suffolk in 1976.

At an early age, he quickly outgrew the local resources for his composition studies. His viola instructor Audrey Alston introduced the young Britten to the English composer, violist and conductor Frank Bridge. Bridge not only became his composition teacher, but also his friend. The most valuable lesson Britten attributed to Bridge was the encouragement “that you should find yourself and be true to what you found.” He won a scholarship to the Royal College of Music in London where he studied with John Ireland and Ralph Vaughn Williams.

Britten remained in close contact with Bridge and continued to seek his advice as Britten’s compositional style was not fully welcomed at the Royal College of Music. Towards the completion of his studies there in 1933, Britten who was in his early twenties, composed the now *Three Divertimenti*. The three individual character pieces were originally meant to be “pleasing entertainment” and were character portraits of school friends from South Lodge and Gresham’s.

They belonged to an unfinished suite originally entitled *Alla quartetto serioso*: ‘Go play, boy, play’ with PT, At the Party, and Ragging as the names of the three movements. Like many of his works, Britten’s passion for literature is evident. The subtitle makes reference to Shakespeare’s *A Winter’s Tail*:

Gone already!

Inch-thick, knee-deep, over head and ears a fork’d one!

Go play, boy, play: thy mother plays, and I play too, but so disgraced a part, whose issue will hiss me to my grave: contempt and clamour will be my knell.

Go, play, boy, play.

Several years later Britten extensively revised the work and chose completely different names. Now entitled *The Three Divertimenti* the movements became *March*, *Waltz*, and *Burlesque*. The Stratton Quartet gave the first performance at Wigmore Hall on February 25, 1936. About the premiere’s reception Britten wrote: “sniggers and in a pretty cold silence.” Depressed, he withdrew the work keeping it from publication during his lifetime. They were not heard again publicly until performed by the Gabrieli Quartet on BBC Radio 3 in 1982.

The opening first movement is a “raucous fanfare” while the second movement, *Waltz*, is nostalgic and graceful. The third movement is dedicated to Francis Barton, a school friend at Lowestoft. It is athletic, full of life, and moves quickly.

~ *Emma Mills Bledsoe, 2022*

PROGRAM NOTES *(continued)*

Alleged Dance Suite

Back in the days in Europe, music could have two functions: Either it was sacred music of the church, or it was music made to dance to. The sacred music was essentially elaborate hymns sung in the church as to praise God or accompany the rituals. The dance music would be performed at parties, social gatherings, pubs and inns. In the late 14th century, it became fashionable to pair different dance tunes and eventually this grew into a standardized musical form: The Dance Suite. The Dance Suite remained as one of the most popular musical forms until the 18th-century arrival of the juggernaut forms of classical music: The sonata, the symphony and the concerto. In our ‘Alleged Dance Suite’, we have taken inspiration from John’s ‘Book of Alleged Dances by John Adams’, and poured some new music into a very old musical form. Some of the music is quite old (Charpentier), some of it is new (John Adams). There is also some traditional folk music from Sweden and a romantic Russian Sarabande. Together this eclectic mix of music provides a varied little musical journey through the centuries. Humans have been dancing forever, and maybe the swing of Charpentier’s Gigue isn’t so different from a Swedish traditional polska. We hope you will enjoy this little set of dances.

~ the Danish String Quartet



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THE AMELIA ISLAND CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL

FRANZ SCHUBERT

String Quartet No. 14 in D minor, D. 810

Der Tod und das Mädchen (Death and the Maiden)

Maiden: Go by, oh, go by, harsh bony Death! I am still young.
Go, my dear, and do not touch me.

Death: Give me your hand, you fair gentle thing. A friend I am and do not come to punish. Be of good cheer. I am not harsh. In my arms shall you sleep soft!

~ *Der Tod und das Mädchen* ~ Matthias Claudius



Franz Schubert borrowed his own theme for the *String Quartet No. 14 in D minor* from the second movement of his 1817 song, *Der Tod und das Mädchen* (*Death and the Maiden*.) The German poet and journalist, Matthias Claudius, penned the poem. Schubert's piano introduction representing the approach of death is the borrowed melody for the *String Quartet No. 14*. Composed in 1824, the "*Death and the Maiden*" Quartet's first performance was in Vienna at the home of amateur musicians Karl and Franz Hacker. Frequently, Schubert would play viola in these chamber music ensembles. However, he was hurriedly copying out parts, making last minute corrections and unable to participate in this first performance, an "unrehearsed reading." The Quartet was not published until 3 years after Schubert's death.

This *Quartet in D minor* was composed four years before his death. These final years of Franz Schubert's life were a struggle against depression and illness. His illnesses, financial woes and a growing sense of failure were quite evident in the early months of 1824. But, his compositions flourished. It was during this period that he composed the *String Quartet in D minor* containing the variations from "*Der Tod und das Mädchen*". A letter to friend and librettist, Joseph Kupelwieser reveals Schubert's state of mind as he refers to himself as "the most unfortunate, the most miserable being in the world...My peace is gone, my heart is sore, I shall find it never more. I might as well sing every day now, for upon retiring to bed each night I hope that I may not wake again, and each morning only recalls yesterday's grief." Quoting commentator and Classic FM host Jane Jones: "It's impossible to listen to all four movements of the quartet without an awareness of death's shadows stalking Schubert and emerging in the most funereal passages...Certainly this is a deeply melancholic work - but never underestimate the power of even the saddest music to enrich our own emotional make-up." During this time he also produced a fifteenth quartet, two piano trios, and the C-major Symphony.

On March 29, 1827 Schubert was among the torch-bearers in Beethoven's funeral procession

on March 29, 1827. Two years later, his body would be interred close to Beethoven in the same cemetery just outside Vienna. The prolific composer Franz Schubert was only 31 years old. Over his short lifetime he had written over 600 songs, numerous chamber works, 6 Masses, 25 other religious works, nearly 100 choral compositions, 17 operas, 9 symphonies and many short piano pieces. The Viennese press when reporting his death noted his “simplicity, shyness, modesty, and his industrious nature...He lived solely for art and for a close circle of friends.” An old school acquaintance said: “The Muses weep, one favorite joins another [i.e.Beethoven]: Wherefore thou, too, so young, so full of hope.”

Commentators have long speculated that this *Quartet in D minor* represented Schubert's views on death. More than likely, the use of his “borrowed” melody stemmed not from programmatic reasons, but for musical reasons and from the encouragement of friends who loved the melody. The first movement, an Allegro, is filled with triplets and explosive major-minor passages. In the somber second movement we hear the “borrowed” melody. It is given in a calming, choral-like theme and gives way to the pulsing set of five variations. The Scherzo, the third movement, presents strong, cutting syncopations which is contrasted by the Trio. Its cantilena melody warmly sings a lyrical and voice-like song. The rhythmically driven Scherzo returns in a literal repeat to close the movement. The fourth movement, Presto, is a raging rondo taking its rhythmic pattern from the tarantella, an old Italian dance thought to counteract the poisonous effects of a tarantula spider's bite. All four instruments engage in a frenzied dance, energetically racing to the ending of two short chords.

~ Emma Mills Bledsoe, 2022



Danish String Quartet: From left, Asbjørn Nørgaard, viola; Fredrik Schøyen Sjölin, cello; Rune Tonsgaard Sørensen, violin; Frederik Øland, violin

FREDERIK ØLAND (b. 1984) was educated by Serguei Azizian in Copenhagen and Ulf Wallin in Berlin. In 2009 at the age of 23 he won the position as concert master at Copenhagen Philharmonic Orchestra. The same year he was also employed as a teacher of violin and chamber music at The Royal Danish Academy of Music. Frederik Øland has been awarded various Danish prizes such as grants from Jacob Gade Foundation, Victor Borge Foundation and Léonie Sonning Foundation. He has appeared several times as a soloist, most recently with his colleagues in Copenhagen Philharmonic Orchestra. In his spare time Frederik relaxes in his apartment in the Vesterbro-borough in central Copenhagen.

ABOUT THE PERFORMERS *(continued)*

RUNE TONSGAARD SØRENSEN (b. 1983) started playing violin at the age of 5 after a failed attempt of learning the accordion. Now he is the concert master of Copenhagen Philharmonic, teacher at the Royal Danish Academy of Music, violinist in the Danish String Quartet and a well known soloist in Denmark. In 2008 Rune was the only Danish semi finalist at the international Carl Nielsen Competition in Odense and he also received a prize for best performance of the danish pieces in the competition. Rune has always been a curious musician. He has been playing folk music most of his life, he is educated in organ and church music and he always likes a good jam session.

ASBJØRN NØRGAARD (b. 1984) has established himself as one of the most sought after viola players in Denmark and is the recipient of multiple accolades, including Jacob Gade's large music grant and Sonnings Music Scholarship. First and foremost, Asbjørn Nørgaard is a vivid chamber musician and has founded The Danish String Quartet as well as Inviolata, a viola-accordion duo. With these two ensembles, he is prize winner in several national and international competitions and has recorded a plethora of cd's, the latest being a recording of all J.S. Bach's Viola da Gamba Sonatas. On the side of this, Asbjørn Nørgaard is an experienced orchestral player, and has led the viola sections of the Copenhagen Philharmonic and the Danish National Chamber Orchestra.

Asbjørn Nørgaard has studied in Copenhagen, Stockholm and Berlin. He graduated from the soloist scheme at the Royal Danish Academy of Music in 2013 performing Mozart's Sinfonia Concertante at the Radio Hall in Copenhagen. At the moment Asbjørn is learning to speak Portuguese and his favorite writer is Thomas Mann. He is a huge fan of encyclopedias and is always reading something about everything.

FREDRIK SCHØYEN SJÖLIN (b. 1982) has the honor of being the only Norwegian member of The Danish String Quartet. However (and this is often pointed out during rehearsals), as Norway was effectually a tributary to Denmark until 1814, Fredrik is actually sort of Danish. Fredrik grew up in Trondheim, where he had his first cello lessons as a 6-year old at the local music school. After finishing high school, he moved to Stockholm where to study with Torlief Thedéen. In 2007 he graduated from the diploma-programme and subsequently won a place in the prestigious two-year "intro klassisk"-scheme, run by "Concerts Norway". In 1996 Frederik won Norway's national competition for young string players, and two years later he won the second prize in "EMCY"'s international competition. He has performed as soloist with several of the Norwegian orchestras including: The Norwegian Radio Orchestra, Stavanger Symphony Orchestra, Trondheim Symphony Orchesra and the Bergen Philharmonic.

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- In addition YP Members will receive a discount on Dining as well as a Special Room Rate the night of 4/22.
- **May 7th: The Legend of Peer Gynt – a Concert for All Ages, hosted by YP,**

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| Saturday, April 2, 2022 | University of North Florida Big Band Ensemble I
1 pm Amelia Park |
| Saturday, April 9, 2022 | Dover Quartet Master Class
1 pm Prince of Peace Lutheran Church |
| Sunday, April 10, 2022 | Dover Quartet with Roberto Díaz
3 pm Amelia Plantation Chapel |
| Saturday, April 16, 2022 | Gibson Brothers
7:30 pm Peck Center Gymnasium |
| Friday, April 22, 2022 | Zukerman Trio
7:30 pm The Ritz-Carlton, Amelia Island |
| Saturday, May 7, 2022 | “The Legend of Peer Gynt” – A Concert for All Ages
1 pm Courtyard Amelia Island by Marriott |
| Sunday, May 22, 2022 | Beer & G-Strings – Musical Fireworks
5 pm Courtyard Amelia Island by Marriott |

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The Amelia Island Chamber Music Festival no longer requires concert attendees and volunteers to wear facial masks during upcoming events, but they are recommended.

**Times and venues are subject to change. For tickets and more information please visit www.aicmf.org*