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Peter Copley (b.1962) String Quartet No.3 (2022)

Maestoso

Feroce

Andante molto sostenuto

Molto vivace

This quartet by Peter Copley was the catalyst for inviting the Brompton Quartet to Lewes. They gave its first performance last year at a concert in Brighton celebrating Peter's 60th birthday. Some members of the NYS Committee were at that concert and were most impressed both by the piece and by how it was played by the Bromptons.

Peter is well known to Lewes audiences both as performer and composer: he has played cello in the Musicians of All Saints orchestra since its inception, and they have performed many of his compositions. Born in Hove, he studied composition at the Royal Academy of Music and with Hans Keller. A Polish Government Scholarship took him to the Akademia Muzyczna in Kraków. This proved to be the beginning of an enduring connection with Eastern Europe, from where he has received many commissions, broadcasts and performances.

He has composed extensively for an eclectic range of performers and occasions both national and local. His ***Farnham Fantasia*** for strings, was performed in both the Royal Festival and the Royal Albert Hall and the ***Concerto for Trumpet, Strings and Percussion*** received its first performance by John Wallace and the Brighton Philharmonic Orchestra in the orchestra's 75th Birthday Weekend. ***A City Awakes*** is a large-scale work commissioned by the Brighton & Hove Philharmonic Society in celebration of Brighton and Hove's elevation to city status.

Recent compositions include music for the play ***Prison Dialogues*** (Brighton Festival 2021) and ***Music of Exile*** for viola and 13 solo strings, an Arts Council funded collaboration with exiled Syrian viola player Raghad Haddad, incorporating Arabic folk scales.

His second string quartet was written for his 50th birthday, and today's third quartet continues that pattern a decade later. Peter writes of his third string quartet:

"My second string quartet took a Haydn quartet as its starting point. Beethoven is the starting point for three movements of the present work but rather than a single quartet, a number of Beethoven movements were used. In each case, a particular technical feature was the catalyst. In the first movement, there are three distinct speeds. As with Beethoven, in some cases actual changes in tempo are marked. In others, the illusion of a change is created by the use of longer or shorter note values.

"The second movement is intended to have 'Scherzoid' character, to use a neologism coined by Hans Keller, but as with the Beethoven model, the formal divisions that normally characterise a scherzo are missing. The third movement departs from any direct connection with Beethoven. Its starting point is a discussion, again by Hans Keller in *The Great Haydn Quartets* of the very full texture of the slow movement of Haydn's Op.20, no.1. He remarked that hardly any composer, other than Haydn succeeded with this kind of string quartet writing. Naturally, this was an irresistible challenge!

"The fourth movement returns to Beethoven as a starting point and here the connection would be at its most obvious if you happen to know the original. However, these are no more than starting points and for that reason, I don't identify the movements as the quartet is intended to be self-sufficient. I was certainly never conscious of 'channelling my inner Beethoven', as I wouldn't be presumptuous enough to believe that I had one! "

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