

The music

Franz Joseph Haydn String Quartet op74 no1 in C major
Mark-Anthony Turnage Laura

INTERVAL

Carl Nielsen String Quartet no1 in G minor op13

Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809) *String Quartet op74 no1 in C major* (1793)

1 *Allegro moderato* ~ 2 *Andantino grazioso* ~
3 *Menuetto: Allegretto* – Trio ~ 4 *Finale: Vivace*

Haydn had already written over 50 string quartets by the early 1790s, when he was briefly back in Vienna from a spell in London. In 1793 he published six more – three each as his *opus 71* and *opus 74* sets – all reflecting his recent experience of having played to large and enthusiastic public audiences at his London concerts. They’re dedicated to the Hungarian Count Apponyi (who paid 100 ducats for the privilege/naming rights) and are now larger in scale and more outward-facing, no longer intended principally for private performance and the ears of the Esterházy court alone.

Haydn’s many years at court had been essential to his own development, and of course to that of Western classical music in general. But after Prince Nicolaus’s death in 1790 he was left with only a small retainer from the new Prince Anton. With a new-found freedom to charge fees to concert promoters, and putting these together with the publishing income he’d been developing for the previous 10 years, he quite soon became a wealthy man

The first quartet in the *opus 74* set is full of invention: Haydn at his lively best. Before the first movement *Allegro* gets into its stride, we’re brought to attention with two emphatic chords (stop coughing, turn off your mobile phones). The cheerful, upbeat, opening theme that follows and is repeated then moves into a mysterious and dramatic development section in the minor — the first of a number of key changes keeping us on our toes throughout the work. The movement closes with rondo-like comment on the main theme and a number of harmonic surprises.

The *Andantino* is styled *grazioso*, and that really says it all. The movement flows forward steadily and with charm. The

strings converse politely with each other; there are occasional tinges of melancholy; and there’s a very sudden key change towards the end.

The *Menuetto* leads us into a more insistent dance, interrupted by the warm and lyrical *Trio* in – and it won’t surprise us by now – a completely unrelated key.

Joyful exuberance sets the tone of the *Finale*, with the players sometimes seeming to compete to see who can play the fastest. The onward momentum is twice brought down to earth by a folk-like drone from viola and cello, and the conclusion is weighty and affirmative.

Mark-Anthony Turnage (b1960) *Laura* (2025)

Commissioned by *BBC Radio 3*, *Laura* was written in memory of the late Laura Samuel, violinist, leader of the BBC Scottish SO and co-founder of the Belcea Quartet. It was premiered by the Kleio Quartet last November on the anniversary of her death and, in their own words, “It is a spellbindingly beautiful work, which features four Japanese Rin bells at the heart of its sonic soundscape. The interplay of the long-lasting tones of the bells (striking and resonant) with the quartet is wholly unique, and reflective of the depth and brilliance of Laura’s character and incredible versatility as a chamber musician and beyond.”

Carl Nielsen (1865-1931) *String Quartet no1 in G minor op13* (1889, revised 1898)

1 *Allegro energico* ~ 2 *Andante amoroso* ~
3 *Scherzo: Allegro molto* ~ 4 *Finale: Allegro (inquieto)*

Nielsen published four string quartets between 1889 and 1904. They’re early works and reflect his love of Haydn and Mozart, whose quartets he played as a student at the Royal Danish Academy of Music. Despite their charm and approachability, they remain not nearly as well-known outside Denmark as his symphonies and concertos.

The *opus 13* quartet received its first performance at a private gathering in early 1889 but wasn’t played in public (in a slightly revised version) for another nine years. It’s classical in form but firmly late-Romantic in mood.

The first movement *Allegro* launches the work with immediate thrusting momentum, but that’s contrasted quite soon afterwards by the highly lyrical second subject in

which the instruments really sing to each other, and to us. Haydnesque *sturm und drang* follows in the development, before the movement sinks slowly but firmly to its close.

A slow and beautiful chorale opens the *Andante* – hushed at first and then breaking out joyfully. There’s contrast again in the middle section, where the sudden turbulence of the strings seems deliberately placed to emphasise the beauty both of what’s come before and what will follow after.

A wake-up call then with the arrival of the *Scherzo*, whose *trio*’s gentle melody is supported by a rustic drone in the cello. The *Finale* pulls together the main themes from the first and third movements in vigorous counterpoint, before ending triumphantly and leaving us asking for more.

Note by Dick Ware

The artists

Yume Fujise, Katherine Yoon *violin* Jaren Ziegler *viola*
Gerard Flotats *cello*

First Prize and Commission Prize winners at the 2023 Carl Nielsen International Chamber Music Competition, the Kleio Quartet are rapidly emerging as one of the most exciting young string quartets on the international stage. Formed at the Seiji Ozawa International Chamber Academy, the ensemble has since performed in many leading venues across Europe.

The quartet are part of the *BBC Radio 3* New Generation Artists scheme and served as the Resident Quartet at the Royal Northern College of Music’s String Quartet Studio in 2025. They won the Ensemble of the Year award from *Le Dimore del Quartetto* and also received the Freiburg and Walburger Prizes at the Jeunesses Musicales International course in Weikersheim, Germany.

Recent highlights include debuts at the Edinburgh International Festival, Wigmore Hall and Kings Place in London, as well as appearances at the North Norfolk Music Festival. The quartet returned to the Edinburgh Festival this August to collaborate with Sheku Kanneh-Mason and Makoto Ozone, while also mentoring the Festival’s Rising Stars programme.

The quartet have also been Britten-Pears Young Artists at Snape Maltings in Aldeburgh and held residencies with the Strijkkwartet Biënnale Amsterdam and ProQuartet - Centre Européen de Musique de Chambre in Paris. They were also selected for the Tunnell Trust Music Club Awards Scheme, the Kirkman Concert Society Young Artists programme, and the MERITA platform, and received the Hattori Foundation Senior Award.

The quartet benefited from mentorship with John Myerscough (Doric Quartet) and Eckart Runge, and received guidance and coaching from distinguished musicians, including Sadao Harada, Heime Müller, Kirill Gerstein, the Kronos Quartet, Cuarteto Casals, Simon Rowland-Jones, György Kurtág, and Oliver Wille.

kleioquartet.com

Festival Patron: David Matthews

Grateful acknowledgements

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- Phone: 01494 958148 between 11am and 8pm

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- Email: contact@little-missenden.org

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Programme Notes

KLEIO QUARTET

A quartet with bells



8pm, Tuesday October 6th, 2026
Little Missenden Church

66th Little Missenden Festival

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