

The Emperor Quartet

Martin Burgess and Clare Hayes – violins

Fiona Bonds – viola, William Schofield – cello

The Emperor Quartet are now well into their second decade with their original membership intact. They were the first British group to win the Evian/Bordeaux International String Quartet Competition where they were also awarded the Mozart and the Contemporary Prizes. In 2001 the Quartet were nominated for a Grammy award for their recording of Walton String Quartets.

The Quartet gives concerts throughout the British Isles, performing regularly at the Wigmore Hall and Purcell Room in London. They are frequent visitors to continental Europe and have toured in North and South America and in West Africa. They have played at all of the important festivals in the UK and at a range of Festivals abroad from the Prague Spring to New York's "Mostly Mozart". They broadcast regularly for the BBC and have contributed to a number of programmes in the "BBC Discovering Music" series. The Quartet record for BIS Records and in 2005 will release a recording of Sally Beamish and Beethoven and will also record the first disc in a Britten cycle. They are also looking forward to the release of Elgar's Introduction and Allegro, recorded with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra last autumn.

In their first year together the Quartet gave over 50 performances for the organisation "Live Music Now!" in community venues such as Hospices and Special Needs Schools. They have given house concerts in rural Finland and coached young musicians in the Andes. In the UK the Quartet have worked with the Cavatina Chamber Music trust since its inception, presenting workshops in primary and secondary schools and at the Royal Welsh College of Music in Cardiff.

This season the Emperor Quartet will give concerts in France, Belgium and Switzerland. They will play on a Page & Moy Music Cruise in the Baltic and will make a return visit to the Kuhmo Festival in Finland. A new Piano Quintet by David Matthews will be premiered and recorded by the BBC at the Cardiff Coffee Concerts and the Quartet will play at the Wigmore Hall for the From-Sweden Festival, presenting works by Swedish composers Wilhelm Stenhammer and Ludwig Norman. They will be in residence at the Welsh College coaching chamber music and, thanks to sponsorship from First Campus, giving concerts and workshops for school children in the South Wales area.

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