

## PROGRAMME NOTES by The Consone Quartet

As string quartet players we are lucky enough to have a wealth of fantastic repertoire to play. Haydn's music was some of the first we tackled together as students at the Royal College of Music in London and he remains one of our most played (and loved) composers. Haydn composed his Op. 71 set in 1793, following a successful tour to London. He returned home to Vienna a celebrity, famous internationally as a composer and public figure.

Beethoven is another staple of our repertoire as a period string quartet. In this programme we will perform the composer's own arrangement of his Piano Sonata in Eb major, Op. 14, No. 1. It was common practice right throughout the baroque and classical periods to arrange popular pieces for whatever instruments you had available, meaning more people could enjoy the music and, on a purely pragmatic level, publishers could sell more copies.

Over the ten years we have been working together in the Consone Quartet, we have developed our own musical language and interpretation. Mendelssohn's quartets have a particularly special place for us in this regard since we are fortunate enough to have access to players' editions of the time - most notably that of Ferdinand David, who premiered many of Mendelssohn's works. His characteristic blue pencil markings give us lots of clues about bowings and fingerings, implying generous use of expressive portamenti slides and a particular freedom of bowing. The four pieces that make up Mendelssohn's Op. 81 are rarely performed. Published posthumously as a set, they were in fact written at different points during Mendelssohn's lifetime, with the "Theme and Variations" and the "Scherzo" written in 1847 - the year of his death.

Another lesser-known gem that we are excited to feature in this programme is Carl Czerny's String Quartet in A minor. Czerny's music has been a bit of a discovery for us. We all slaved over his piano etudes as students, but in fact it was his symphonies, sacred works and string quartets that he was most proud of. He wrote nearly forty string quartets, though none are published and the music is therefore very tricky to get hold of. We came across these pieces through a wonderful recording by the Berlin-based Sheridan Ensemble, who have managed to track down the scores in a Viennese archive. They have very kindly shared some of these with us and we hope our audiences enjoy listening to this exciting music as much as we love playing it!