

# WIGMORE HALL 125

Wednesday 1 October 2025  
7.30pm

## Pavel Haas Quartet

Veronika Jarůšková violin

Marek Zwiebel violin

Šimon Truszkla viola

Peter Jarůšek cello

Bohuslav Martinů (1890-1959)

String Quartet No. 3 (1929)

*I. Allegro • II. Andante • III. Vivo*

Erich Wolfgang Korngold (1897-1957)

String Quartet No. 2 in E flat Op. 26 (1933)

*I. Allegro • II. Intermezzo. Allegretto con moto •  
III. Larghetto. Lento • IV. Waltz. Tempo di valse*

*Interval*

Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)

String Quartet in A flat Op. 105 (1895)

*I. Adagio ma non troppo. Allegro appassionato •  
II. Molto vivace • III. Lento e molto cantabile •  
IV. Finale. Allegro non tanto*



UNDER 35S

Supported by the AKO Foundation  
Media partner Classic FM



Help us raise £125,000  
for 125 years of music

To find out more visit [wigmore-hall.org.uk/donate](https://wigmore-hall.org.uk/donate)



Join & Support  
Donations

Wigmore Hall is a no smoking venue. No recording or photographic equipment may be taken into the auditorium nor used in any other part of the Hall without the prior written permission of the management. In accordance with the requirements of City of Westminster persons shall not be permitted to stand or sit in any of the gangways intersecting the seating, or to sit in any other gangways. If standing is permitted in the gangways at the sides and rear of the seating, it shall be limited to the number indicated in the notices exhibited in those positions. Disabled Access and Facilities - full details from 020 7935 2141. Wigmore Hall is equipped with a loop to help hearing aid users receive clear sound without background noise. Patrons can use this facility by switching hearing aids to 'T'.



Please ensure that watch alarms, mobile phones and any other electrical devices which can become audible are switched off. Phones on a vibrate setting can still be heard, please switch off.

The Wigmore Hall Trust Registered Charity No. 1024838  
36 Wigmore Street, London W1U 2BP • [Wigmore-hall.org.uk](https://wigmore-hall.org.uk) • John Gilhooly Director

Wigmore Hall Royal Patron HRH The Duke of Kent, KG  
Honorary Patrons Aubrey Adams OBE; André and Rosalie Hoffmann; Louise Kaye; Kohn Foundation; Mr and Mrs Paul Morgan

Tonight's concert of Central European music places two contrasting 20th-century string quartets alongside Antonín Dvořák's final contribution to the genre.

**Bohuslav Martinů** studied violin and organ at the Prague Conservatory, but rebelled against the institution's rigid discipline and in 1910 was dismissed for 'incorrigible negligence'. For the next decade he worked as a teacher and orchestral violinist while continuing to compose. His first major success was the 1918 cantata *Czech Rhapsody*. He took some lessons from Dvořák's son-in-law Josef Suk in 1922, and the following year moved to Paris to study with Albert Roussel. The French capital would remain his home until 1940.

Martinů composed his compact and acerbic Third String Quartet in 1929. Its main influences are Czech folk music and the contemporary idioms he had absorbed in Paris, including those of Roussel and Stravinsky. The first movement opens commandingly, with a restless first violin melody accompanied by vigorous pizzicati from the cello (plucked notes), *col legno* playing from the viola (tapping the strings with the wood of the bow) and a long tremolo from the second violin (the rapid alternation of two notes). This energetic first theme contrasts with a more relaxed second one, which has a rustic character. Syncopated (offbeat) rhythms give the movement a hint of jazz. In the intense and occasionally anguished ensuing *Andante*, the viola and cello come to the fore with wide-ranging, quasi-improvisatory solos. An energetic *moto perpetuo* finale featuring glissandi (slides), pizzicati and playful high-pitched solos for first violin and cello brings the work to an exhilarating and witty close.

**Erich Wolfgang Korngold** was a child prodigy, whom Gustav Mahler called 'a genius'. Unlike many of his contemporaries, he had no interest in abandoning traditional tonality; indeed, the writer Gila Flam has described his style as 'essentially romantic, effusive, luxuriant and, most significantly, harmonious'. While this led his compositions to fall out of favour in the modernist 1920s and 30s, it has also contributed to their growing popularity today.

For years, Korngold was best remembered for his Hollywood film scores from the 1930s and 40s. However, his classical output was also considerable, and includes three full-length operas (and two one-act ones), concertos for violin and cello, a symphony, seven collections of songs and several significant chamber works. He wrote his Second String Quartet – a love song to his native Vienna – in 1933, five years before the Nazis' annexation of Austria forced him to relocate permanently to the USA.

The opening *Allegro* is dominated by the same rhythmic pattern that launches Beethoven's Fifth Symphony: three short notes followed by a long one. Korngold's richly chromatic harmonic language recalls that of Richard Strauss, whose music he much admired. Although there are moments of passion, the predominant mood is one of geniality. A witty *Intermezzo*

containing several deliciously cheeky melodies follows. Its energetic central episode includes much spirited instrumental dialogue. More troubled emotions come to the fore in the harmonically adventurous *Larghetto*, where eerie passages featuring very high string writing – including harmonics, where the player creates overtones by lightly touching the strings – alternate with elegiac lyrical episodes. Both the cello and the first violin have prominent solos, with the latter soaring to celestial heights in the closing section. Another Strauss – the 'waltz king' Johann Strauss II – is the inspiration behind the joyful finale. It is a lilting and increasingly exuberant waltz, packed with glorious tunes: a fitting tribute to the city from which Korngold would soon be exiled.

In 1892, **Dvořák** took up the post of director of New York's National Conservatory of Music. His American experiences inspired memorable compositions such as his 'New World' Symphony, but he was often homesick, and in spring 1895 decided to return to his native Bohemia. Shortly before leaving America, he began to write a string quartet in A flat major. On his return to Europe, he set it aside while he settled back home, revised his Cello Concerto and wrote another quartet (No. 13 in G major). He returned to the A flat quartet in December 1895, completing its first movement and writing the remaining three movements in a month. It was to be his last piece of 'absolute' music – from then on, he focussed on symphonic poems and operas.

Although begun in the US, the String Quartet in A flat shows little American influence, and has a strongly Czech flavour. It opens with a pensive cello melody, which the other three instruments take up and develop. This melody then metamorphoses into the sunny principal theme of the *Allegro appassionato*. A cheerful second theme follows, characterised by bouncy triplet rhythms that recall hunting fanfares. The ensuing music is notable for its emotional range, from the storminess of the central (development) section to the alternate wistfulness and joy of the final section (the coda), which recalls the quartet's opening. The second movement is modelled on the *Furiant*, a traditional Czech dance that mixes duple and triple rhythms. Lively outer sections contrast with a soulful central trio containing ardent duets for violin and cello and the two violins.

The third movement was written at Christmas 1895 in Dvořák's beloved country home Vysoká. Its opening section has a hymn-like quality, due to its full, rich textures and exquisitely simple melody. Following an agitated and harmonically restless central episode, the opening melody returns, now accompanied by birdsong-like figuration from the second violin and lower-string pizzicati. A gentle coda recalls music from across the movement. The finale opens hesitantly, with another cello solo, but quickly evolves into an energetic Czech dance, whose robust main theme alternates with more lyrical episodes. Full of textural variety, melodic beauty and rhythmic vitality, it ends the quartet in a mood of undiluted jubilation.

© Kate Hopkins 2025

Reproduction and distribution is strictly prohibited.