



**UNIVERSITY OF  
BIRMINGHAM**

University Music  
& Concerts

# **CrossCurrents: The Memory Project Ligeti Quartet**

**Friday 8 March 1-1.50pm**  
Barber Lunchtime Concert  
Elgar Concert Hall, Bramall Music Building

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We activate  

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Barber Concerts are funded by the Henry Barber Trust and form part of The Barber Institute of Fine Arts programme of public events to 'encourage the study and enjoyment of art and music' in accordance with the deeds of the Trust.

# Programme

- **In MEMORiam,**  
**por las víctimas del conflicto armado en Colombia**  
**(In MEMORiam, for the victims of the armed conflict in Colombia)**
- Jorge Gregorio García Moncada  
(b. 1975)

## **Vignettes from Kazimierz**

Daria Kwiatkowska  
(b. 1969)

Remuh graveyard  
Tour guides  
Tourists  
Interlude (1997)  
Hevre: Converted Synagogue  
Festivals

## **La pieza faltante (The missing piece)**

Santiago Lozano  
(b. 1976)

Take your goal  
Stables  
A cluster of ideals

## **Canción de cuna para los niños muertos** **(Lullaby for Dead Children)**

Natalia Valencia  
(b. 1976)

## **On the memory of trees...**

Scott Wilson  
(b. 1969)

## **Resight**

Sara Caneva  
(b. 1991)

# Programme Notes

**In MEMORiam, por las víctimas del conflicto armado en Colombia  
(In MEMORiam, for the victims of the armed conflict in Colombia)**

**Tribute to the memory of  
Jorge Guillermo García Moncada  
(1979-2023)**

The 9,593,356 victims of the Colombian conflict (according to the census of 31 October 2023) have been protected under Law 1448 of 2011 and are thus now recognised as having experienced serious Human Rights violations, allowing the process of seeking reparation to begin. 'Every victim counts', is the phrase that heads the website of the Unidad para las Víctimas (Victim's Unit), in which Law 1448 recognises as victims "those persons who individually or collectively have suffered harm as a result of events that occurred on or after 1 January 1985".

Given the current state of affairs where guerrillas, drug traffickers, paramilitaries and neo-feudal structures - among others - compete for control of land and trafficking corridors for all kinds of illicit activities, it is clear that this figure (from the official census of 2023) is derisory when we go back in time to the modern genesis of the bipartisan violence of the 1940s and 50s, or earlier. These generations of the population, still alive in the memory of our parents and grandparents, have witnessed the migration of vast numbers of communities transformed into what we now painfully call "desplazados" (displaced people).

My brother, Jorge Guillermo García Moncada (RIP) gave his professional life - and much of his personal one - to caring for this vast vulnerable population of the

country. This is a heartfelt posthumous tribute to him who was "much more than a great friend"... mentor, companion, unconditional support... to his memory, for all the love he left us in his beautiful smile that endures forever. I love you.

Jorge Gregorio García Moncada

## Vignettes from Kazimierz

Kazimierz is the name of a small Jewish neighbourhood in Kraków, a place that went through multiple transformations through several hundred years of its existence. Some of these transformations happened during my lifetime and I witnessed them with astonishment, as an abandoned, impoverished district changed into a lively, touristy place, packed with bars and clubs, and seemingly living two distinct lives: that of a history witness, telling its story to many visitors during daytime, and fun-loving, carefree party zone during the night.

In the distant past, Kraków was a welcoming place for the Jewish community, who contributed meaningfully to the city's life and culture. Today, there are few Jews living in the city, and none of them in the original Jewish district. Holocaust was not the only reason behind the fact their community is nearly gone - there are many sad truths to be learned during the tours of Kazimierz, led by knowledgeable people, who are not afraid to show the visitors all sides of the history. After the 2nd World War, the place became derelict: when I visited it for the first time in the late 1980s, only one main street (Szeroka - the 'Broadway') had attractions such as Jewish restaurant, the museum in the Old Synagogue, and

Schindler's List tours. Today, the place is vibrant and busy, and every corner, every street offers attractions such as bars and clubs, restaurants and cafes, galleries, museums and endless guided tours. The Jews that walk the streets are mostly visiting foreigners, but there are also two working synagogues, serving the local communities spread across the city. There is the Jewish Cultural centre and other places where the memory of the Jewish community that used to live here is kept alive, and where the new links and connections are forged to enrich the experience of all people who visit this place.

My piece is set as a series of brief encounters, visiting the past and present of the place. In the electronics, I used field recordings taken during my recent visit there in summer 2023, combined with archival recordings of Klezmer tunes and cantor singing. (recordings include: Haneros Haluli, performed by H. Steiner, violin with unknown cymbalom player, 1909; Firn di Mekhutonim Ahim, performed by Naftule Brandwein with Abe Schwartz's Orchestra, 1923; Aneinu, performed by cantor [hazzan] Moshe Koussevitzky, year of the recording unknown).

Each section of the piece offers a brief experience, each of a different kind, mixing memories with the present moment:

#### Remuh graveyard

The Remuh synagogue on Szeroka street is the only orthodox synagogue in the country still functioning every week (ten male worshippers are required to run a service). Next to it is the old Jewish graveyard, partially destroyed by the Nazis, then partially reconstructed. Pieces of broken gravestones are embedded in the surrounding wall. The place is peaceful and full of memories. A

melancholic Klezmer tune evokes a sense of loss and grief.

#### Tour guides

The front of Old Synagogue on Szeroka street (now a museum) is the usual starting point for Kazimierz tours, guided in multiple languages. Some are walking tours, some are on golf-carts, where the information is delivered on pre-recorded tape (a tour in German is passing by).

#### Tourists

The place is overrun by tourists, following their guides, wondering around, sitting in restaurant, cafes and bars. Some are here to learn about history, some to visit their ancestors' home, some – like me – return over and over again for sentimental reasons.

#### Interlude (1997)

In 1997 Kazimierz was still mostly derelict. In an abandoned building, pigeons coo. A sense of emptiness is gripping.

#### Hevre: Converted Synagogue

The multiple synagogues, once abandoned, are now converted into all sorts of venues. This one is a bar. The indoors still feature fading frescoes on the walls; the characteristic shapes of the windows leave no doubt of what this building used to be. Once a witness to prayers and chants, now the place is filled with loud chatter and chill music.

#### Festivals

Every summer, Kazimierz becomes even more busy during the annual Festival of Jewish culture. The place remembers its past, the community that was lost, but also celebrates the culture that remains, that preserves the memory and still brings joy to all who care about it.

Daria Kwiatkowska

*Please turn quietly*

## **La pieza faltante (The missing piece)**

The work is an inquiry into Colombian national and personal memory, related to the events of the Palace of justice siege by the M19 guerrilla in November 1985.

It is divided into 3 movements, the first Take your goal making use of archival materials from the radio broadcasts that were made at the time of the takeover. These materials mixed with the sounds of the quartet evoke the tension of the moment and the contradiction between the seriousness of the events and the way in which the population was informed.

The second movement Stables invokes, through raw sounds in electronics and strings, the tortures and disappearances that occurred in a military army base after the takeover.

Finally, in the third movement A cluster of ideals we witness a delivery of human remains at a distance of 37 years. The sound intertwines the intimacy of the moment with evocations of the popular musical memory of the desaparecido.

Santiago Lozano

## **Canción de cuna para los niños muertos (Lullaby for Dead Children)**

The music describes a lonely, almost inaudible lament. A phrase sung by the first violin will travel among the quartet's musicians, repeating itself stubbornly throughout the work.

The music is simple, in which harmonics and very high pitches are mixed, evoking the blinding light of the bombs that cross the sky and the initial lament drowned in a roar deaf to all supplication. The shine of small eyes that fades forever.

Natalia Valencia

## **On the memory of trees...**

This work makes use of data from the University of Birmingham's MEMBRA project, which explores the ways in which epigenetic 'memory' may allow trees to 'learn' and retain adaptation strategies in response to stresses such as climatic warming or increased carbon dioxide, and even pass them on to their offspring. Data from the project is used to generate musical material through the process of sonification. This idea of (perhaps imperfect) memory struck me as somehow very musical, and in the piece various small and large scale bits of music come back in strangely altered or adapted forms.

Scott Wilson

## **Resight**

Resight (2023) is a tribute to the experience of memorising and remembering. I conceived this piece for an ideal rendition in complete darkness or dimly lit spaces. Electronic textures intertwine with the string quartet, and the musicians rely on auditory cues only for pulse and synchronisation. The quartet's particular deployment intentionally restrains eye contact between the players and channels sensory stimulation into the listening.

The title, Resight, also imply the homophones 'recite' and 'resite'. A soundscape of recordings connected to unaware childhood memories comes to life, dripping, tuning in, buzzing away, revisiting the performance stage, and linking to the origin of my musical journey.

Sara Caneva

# Biography

**Chris Jones (guest)** violin 1

**Patrick Dawkins** violin 2

**Richard Jones** viola

**Val Welbanks** cello

**The Ligeti Quartet** has been at the forefront of modern and contemporary music since its formation in 2010, breaking new ground through innovative programming and championing of today's most exciting composers and artists.

The quartet's most recent album *Nuc* (2023, Mercury KX) is a celebration of Anna Meredith's music for string quartet, including arrangements by the quartet's viola player Richard Jones. "An album that continually surprises and enlightens" (BBC Music). Their tour of the album in 2023 was supported by Music In The Round and Arts Council England.

The quartet named themselves after the Hungarian composer György Ligeti (1923-2006), inspired by his kaleidoscopic musical outlook and tireless invention. 2023 included many concerts celebrating the 100th anniversary of his birth. They have curated the 'Ligeti Day' at Aldeburgh Festival during which they performed two concerts of György Ligeti's music and the world premieres of 15 new commissions including *Entasis* by Lukas Ligeti (supported by Britten Pears Arts, BBC Radio 3, the Vaughan Williams Foundation, and Bourgie Hall).

Their previous album *Songbooks Vol. 1* (2020, Nonclassical), part of a long-standing collaboration with composer Christian Mason, explores the way in

which the acoustic properties of the string quartet emulate the human voice through Mason's use of extended techniques and unique sound-worlds. "Magnificently vivid performances ... sheer unadulterated exuberance" (Gramophone).

Having played at landmark venues around the world including Carnegie Hall, Curtis Institute, Wigmore Hall, Purcell Room, Barbican Hall, and Kings Place, the quartet also enjoy performing in more unusual places, previous venues including museums, galleries, theatres, pubs, planetariums, a fishing boat, and a cave. They have commissioned many new works and have collaborated with artists from all types of musical backgrounds including Anna Meredith, Xenia Pestova, Elliot Galvin, Kerry Andrew, Laura Jurd, Meilyr Jones, Neil Hannon, Seb Rochford, Shabaka Hutchings, Sean Noonan, Shed 7 and Submotion Orchestra.

The Ligeti Quartet are passionate about music teaching, supporting emerging composers, and taking new music to diverse audiences. They have held residencies at the universities of Cambridge (2016-19), Sheffield (2016-20), and Goldsmiths, University of London (2018-21), and Nottingham High School (2020-2022). The quartet's *Workout!* project initiated during the pandemic (supported by Arts Council England) was a huge undertaking in which they workshopped and recorded 100 new pieces by 100 composers from around the world.

# Forthcoming concerts



**Thursday 14 March 7.30-9.30pm**  
Barber Evening Concert

**CrossCurrents: The Unfurrowed Field**  
Manchester Collective/ Fergus McCreadie Trio

Elgar Concert Hall, Bramall  
£5-£20

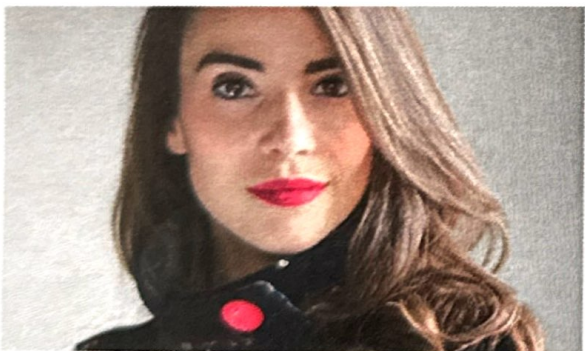


**Friday 15 March 8-10pm**

**CrossCurrents:**  
**Emboldened feat. Steve Banks**  
University Jazz Orchestra

CBSO Centre  
£5

Join us every Friday at 1pm in the Elgar Concert Hall for our free lunchtime concert series:



**Friday 15 March 1-1.50pm**  
Elgar Concert Hall, Bramall

**Lorena Paz Nieto** soprano  
**Sholto Kynoch** piano



**Friday 22 March 1-1.50pm**  
Elgar Concert Hall, Bramall

**Ryan Corbett** accordion



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