

THE Strad

June 2010

By Catherine Nelson

Conway Hall - 7th March 2010

It's tempting to ascribe the utter cohesion of the Carducci Quartet, its wonderful uniformity of tone and articulation, to the fact that the group is made up of two married couples. Violinist Matthew Denton leads with decisive elegance, but these players seem to breathe the music together.

Mozart's String Quartet in D major k.499 set the standard for the concert. After a gambolling and brilliant Allegretto, the 'hocketing' texture at the beginning of the Minuetto was magical, and before the rallying finale, the players sank into a full-voiced and rich Adagio that was breathtakingly lovely.

Anglo-Irish composer E.J. Moeran's Second Quartet made a rare appearance. The work is infused with the folksongs of Moeran's beloved County Kerry, and its lush textures often swelled to Ravellian richness, particularly under the empathic fingers of the Carducci players.

Pianist Simon Callaghan then joined them for a deeply felt performance of Elgar's Piano Quintet in A minor op.84, in which bristling dramatic tension alternated with desolate melancholy. Callaghan's delicate pianism blended beautifully with the Carducci sound: a finely drawn finale to an inspiring concert.