

Strad

March 2007

By Tim Honfray

The Carducci Quartet played a blinder at the Wigmore Hall. It brought exuberance and feeling to Haydn's op.20 no.4, with playing of vivacity and constant rhythmic subtlety. This is Haydn wearing his brilliance lightly, and the Carducci matched him in fleetness and elegance. Two newer works followed: David Matthews's 'Tenth Quartet' and Osvaldo Golijov's 'Yiddishbbuk'. The Carducci steered a sure course through Matthews's passages of dance and stasis, with well-pointed syncopations and tightly controlled energy. The players also had fun with the Australian birdsong, upside-down cuckoo and all. This is a charming work, full of good things.

The Yiddishbbuk is a darker piece, each of its movements a commemoration: of three children killed by the Nazis, of Isaac Bashevis Singer and of Leonard Bernstein. The Carducci showed it to contain a wealth of vivid and contrasting tableaux, bleak, relentless, agitated, frantic, ending with unison shout of anger. The performance of Beethoven's second 'Razumovsky' Quartet, op.59 no.2, which ended the concert, was superb. This was playing of constant variety, a masterclass in unanimity of musical purpose, in which severity could melt seamlessly into charm, and drama into geniality. The interplay of parts in the Scherzo was a delight; the finale was taken at a gallop, with exuberant playing from the leader, Matthew Denton.