

The background of the entire page is a photograph of four men walking away from the camera on a dark, paved pier. The man on the far left is wearing a green jacket and dark trousers. The second man from the left is carrying a white double bass and wearing a light blue jacket. The third man is wearing a dark sweater, and the fourth man is wearing a patterned sweater. They are walking towards a body of water under a cloudy sky. To the right of the pier, there is a pile of green fishing nets and some debris.

Joseph Haydn

String Quartets Op. 77
& Folk Music from Scotland

MAXWELL QUARTET



String Quartets Op. 77 & Folk Music from Scotland

Joseph Haydn (1732–1809)

MAXWELL QUARTET

COLIN SCOBIE violin 1^{*}

GEORGE SMITH violin 2[°]

ELLIOTT PERKS viola

DUNCAN STRACHAN cello

^{*}violin 2 on tracks 1, 6, 11

[°]violin 1 on tracks 1, 6, 11

This album is dedicated to Hatto Beyerle (1933–2023).

‘In order to truly understand Haydn’s music, you must first understand folk music.’

1. **Captain Campbell's March** 2:28

Traditional, *arr.* Maxwell Quartet

String Quartet in G major, Op. 77 No. 1

2. Allegro moderato 7:15

3. Adagio 6:10

4. Menuetto: Presto – Trio 4:02

5. Finale: Presto 5:06

6. **Master Francis Sitwell – The Marquis of Tullibardine –
Miss Cameron of Balvenie** 6:54

Nathaniel Gow (1763–1831), Niel Gow (1727–1807), William Marshall (1748–1833),
arr. Maxwell Quartet

String Quartet in F major, Op. 77 No. 2

7. Allegro moderato 7:26

8. Menuetto: Presto, ma non troppo – Trio 4:51

9. Andante 6:57

10. Finale: Vivace assai 5:44

11. **Hector the Hero** 3:28

James Scott Skinner (1843–1927), *arr.* Maxwell Quartet

Total Running Time 60:46

Joseph Haydn

String Quartets Op. 77 & Folk Music from Scotland

Navigating your way through Haydn's string quartets is, for us, the best journey you could wish to undertake. Not alarmingly new at every turn, but more familiar, confident, enlightening – and with new laughs, tears, and profound questions at every step along the way. When you reach his Opus 77 set, which consists of just two quartets, published in 1802 with a dedication to the music-loving aristocrat Prince Lobkowitz, you really have to step back and marvel at the sheer gloriousness of his writing. It's not quite clear why they were his last – no doubt he was getting on in years, and although he probably had intended to compose more, he lacked the energy to complete them. But the year before these were published, the new kid on the block – Ludwig van Beethoven – had composed his first set of string quartets, the Opus 18 set, and it's not impossible that this was a factor in Haydn deciding it was time to hand over the baton. Whatever the reason, we end up with two quartets that balance and complement each other perfectly – one brilliant, enigmatic, youthful and light, the other considered, noble and somehow with a sense of gravity. Whether intentional or not, they make a perfect ending to Haydn's astonishing string quartet-writing career.

We love to draw parallels and relate to Haydn's music with music from our own folk-inspired heritage. Opus 77 No. 1 in G major begins with a cheeky march – so we begin the album with an old Scottish pipe march in its dominant of D major, probably from the eighteenth or nineteenth century, called *Captain Campbell's March*. As pipe marches progress, they become more and more intricate and embellished – and we think Haydn would have expected his performers to do the same. Initial cheeky interjections to the theme from cello, and second violin, pave the way for a more

turbulent development which intensifies, before returning to the happy-go-lucky march once more. The second movement, a rich and profound hymn, opens with a swooping unison theme which Haydn uses almost like a passacaglia throughout the movement, ever more richly scored, until we reach the climactic moment that it returns fully scored in four parts. We borrow the outline of this theme as a bassline for an eighteenth-century slow Scottish Strathspey, called *Master Francis Sitwell*, written by the great Scottish publisher and composer Nathaniel Gow. The raucous menuet, with its stomping and furious trio, instantly carries us off to jig territory, so we included Niel Gow's brilliant tune (a $\frac{9}{8}$ jig) *The Marquis of Tullibardine*; and the plucky, heart-racing finale, with its lightning speed passing of little couplets around the ensemble, inspired us to include these figures in our version of the reel *Miss Cameron of Balvenie*, by eighteenth-century East coast fiddler William Marshall.

Where Opus 77 No. 1 was dazzling, brilliant and breezy, the second of the set, Opus 77 No. 2 in F major, is a perfect complement. It begins with a gorgeous lyrical theme in the first violin, later given to the second violin in the second subject area, and that thematic unity, coupled with densely worked contrapuntal writing, is a strong feature of the movement, and indeed the whole quartet. In fact, it is a seemingly trivial figure of repeated notes from the opening that becomes the basis for the development, in which Haydn explores harmonic shifts that would have astounded even Beethoven the newcomer, so daring and unsettling are they in their originality. Haydn then chooses to switch back to the older pattern of movements for this last quartet; he puts the menuet and trio second here, clearly needed after a less 'brilliant' opening movement. And it does not disappoint – so witty, rhythmically and metrically complex that even when playing it with the music in front of you, it can be difficult to understand the metre – the beating drum figure in the cello and viola (V-I-V-I) is so clearly in two, that when you hit the cadence points in triple

meter, it completely throws you. The trio drops in key to the flattened submediant of D flat major – a favourite technique of Haydn in his later quartets – and we enter a murmuring, subterranean world of beauty, before a false, faltering return to the menuet by way of a very clever and funny coda. The third movement, a theme and variations of sorts, surprises by the sparseness of its opening – a simple folk tune in the violin with bass accompaniment, and no middle voices at all. As the movement progresses, this simple tune becomes impossibly more and more beautiful – it's a perfect example of folk music and its direct simplicity, and as a moving swansong, it's hard to imagine a more sublime way to define Haydn's wonderful musical imagination. The finale, again based on a single theme, seems to sum everything up: the complex play with metre from the outset, the folk-like rustic textures, the contrapuntal density of the development, which grows increasingly bombastic, before returning to sweetness – and a sense of home comfort – by the end. It's a journey that only Haydn could have taken us on, and it must be said, leaves you with no sense of needing another quartet in this perfectly balanced Opus.

We end the album with a memorial from Scotland by James Scott Skinner, one of the great fiddlers, composers and dance masters at the beginning of the twentieth century in Scotland. He had lost a good friend in Major General Hector MacDonald, who tragically committed suicide after false allegations and charges were brought against him, and Skinner composed this rather beautiful tune in his honour, known as *Hector the Hero*. It may seem like a rather sombre end to a recording celebrating Haydn's great string quartet journey; but, echoing the beautiful Andante in Opus 77 No. 2, the simplicity of this tune has an ever more profound effect on us. As the tune brings the album to a close, we hark back to the opening bars of both Opus 77 quartets, by way of memorial to our own hero – Papa Haydn.



MAXWELL QUARTET

The Maxwell Quartet combines a refined approach to classical works with a passion for its own folk heritage and a commitment to expanding the string quartet repertoire through wide-ranging projects. Its first two releases on Linn paired string quartets by Haydn with the players' own compositions, based on Scottish folk music, the first reaching number three in the classical specialist charts.

The quartet performs at UK venues such as London's Wigmore Hall and Purcell Room, Queen's Hall, Edinburgh, and Perth Concert Hall, and across Europe, including at Concertgebouw and Muziekgebouw Amsterdam, Berlin and Dortmund Konzerthaus, and the Rheingau, Just Classik, Wonderfeel, Lammermuir and St Magnus Festivals. Since their debut American tour in 2019, which sold out venues in New York, Florida, California and Washington, they have toured the US annually.

Current projects include a new commission by Linda Buckley, with bagpiper Brìghde Chaimbeul, which they perform at Celtic Connections Festival in Glasgow and across Europe, and Worksongs, a project exploring the folk songs and cultures of Scotland's historic industries, including the jute and tweed trades. In 2023 they released *Gather*, bringing together traditional Scottish music ranging from 1200 to the present day, such as ancient Celtic plainchant of the Inchcolm Antiphoner, fishermen's songs, pipe marches from the Western Isles and Shetland Reels, as well as new compositions.

Passionate about collaborating with other musicians and art forms, the quartet has worked with a global roster of artists and institutions, including theatre company Cryptic, installation artists Wintour's Leap, Royal Ballet School, soul duo

Lunir, folk duo Chris Stout & Catriona MacKay, cinematographer Herman Kolgen, Danish String Quartet, Calidore Quartet, pianist Imogen Cooper, clarinettist Kari Kriikku and baritone Roderick Williams.

The four players have been friends since youth, studying and playing together in youth orchestras in Scotland. They formed officially in 2010 at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, as postgraduate students, and a year later were named as Residency Artists for Enterprise Music Scotland 2011–13, which gave them several acclaimed concert tours. The quartet has since held residencies at Oxford University, Perth Concert Hall, Music at Paxton and the Lammermuir Festival. The players founded their own Loch Shiel festival in the West Highlands of Scotland and curated a concert series at Guardswell Farm in Perthshire. They studied with the Endellion Quartet through a ChamberStudio mentorship programme at King's Place and privately with Hatto Beyerle, founding member of the Alban Berg Quartett, in Hanover.

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Images
© Richard Watson (Flux Video)

Thank you

To the team at Linn and Outhere, especially Phil for all of his brilliant work and companionship. To our friends and our ever-growing families, thanks for supporting us through thick and thin. To all our wonderful supporters, particularly the fantastic team at Maxwell Quartet Music who are helping us build for the future. This album is dedicated to Hatto Beyerle, our wonderful mentor and inspiration who passed away in 2023. He will live on in his ideas and his generosity in music; and we will never forget – nothing is ever twice the same.



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