

Vision String Quartet

Pittville Pump Room

Sun 5 July

Adam Koch *Violin*

Daniel Stoll *Violin*

Sander Stuart *Viola*

Leonard Disselhorst *Cello*

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart	String Quartet No. 21 in D Major	24'
Vision String Quartet	Babies, Pyramid Song and Bells of North (Cheltenham 2026 Commission, World Premiere)	10'
Interval		
Edvard Grieg	String Quartet No. 1 in G Minor	30'

About the Programme

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart – String Quartet No.21 in D Major

- I. Allegretto
- II. Andante
- III. Menueto. Allegretto – Trio
- IV. Allegretto

The last of Mozart's work for string quartet, the 'Prussian' quartets No. 21, 22 and 23 were written for Friedrich Wilhelm II, King of Prussia and amateur cellist, and offer that instrument an unusually prominent role. The first of the three was composed fairly quickly in June 1789 during a period of immense financial, physical and mental hardship for Mozart. The writing of quartets was never something the composer found easy, and, after failing to complete a promised set of six, Mozart was forced to sell what he had to a publisher. "I have now been forced to give away my quartets (that exhausting labour) for a mere song," he wrote to a friend, "simply in order to have cash in hand merely to meet my present difficulties." You would never guess that the Prussian quartets were the product of "exhausting labor", such is their easy delicacy. Clearly influenced by Haydn, this quartet is filled with beautiful melodies, emanating something of the sensual Mediterranean warmth of the opera *Così fan tutte* composed shortly afterwards.

Vision String Quartet – Babies, Pyramid Song and Bells of North (Cheltenham 2026 Commissions)

"All three new pieces follow the aesthetics of groovy, instrumental pop tunes that were established by the quartet's album 'Spectrum'. *Babies* is dedicated to my quartet members, with whom I had the honour to work with for five years. *Orakel* is a very cinematic piece that follows the harmonic idea of Radiohead's 'Pyramid Song', and 'Bells of North' is a

very cheerful, folksy and rather northern sounding song that is written in my favourite key, E Flat Major. These three pieces are among the first to be part of 'Spectrum II', one of the quartet's next albums."

Florian Willeitner, former Vision String Quartet violinist

Edvard Grieg – String Quartet No. 1 in G minor

Edvard Grieg's *String Quartet* was composed in solitude in a small composer's hut alongside a fjord and under a birch tree in 1877-78 in Hardanger, as he was escaping the cacophony of the city. It was there he found inspiration and focus. In February of 1878 Grieg wrote to Gottfred Matthison-Hansen, "I needed this bath in solitude and ... an opportunity to work without interruption, and I have gotten it—more, perhaps, than is good for me. I recently finished a *String Quartet* ... in G minor and [it] is not intended to deal in trivialities for petty minds. It aims at breadth, flight of imagination, and above all sonority for the instruments for which it is written." From that hut emerged the only completed four-movement work for string quartet in his output. The third movement, performed here, opens with the grandeur and boldness of many of Grieg's larger works, creating a much lush sound than one would usually expect from just four stringed instruments, as its strongly syncopated opening measures evoke tension within the music. The middle section, however, highlights the truly Norwegian sound of the *halling* folk dance, surely inspired by his own surroundings in Hardanger. Grieg juxtaposes grand, musically advanced compositional techniques (not appreciated by many critics of the time) with the folk sounds of his home country. In a letter to Aimar Grønvold he wrote, "In this work are specimens of the heart-blood of which the future hopefully will see more than just a few drops." The piece is dedicated to Robert Heckmann, whom Grieg consulted extensively on revisions and edits and whose quartet premiered the work on October 29, 1878 in Cologne.

Programme note by Laura Loge

Artist Biographies

Vision String Quartet

Founded in 2012, the Vision String Quartet has redefined the string quartet experience by blending classical mastery with bold originality. Their genre-defying performances seamlessly fuse classical repertoire with compositions inspired by folk, pop, rock, funk and minimalism, establishing them as leaders in contemporary chamber music.

Renowned for innovative concert formats, the quartet performs in prestigious venues such as the Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, Berlin Philharmonie and Wigmore Hall, as well as at major festivals such as the Festspiele Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and Beethovenfest Bonn. They push boundaries with unconventional performances, including memorised renditions and concerts in complete darkness, deepening their connection with audiences.

Their acclaimed albums, *Memento* (Opus Klassik Award 2020) and *Spectrum* - entirely self-composed and produced - showcase their artistic versatility. After a five-year break, their latest album, *In the Fields* (ACT Music), intertwines classical works with folk, jazz and original pieces, featuring guests including Bernhard Schimpelsberger and Mahan Mirarab.

Winners of top competitions, including the Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy and International Concours de Genève, the quartet trained under the Artemis Quartet and Günter Pichler. Their global recognition includes tours in Japan, Australia and Korea, and residencies like the 2025/26 season at Tonhalle Düsseldorf. They are also official endorsers of Thomastik-Infeld.

