***MUSIC AT WESLEY***

**TUESDAY LUNCHTIME CONCERT**

Wesley Church Centre, St John St, Chester CH1 1DA

February 25th 2025, 12.45pm

 **Aestus String Quartet:**

 **Leda Mileto (violin)**

 **Chris Karwacinski (violin)**

 **Beth Willett (viola)**

 **Clara Hope Simpson (cello)**

 **with**

 **Jordi Bitlloch (piano)**

**String Quartet No. 1 "Kreutzer Sonata" Leos Janáček (1854 – 1928)**

1. *Adagio – Con moto*
2. *Con moto*
3. *Con moto – Vivo – Andante*
4. *Con moto – (Adagio) – Più mosso*

 **Piano Quintet in E flat major Op. 44 Robert Schumann (1810 – 56)**

1. *Allegro brillante*
2. *In modo d'una marcia. Un poco largamente*
3. *Scherzo: Molto vivace*
4. *Allegro ma non troppo*

*FUTURE ‘MUSIC AT WESLEY’ CONCERTS*

 **Tuesday Lunchtime Concerts Series**, 12.45pm. Retiring collection.

 March 4th: Justine Gormley (piano)

 March 11th: Chetham’s School of Music Brass Ensembles

 March 18th: Heather Buckmaster (soprano), Joseph Buckmaster (tenor), Tim Kennedy (Piano)

 **Saturday Lunchtime Recitals**, 12.45pm. Retiring collection

###  March 15th: Brian Heald (organ)

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*Thank you for supporting this recital. The retiring collection (suggested minimum donation £4 per person) covers performer, performing rights and other direct expenses, with the balance in aid of Wesley Church funds. If you are a taxpayer it would be much appreciated if you would donate using a Gift Aid envelope (just add your name, address & post code).*

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**Aestus String Quartet** *(See website www.aestusquartet.com)*

Since their formation at the Royal Northern College of Music (RNCM) in 2021, the Aestus Quartet have been recognised for their warmth and sensitive musical approach. The name “Aestus” is Latin for sea tide and is inspired by the opening of Benjamin Britten’s String Quartet No. 2 - the first piece the group performed together. In 2024-2025 they are excited to be joining the Sergei Rachmaninoff Conservatoire as one of four groups selected internationally to be mentored by Quatuor Ébène violinist Gabriel Le Magadure in Paris on a monthly basis. In the 2023-2024 season, the Aestus were the RNCM Studio Quartet and Britten Pears Young Artists. They were delighted to give the closing performance of the 2024 Royal Philharmonic Society Awards in collaboration with Instrumentalist of the Year winner, Jasdeep Singh Degun and tabla player Harkiret Singh Bahra. The Aestus have performed at Festival Ravel (France), Residart (Italy), Winchester Chamber Music Festival, Oxford Chamber Music Festival, Manchester Chamber Concerts Society, Southwell Music Festival, and Britten Pears Chamber Futures, among others.

**Leda Mileto** is a violinist born in Rome, Italy and is currently based in Manchester, UK. She has performed and recorded in venues such as Bridgewater and Stoller Hall, as well as national and international contexts (Italy, Poland, Austria, France). She was awarded first prize in competitions including the Chroma Prize (Rome) and Napolinova International Competition (Naples).  Leda currently studies privately in London with David Takeno. She obtained her Master’s degree from the RNCM supported by the Charles Greenhough Award and has recently completed a Postgraduate Diploma there with a scholarship. Leda was recently appointed tutor in violin, eurhythmics, foundation singing and improvisation by the Junior department of the RNCM.

**Chris Karwacinski** is a violinist from London, enjoying a wide-ranging career in orchestral playing with orchestras such as the BBC Philharmonic, Manchester Camerata, Sinfonia Viva, and British Sinfonietta. Chris has performed at venues such as the Royal Albert Hall, the Royal Festival Hall, the Barbican, the Sage Gateshead, Symphony Hall Birmingham, and the Bridgewater Hall. Recent solo experiences include reaching the Royal Northern College of Music (RNCM) Norman George Violin Prize final. Chris is also a member of the Velaris Piano Quartet and Duo Stringendo, a violin and guitar duo. He recently completed his Master’s of Music in Violin Performance at the RNCM. He has a degree in Pure Mathematics at King’s College London has a history of teaching both music and maths. Chris is also a tuba player and has been principal tuba of the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain and of Redbridge Brass Band.

**Beth Willett** is an enthusiastic chamber musician, most notably as the Violist in the Aestus and Innsӕi String Quartets. With these ensembles Beth has participated in prestigious international festivals, and has been prize-winner or finalist in several competitions. Beth has also performed with the UK’s leading orchestras, including the BBC Philharmonic, the Northern Chamber Orchestra, Manchester Collective, and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. Beth is committed to improving access to classical music and spent a year working with the Music in Secondary Schools Trust (MiSST), which brings free music tuition and musical instruments to schools in deprived areas. Beth also works with the Royal Northern College of Music’s Young Strings programme to deliver music tuition to young children aged 6-12. Beth completed both her postgraduate (2022) and undergraduate (2020) studies at the RNCM receiving a first-class result in both degrees.

**Clara Hope Simpson** is a creative and versatile cellist who is passionate about both performance and teaching. She has performed as a soloist in venues including Wigmore Hall, Stoller Hall, and Kodak Hall. Clara won the 2021 Barbirolli Cello Prize She additionally won the Musicales Prize at the RNCM, as well as the cello concerto competition at the Eastman School of Music. Clara has been awarded the Exceptional Global Talent Visa from Arts Council England. She has performed with groups including the Elias Quartet, Manchester Collective, and Manchester Camerata. Clara has studied Dalcroze and pedagogy, has taught cello extensively, and is an Ambassador with the Benedetti Foundation. Clara holds a Master of Performance from the RNCM, a Bachelor of Music from the Eastman School of Music, a Bachelor of Arts in Chemistry from the the University of Rochester, and entrepreneurial training from the Institute for Music Leadership.

**Jordi Bitlloch** was born in France and is currently based in Manchester, performing regularly through the UK and abroad as an accompanist, chamber musician and soloist, collaborating with musicians such as Gina McCormack, Leland Chen, Iona Kaye as well as members of the Elias and Aestus string quartets. His international breakthrough came when he won second prize and audience prize at the International Beethoven Competition in Bonn (Germany) and he has also garnered prizes in the European Piano Competition Vlado Perlemuter and Concours Aujourd'hui Musiques (France). He has performed in venues such as the Wigmore Hall, Purcell Room, Leeds Clothworkers Centenary Concert Hall, Beethoven Halle Bonn among others, and has been a guest at festivals such as the Klavierfestival Ruhr (Germany), Music in Paxton (Scotland), Windsor Festival (UK), Festival Jeunes Talents (France) and Euriade Festival (Holland). Jordi attended the Yehudi Menuhin School in Surrey (UK) as a teenager, studying under Ruth Nye, and later the University of Arts in Berlin (Germany) under Pascal Devoyon, where he earned undergraduate and postgraduate degrees in performance. Between 2021 and 2023 he was also Junior Fellow in Accompaniment at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester. During a hiatus from music in his thirties, Jordi also earned Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Geography and worked for several years as a flood management consultant.