

ARTISTS' PROGRAMMING VISION AND MUSIC NOTES

The TinAlley String Quartet is delighted to be appearing on the Virtuosi Concerts stage. We have put together a wonderful program, featuring an ancient opener which we hope will whet your appetites, one of the most stunning piano quintets which we are thrilled to perform with our colleague Hinrich Alpers, and a quartet by 2009's birthday boy, Felix Mendelssohn!

Shostakovich

was deeply influenced by the 48 Preludes and Fugues of J.S. Bach and would later write a book of 24 Preludes and Fugues (Opus 87). The stirring entry of the piano at the opening of the Quintet's Prelude is answered by the quartet, and after the thunderous culmination of the Prelude, without a break between the two movements, the fugue begins in the first violin. The vulnerability of the single, unaccompanied violin line and the stop-start hesitation in the writing creates a fugal movement of extraordinary mystery and beauty. A further parallel can be drawn between the textural clarity



*Dmitri Shostakovich
(1906-1975)*

Shostakovich achieves in the quintet and that of Purcell's Fantasias. The piano or string quartet never threatens to overshadow the other, thanks to Shostakovich's frequent doubling of the piano part and the simplicity of inter-part composition, yet the parts intertwine subtly, allowing every voice to shine. Purcell's Fantasias achieve the same magical transparency, so that despite how complex the four voices may appear, textural clarity is always attained. The Quintet's Scherzo movement, is a particular favourite of many listeners, but it is the finale that the quartet especially loves. The stunning opening duo between the pizzicato cello and the first violin is captivating and the rhythmic pulsation that imbues the entire movement leaves one with a sense of inevitability.

Mendelssohn's **Quartet in a minor, Opus 13**

was the first piece we recorded as an ensemble and is a work which takes both the player and the listener on a wonderful journey. It was inspired by the Opus 132 string quartet of Beethoven and although Mendelssohn had composed several of his finest works before completing the Opus 13, we feel that it is a young Mendelssohn



*Felix Mendelssohn
(1809—1847)*

whose musical and emotional journey we

follow, as though riding a rollercoaster of impetuous, pubescent fantasies. The second movement is particularly beautiful and features a rather haunting fugue which reappears unexpectedly in the fourth movement. The guileless third movement will remind you of the fleeting, delicate scherzos from Mendelssohn's *Octet* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The finale is ardent in its fervour before giving way to the reappearance of the opening chorale, though we always find that this final statement has a poignancy one would never expect thanks to the many fantasies, trials and tribulations we have lived out before reaching the work's destination. (*TinAlley String Quartet*)