



**Connect: Resound 2016  
Music In Performance - Live Broadcast**

**East Riding of Yorkshire Music Hub and the Beverley and East Riding Early Music  
Festival present**

# **Conson Quartet**



## **Teachers' Resource Pack**



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# Welcome!

We are really pleased that you are joining us for this special live online broadcast. This pack will provide you with information about the performance - how to tune in, what to expect, and information about the performers, the music and the instruments to help you to plan activities with your pupils.

This broadcast is part of Connect: Resound, a project which brings musical experiences to schools via the internet, including instrumental lessons and live music performances. Led by music development charity NYMAZ, the project works with partners to help overcome the barriers that those based in rural areas can face when providing musical opportunities for children and young people.

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## 1 How to tune in

The performance will take place on:

Tuesday 24th May 2016

at:

1.30 pm - 2.30 pm

To view the performance, simply click on:

<http://live.ucanplay.org.uk>

You may wish to test the link in advance of the performance - please scroll down the webpage to find previous live broadcasts and click on one of them to ensure you are able to access our Youtube page.

## 2 The Consone Quartet

The Consone Quartet is an ensemble of four musicians:

Agata Daraskaite, Magdalena Loth-Hill – violins

John Crockatt – viola

George Ross – cello

Winners of the 2016 Royal Over-Seas League Strings/Keyboard Ensemble Prize, the Consone Quartet is dedicated to exploring and recreating the sound-worlds of the Classical and early Romantic string quartet repertoire through period instrument performance.

### What is a string quartet?

The **string quartet** is the most familiar type of composition for a chamber group - playing music composed for a small group of solo musicians. It has two violins, a viola and a cello – all the parts are equally important. The two violins have the highest parts, the viola plays in the middle and the cello has the lowest part.

You can explore string quartets and the music they play here: [http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/music/western\\_tradition/chamber\\_music2.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/music/western_tradition/chamber_music2.shtml)

## **About the musicians**

### **Magdalena Loth-Hill - violin**

Magdalena is a British-Polish violinist, born in Cumbria.

I was brought up listening to a lot of classical music on the radio and knew from an early age that I wanted to be a violinist. I was very lucky that my parents were so supportive as it was difficult to get good music tuition where we lived which was a very rural area. I had a wonderful violin teacher when I first started, who instilled a very positive attitude in me – we always had a lot of fun in the lessons and it was never a disaster if I made a mistake! When I was twelve I started going to the Junior Department in Glasgow. I had to get up very early (at 5.30am) every Saturday to get there, but it was good because I got my violin and piano lessons as well as choir, orchestra, theory and chamber music all in one day. After that I went to Chetham's School of Music in Manchester and then on to the Royal College of Music where I am still studying today!

### **Agata Daraskaite - violin**

Agata is a Lithuanian-Polish violinist, residing in London.

From as early as I can remember every weekend I would be woken up by the sounds of jazz coming from my Dad's sound system. He is still a big jazz fan but I chose to be a rebel and asked to play the violin when I was 5! At first I wanted to play the piano but my music teacher said that my hands would be too small for the piano when I grew up. She was right and I'm glad I chose the violin as it's the smallest of the string instruments!

When I was 14 I got on a plane all by myself and arrived in the UK to study at a small school in Surrey, where absolutely everyone played an instrument. My favourite thing at school was the lessons where I got to play with other students - this is how I fell in love with chamber music!

I now play many many hours nearly every day (I do give myself a holiday every now and then!) and travel to places far away to play with other musicians!

### **John Crockatt - viola**

I began playing the violin when I was 7 years old. I think when I was that young my love of music was primarily based around showing off! Through my teens though I began spending my summers playing chamber music and that's when things started to get serious. I took the usual route through music school but then veered off and spent a couple of years travelling – some months in India then a year living and working in East Jerusalem. Coming back to London, I completed a masters in ethnomusicology at the School for Oriental and African Studies and somehow after that managed to fall back into performing music and now, 25 years after I first picked up a violin, it is how I spend my days and earn my living, and I couldn't be happier about it!

### **George Ross - 'cello**

It was aged 7 that I started to learn the cello, soon after a failed attempt at bearing the horrible sound I made whilst practising the violin. I had heard my brother making far more beautiful noises on his cello from the next room and so I persuaded my parents to let me give that a go instead. Challenged by my less academically minded brain, I was given the opportunity to attend the Purcell School, a specialist music school where I boarded from the age of eleven and where my musical potential was encouraged and inspired to grow, in particular by my Russian cello teacher. I gained a scholarship to study at the Royal College of Music in London where I completed my bachelor degree. I've since travelled around Europe with various groups of my own and also with a number of famous early music groups. I am almost finished with my masters in baroque cello in the Netherlands, an extremely important country

for early music, and I have loved every minute of my two years away from London.

You can see and hear them playing here: <http://www.consonequartet.com/#!media/c1pn>

### **3 The Music**

We will be playing music by Mozart (1756- 1791) and Mendelssohn (1809 -1847). We will play movements from:

***W.A. Mozart String Quartet in F-major, K.590***

***And***

***F. Mendelssohn String Quartet in E flat major, op.12***

We'll also go back in time to the music of Purcell (1659 - 95) to show you how bows have changed over time. We'll be taking the music apart and will show you how the music is constructed and what we enjoy playing as a quartet.

## **4 The Instruments**

The Consone Quartet play music from the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries on instruments that were used in that time. Their instruments and bows are set up as we think they would have been in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. They often play at a different pitch from modern concert pitch (usually, but not always, a semitone lower) and tune keyboard instruments (such as harpsichords or organs) slightly differently from the modern way of tuning a piano.

### **Major differences between modern and baroque instruments**

There are several differences between modern and baroque stringed instruments and bows.

Baroque instruments have a straighter neck, a lower bridge, and a shorter fingerboard than their modern equivalents, and use gut strings. They also have a lighter bass bar and sound post. Players of violins and violas tend not to use a chin-rest or shoulder-rest, and cellists play without a spike.

The differences give the instruments a characteristic sound and require a slightly different technique (for example, players hold the instruments differently and rely more on the natural resonance of the instrument, using open strings and first position more often than players of modern instruments).

Baroque bows are convex in shape (unlike modern bows, which are concave), are generally lighter and slimmer than modern bows, and are balanced nearer the frog. Down-bows are naturally stronger than up-bows, and the variation in tension over the length of the bow gives a natural diminuendo to a down-bow. To maximise the baroque bow's characteristics, players often employ different bowing and articulation from that used with a modern instrument and bow.”

## **5 What next?**

### **Connect: Resound broadcasts**

This live broadcast is one in a series from Connect: Resound. Visit <http://live.ucanplay.org.uk> to see previous performances including a performance from folk band Maia and a peek behind the scenes of the music business with the band Hope and Social.

We have further concerts planned for this year - please email [emily.penn@nymaz.org.uk](mailto:emily.penn@nymaz.org.uk) if you would like to be kept updated.

### **Ten Pieces**

The BBC's Ten Pieces project is a fantastic online resource to help schools to explore, make and respond to music. Its aim is to open up the world of classical music to a new generation of children and inspire them to develop their own creative responses to ten pieces of music using a variety of art forms - digital art or animation, performance poetry, dance or movement and composition.

### **Beverley and East Riding Early Music Festival**

There are lots of opportunities to experience more beautiful music from the Beverley and East Riding Early Music Festival between Friday 27 and Monday 30 May 2016. The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment are running workshops for school children across Beverley during the festival. [www.ncem.co.uk/bemf](http://www.ncem.co.uk/bemf)

### **National Centre for Early Music**

The National Centre for Early Music presents regular family friendly concerts created for children and young people. The next is Pete Coe's Tall Tales, a storytelling and music concert full of clapping games, rhythms and dances. <https://tickets.ncem.co.uk/en-GB/shows/pete%20coe's%20tall%20tailes/info>

## **Play an instrument, join an orchestra!**

To contact your local Music Education Hub, and find out about music making opportunities for your school, please visit: <http://www.musiceducationuk.com/music-hubs/>