

Amersham Concert Club's 55th Season

The Vida Guitar Quartet – Saturday 26 February 2022

Mark Ashford, Amanda Cook, Mark Eden, and Chris Snell

A large and enthusiastic audience welcomed the Vida Guitar Quartet to Amersham, the first time such an ensemble has played at the Club in over 50 years and what a treat they gave us. The Vida Quartet were a joy to listen to. The rapport between the members of the quartet and between the quartet and the audience brought a real warmth to this February evening. Their introductions of each of the pieces in their wide-ranging programme were informative and engaging.

The programme opened with a lively performance of the Waltz from Khachaturian's Masquerade Suite. The music of Bach and his influence on later composers flowed through this concert, notably in the next piece - two Preludes and Fugues which Mendelssohn, who had a great interest in Bach's music, composed as a homage. 'Innisfree' was a piece inspired by the poem of W B Yeats and composed by Chris Snell during lockdown. It drew on Irish folk melodies and led into the foot-tapping finale for the first half – an arrangement by Mark Ashford of Vaughan Williams' English Folk Song Suite.

Bach returned in the second half with a lovely arrangement, by Mark Eden, of the 3rd Brandenburg Concerto which was followed by a Bach Variation by Howard Skempton and Bachianas No.5 by Villa-Lobos, one of 9 Bach- inspired Brazilian pieces. The programme ended with another South American piece 'Uarekena' by Sergio Assad. As well as beautiful guitar string playing, the quartet demonstrated a range of percussive techniques, to create an enthralling soundscape.

Brought back by an enthusiastic audience, the Quartet gave us an encore of 'I Feel Pretty' from 'West Side Story'. A lovely end to a great evening which showed us all how much we have missed live music during the pandemic.