

**MUSIC**  
**BRODSKY QUARTET**

ROYAL CONSERVATOIRE,  
GLASGOW

★★★★

WITH its big, multicoloured spinning wheel, it felt more like a gameshow than a concert. But that was part of the Brodsky Quartet's ingenious idea for their 40th anniversary tour.

They're offering 40 possible pieces (from Haydn to Bartók, Schubert to Sculthorpe), which lucky audience members get to select at random by spinning the "Wheel of 4Tunes".

And there was more drama, as violist Paul Cassidy explained. The huge library of sheet music that the foursome need for this ambitious project had just been stolen from their car in the Netherlands (though recovered – although they hadn't had it back yet). But that still meant they had to source last-minute parts for all 40 pieces, just in case.

It could all have gone so wrong – a bad mix of pieces, unfamiliar sheet music, stressed players. But it worked like a dream. The three randomly selected pieces – by Purcell, Elgar and contemporary Dutch composer Theo Verbey – made a pleasing if contrasting set, and what held them together were the Brodskys' supple playing and extrovert personalities.

The opening Purcell *Chaconne* was maybe a bit overwrought, but still had plenty of beautiful moments. Verbey's *Spring Rain* was immediately likeable – fresh, sparkling and full of scurrying minimalist figures. And its sudden dramatic eruptions played well to the Brodskys' love of the theatrical. They didn't hold back in their Elgar Quartet, either, with an aching fragile slow movement and tempestuous finale.

The whole concept could have been a gimmick, but it ended up as a bit of a revelation.

**DAVID KETTLE**