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The Solem Quartet presents **Beethoven Bartók Now**, bringing together the six late quartets of Beethoven and the six quartets of Béla Bartók, uniquely reimagined with music from composers of today.

Each of the six parts is accompanied by a wealth of related digital content and educational activity designed to reach a wider public by bringing together traditional and new repertoire via thematic links (*Unpacking BBN* videos), to build a community of composers through workshops (*Writing for Quartet* and *Exploring Sound*) and to inspire the young.

# BEETHOVEN BARTÓK NOW

A SIX PART SERIES FROM

Solem  
LATES



# BBN Overview

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The late string quartets of **Ludwig van Beethoven** (1770-1827) represent the greatest works of chamber music from the nineteenth century. Written roughly 100 years later, perhaps the most important contributions to the genre since Beethoven are the extraordinary six string quartets of **Béla Bartók** (1881-1945). These two composers pushed forward the string quartet idiom in terms of what was demanded from performers musically and technically, and more importantly created music of huge emotional breadth. The Solem Quartet believes it is important that these composers' works continue to be performed with energy and verve in new contexts to new audiences, and are delighted to be working with leading composers of today - Aaron Parker, Jasmine Morris, David John Roche, Ayanna Witter-Johnson, Edmund Finnis, Bushra El-Turk - to deliver this aim.

***Beethoven Bartók Now runs from 2021 to 2024***, nationwide. Learn more:

Page 4	BBN Concerts - introduction
Page 5	PART I NIGHT MUSIC - Aaron Parker
Page 6	PART II SONG & DANCE - Jasmine Morris
Page 7	Part III PIONEERS - David John Roche
Page 8	PART IV EXPERIMENTS - Ayanna Witter Johnson
Page 9	PART V LIFE EPISODES - Edmund Finnis
Page 10	PART VI CODA - Bushra El-Turk
Page 11	BBN Digital
Page 12	BBN Education
Page 13	BBN Project Partners
Page 14	Timings and Subsidies

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# BBN Concerts

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The Solem Quartet offers an ambitious six-part series of concerts, **Beethoven Bartók Now**, bringing together the late quartets of Beethoven and the quartets of Bartók, uniquely reimagined with music from composers of today.

Each of the six programmes below is presented as an hour-long, playlist-form performance. Individual movements from the listed works are woven together, interspersing old with new music, creating a musical story driven by the theme behind each programme. Any individual part can be presented alone, or in combination with other parts over a flexible period.

To create a full evening concert, the Solem Quartet can offer a short first half. This will take the form of Unpacking BBN Live; a sort of living programme note. Unpacking BBN Live features short performance extracts, the Quartet's insights into preparing the music and key moments within it, connections between the works performed, as well as an informal Q&A with the audience.

You can see a filmed version of Unpacking BBN [here](#).





# PART I NIGHT MUSIC

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Aaron Parker  
*tuóretu*

Bartók  
*Quartet no. 5*

Beethoven  
*Quartet no. 13*  
*op. 130 (revised ending)*

Lonely melodies supported by eerie dissonances punctuated with sounds of the nature characterise Bartók's 'night music' style, while Beethoven's op. 130 contains an extraordinary palette of dark and light. Aaron Parker has written a spell-binding new work featuring references to Bartók's 'night music' and the depth of harmonic expression found so richly in Beethoven's op. 130, but with an added experimental electronic edge. In this hour-long playlist-form programme, the Solem Quartet take audiences on a journey through the sounds and atmospheres of the night, uniting musical worlds old and new.

[Unpacking BBN: Night Music in Bartók's 5<sup>th</sup> Quartet](#)

[Aaron Parker interview](#)

[BBN: Night Music Audience reaction](#)

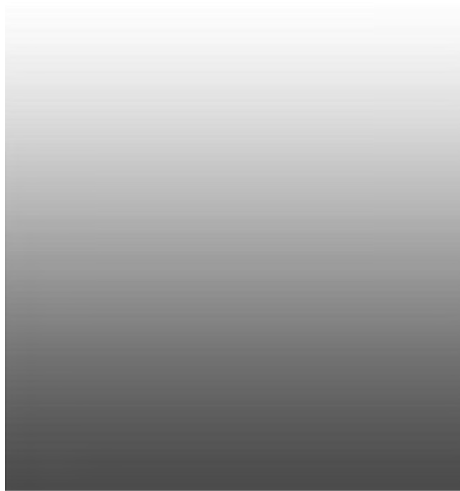
## PART II SONG & DANCE

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Jasmine Morris  
*Hitogata*

Bartók  
*Quartet no. 4*

Beethoven  
*Quartet no. 12, op. 127*



In a one-hour playlist-form programme, the Solem Quartet tell a story of song and dance through the music of Beethoven, Bartók and Jasmine Morris – a winner of the Solem Quartet’s 2021 Call for Scores competition. Morris’s new piece *Hitogata* for string quartet and electronics ‘explores the twisted and almost nightmarish movements and contortions of Butoh dance’, a Japanese dance form. Using this exciting work as a springboard, the Solem Quartet produce a musical journey juxtaposing old and new music, and in doing so showcase fundamental aspects of the human experience: song and dance.

Key to the Quartet’s identity is the performative aspect of concerts, and cross-arts collaboration. This programme can be expanded to see the Solem Quartet work with:

- a String Ensemble to create unique arrangements of this established quartet repertoire, and enhance the musical journey with performance and staging craft.
- Dancer(s) who will devise and perform their own movement to the existing works, interacting with and reacting to the musical narrative.

# PART III PIONEERS

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David John Roche  
*commission*

Bartók  
*Quartet no. 1*

Beethoven  
*Quartet no. 14 op. 131*

In the years directly preceding the completion of the First Quartet, Bartók had experienced huge upheaval in his personal life and had embarked on his lifelong dedication to the collection of folk music. Beethoven's op. 131 – the composer's favourite of the 'late quartets' - is a truly pioneering and exploratory 7-movement work. David John Roche, a winner of the BBN: Call for Scores competition, has created a piece which echoes to the energy and shock of these innovative works: he says "I want listeners to feel like they've had a wild, blistering experience with bold, exciting, relentlessly powerful music!" By presenting all these works together in an hour-long playlist-form programme, the Solem Quartet gives the music of Beethoven and Bartók a truly contemporary context, highlighting their power to astonish and excite in equal measure.

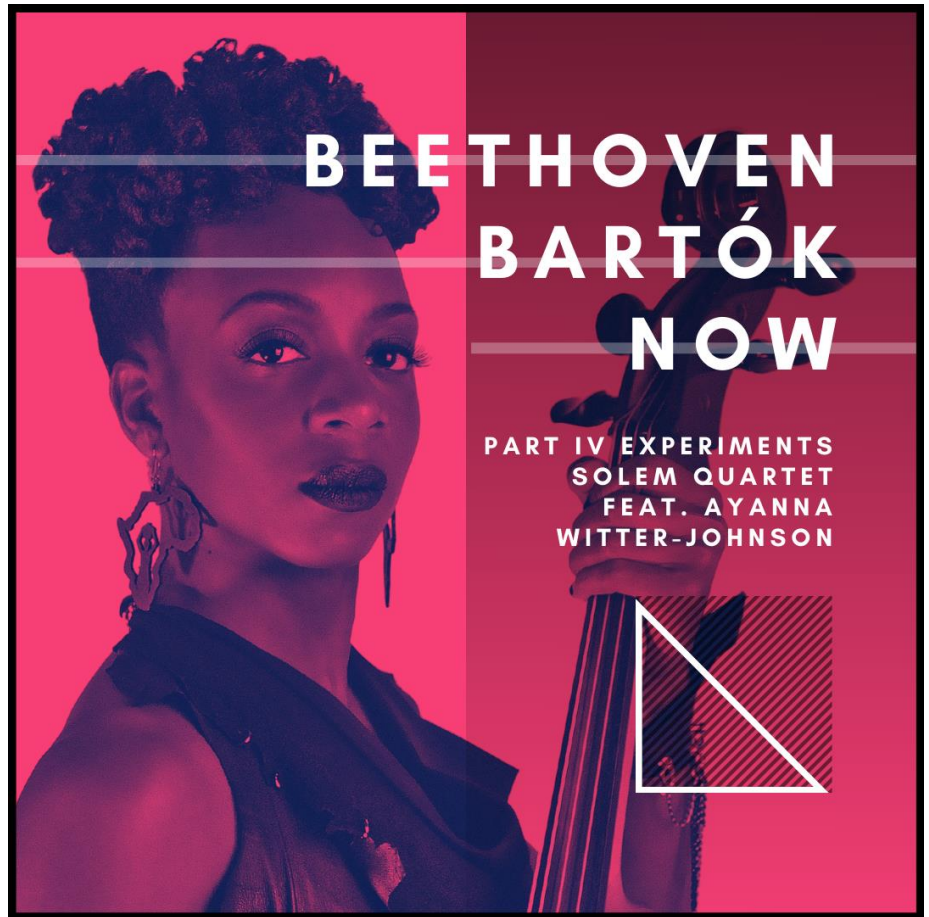
# PART IV EXPERIMENTS

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Ayanna Witter-Johnson  
*commission*

Bartók  
*Quartet no. 3*

Beethoven  
*Grosse Fugue op. 133*



This hour-long programme sees the Solem Quartet perform with composer-performer Ayanna Witter-Johnson – one of the foremost experimental voices of our time. In the op. 133 Grosse Fugue, Beethoven pushed the restraints of the fugal form to the limit, creating ‘an absolutely contemporary piece of music that will be contemporary forever’ according to Stravinsky. Paired with this experiment in form is Bartók’s most compact quartet, where the composer found his true voice channelling and manipulating the Eastern-European folk music he so loved.



# PART V LIFE EPISODES

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Edmund Finnis  
*commission*

Beethoven  
*Quartet no. 15 op. 132*

Bartók  
*Quartet no. 2*

The third movement of Beethoven's op. 132 was written while convalescing at Baden after a serious illness in 1824-25. He wrote the slow movement entitled "Heiliger Dankgesang eines Genesenen an die Gottheit, in der lydischen Tonart" as a hymn of thanks to God for his recovery, praising his reawakened life. Bartók's brooding 2nd Quartet is written in three parts which his friend and colleague Zoltán Kodály described as "life episodes". This one-hour concert will be episodic too; moments of profundity and sorrow contrast with lightness and hope – a story spun by juxtaposing the music of Beethoven and Bartók with a commission from Edmund Finnis whose music has been described as "magical" (The Times), "iridescent, compelling" (The Guardian) and "ethereally beautiful" (Herald Scotland).

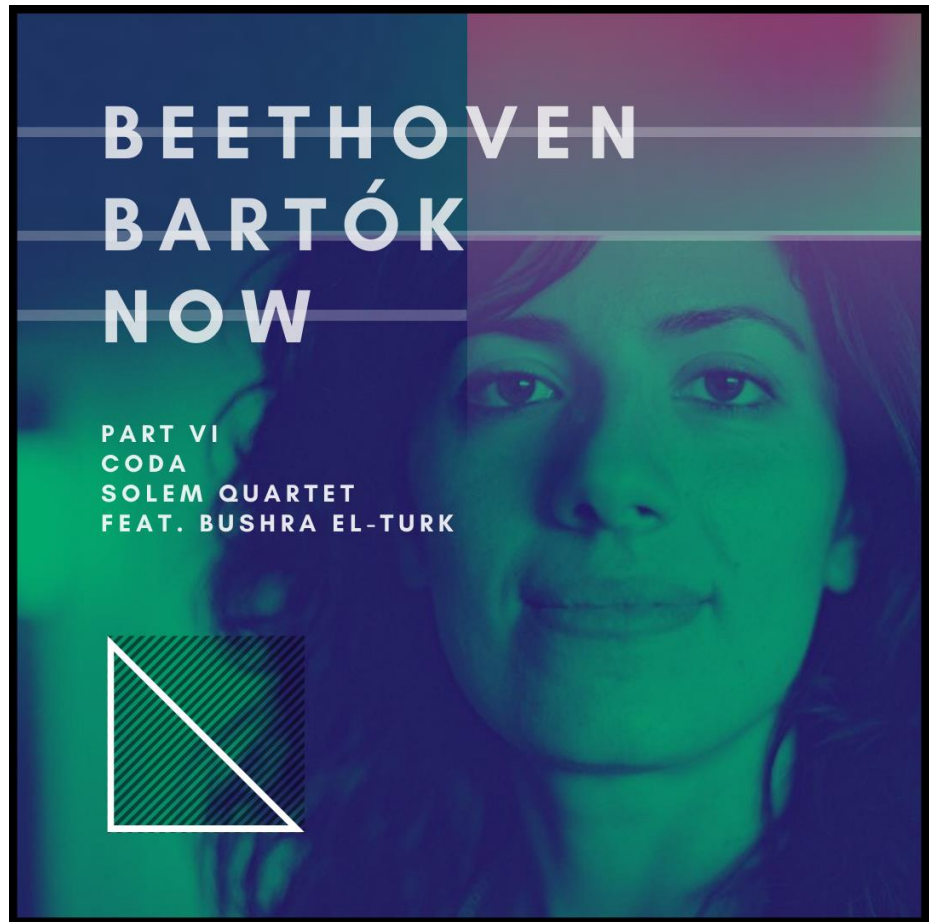
# PART VI CODA

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Bushra El-Turk  
*commission*

Bartók  
*Quartet no. 6*

Beethoven  
*Quartet no. 16 op. 135*



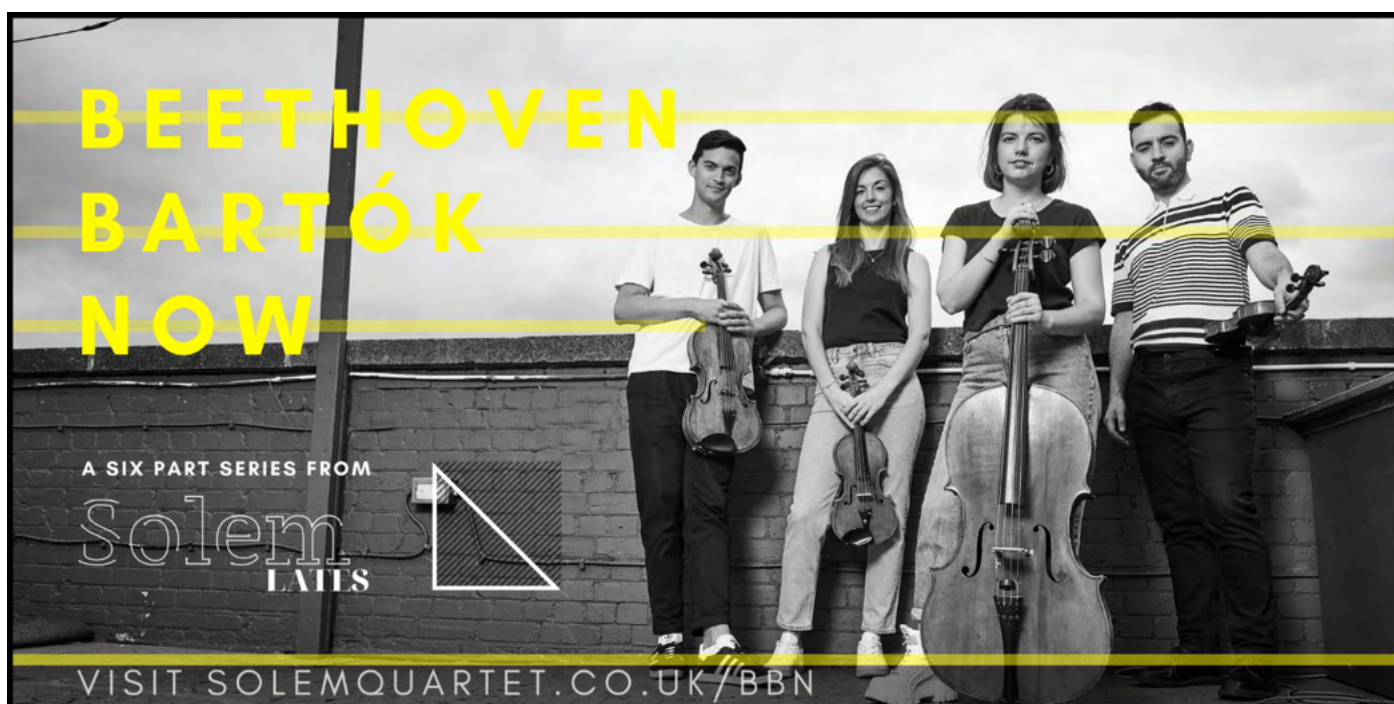
Bartók sixth and final quartet was written in 1939, at a time when the composer was watching Europe collapse with the unfolding catastrophe of World War II. Each movement begins with a theme marked “Mesto” (sad) and this theme’s first utterance notably ends with three notes directly quoted from Beethoven’s final quartet, op. 135, under which Beethoven wrote “Muss es sein?” (Must it be?). Yet despite this sadness, within both works are moments of profound hope. Bushra El-Turk’s music is often defined by the integration of musics and musicians from different cultural traditions and in this one-hour playlist-form programme, the Solem Quartet expand to a quintet, with the addition of a Kamancheh or Qaychak player, proving the ever-evolving nature of the string quartet, and the power of music to unite.

# BBN Digital

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Running concurrently with each of the six performances, the Solem Quartet produce two strands of digital output: *Writing for Quartet* and *Unpacking BBN*.

1. ***Writing for Quartet*** Composers have been robbed in the last year of their principal resource: access to musicians to perform and workshop their music. In these free online video meetings, by performing excerpts of submitted works from a wide range of composers, the Solem Quartet:
  - provide practical advice to help with writing for string quartet
  - explore string techniques and new sounds
  - nurture a network of supportive composers
2. ***Unpacking BBN*** In these videos the Solem Quartet delve into the repertoire of each concert, bringing the music to life by exploring thematic links, giving personal insights, and explaining musical ideas from the performers' perspective.



# BBN Education

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The Solem Quartet is experienced at delivering workshops and working with music makers in all educational settings, from non-musician creators to post-graduate composers.

*Writing for Quartet* and *Unpacking BBN* (set out above) can be delivered in real life and adjusted to suit the particular setting; we also offer *Exploring Sound* workshops to young and non-musician creators, as well as short performance excerpts as an introduction to live performance.

We take the need to reach children from a range of backgrounds very seriously; our priority is to take our workshops to schools where access to music education and other arts is otherwise most lacking. The below displays BBN possibilities in a variety of educational settings.

## Primary school visit

- *Exploring Sound*, introduction to making sounds and expressing feelings via music
- *Unpacking BBN*, delivered as an introduction to one of our composers, via a thematic lens, illustrated with musical signposts.

## Secondary school/ college visit

- *Unpacking BBN*, delivered as an introduction to the music of Beethoven, Bartók, and contemporary music, adjusted to music classes at all levels.
- *Writing for Quartet*, as appropriate for GCSE & A-level classes
- *Writing for Quartet*, composition workshop for lower years (non-music specialist)
- Solem Quartet BBN recital (outside school hours)

## University visit

- Solem Quartet BBN recital
- Public composers' forum session: *Writing for Quartet* incorporated into performing student compositions (+ BBN Composer present at additional cost)
- *Unpacking BBN* as live analysis class (for example, "Bartók's use of structure")
- Chamber group coachings

— **BEETHOVEN** —

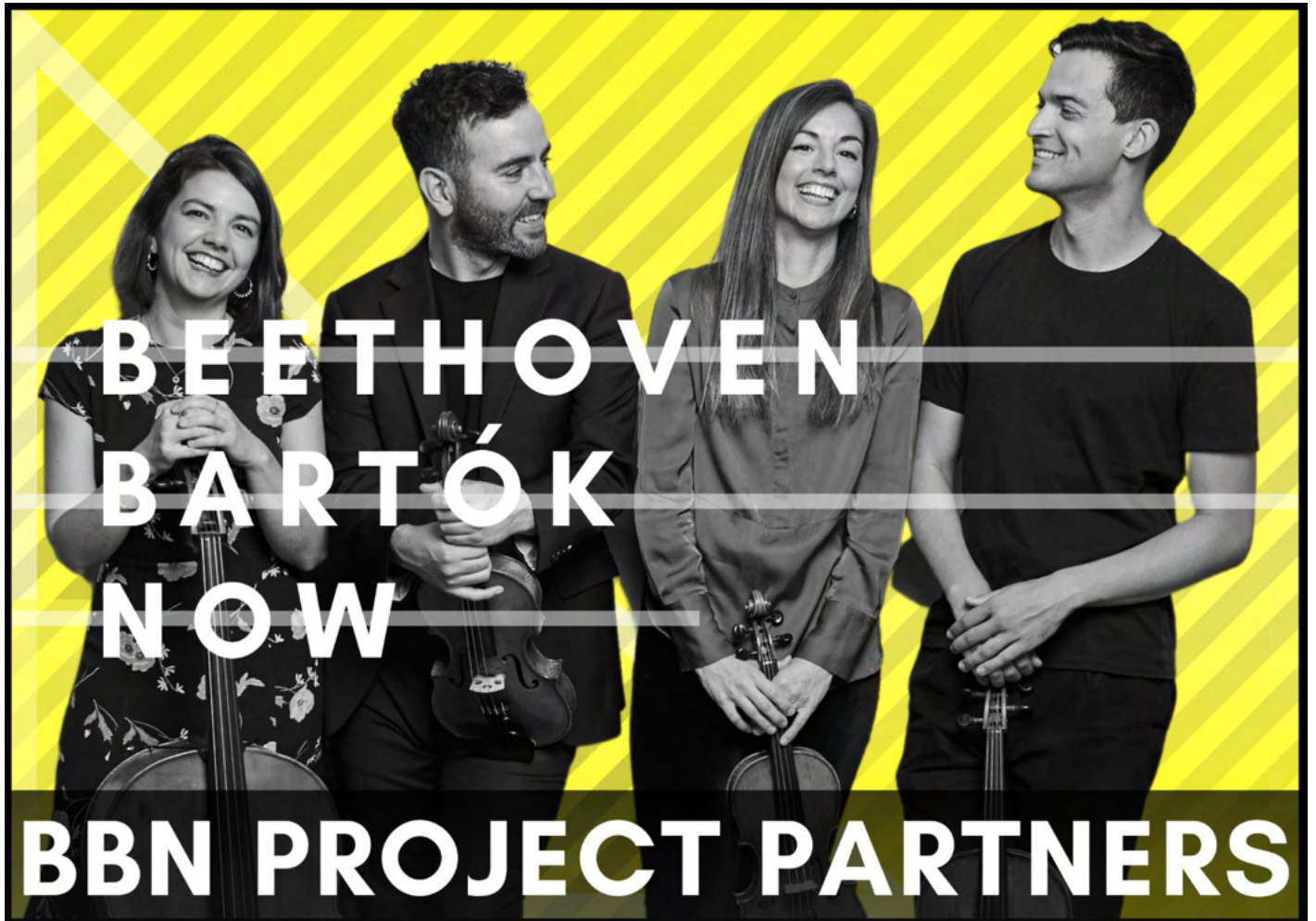
— **BARTÓK** —

— **NOW** —



# BBN Project Partners

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Tashmina Artists, the Solem Quartet's management agency, is still keen to hear from potential partner presenters, so that we can reach even more audience members, composers, students and other participants. Why not work with us, as a BBN Project Partner, and join those who have already got involved?

The Solem Quartet are passionate about reaching new audiences through their series, particularly those who wouldn't normally access live classical music. They also feel a deep commitment to working with young composers, guiding them from a player's perspective and perhaps inspiring the next set of late Beethoven or Bartok quartets. We are therefore particularly keen to hear from presenters interested in additionally hosting and promoting the Digital and/or Education strands too. BBN Project Partners can select any or all of the following BBN Strands:

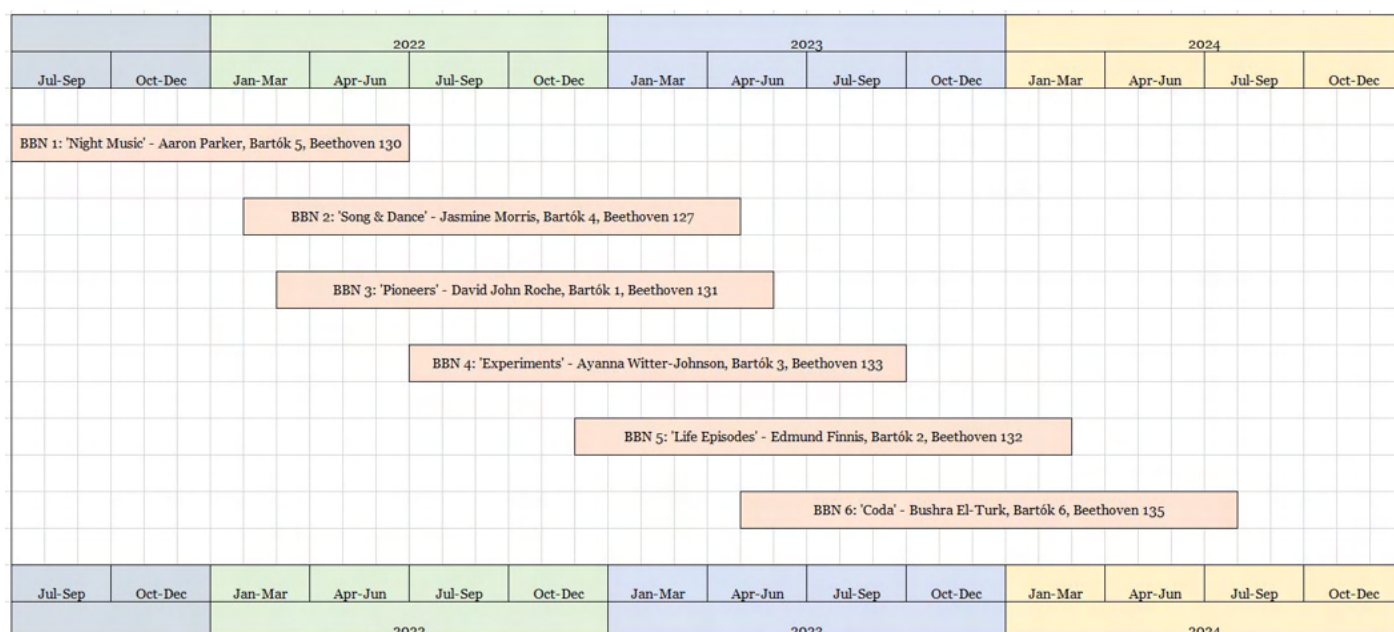
**BBN Concerts** to promote one concert, several concerts or the entire series

**BBN Digital** 'Writing for Quartet' or 'BBN Unwrapped' or both

**BBN Education** University visit, Secondary school/college visit or Primary school visit

**Please also see the timeline and notes on the next page.**

# BBN Timings and Planning



The above chart shows the key period for each Part of the BBN Concerts Strand and the related digital material. As the project continues over time, the Solem Quartet will be able to present more than one programme in the same period, subject to the rest of their schedule. We can discuss this in detail with you, depending on where your interest lies.

The start date, or earliest date for a performance, for any Part may have a little flexibility too, but again it would need discussion.

If you would like to co-commission either the new work by Edmund Finnis or by Bushra El-Turk (please note that a particular festival already has first refusal for the latter) please contact Sally to discuss this in detail; we could then agree the date for you to promote a world premiere performance by the Solem Quartet. In this scenario you would also have 'first use' of the related digital content.

## BBN Subsidies for Partners

The Solem Quartet is delighted to be able to offer the following subsidies to Project Partners, but please see limits below:

	Rate	Subsidy	Actual cost to institution
State school	£500 ½ day	<b>75%</b>	£125 for half a day
Private school	£500 ½ day	<b>25%</b>	£375 for half a day
University/Conservatoire	240/hr	<b>50%</b>	£120/hr

Subsidy can be offered to the first 5 schools to make a firm arrangement to take place in any academic year. Similarly for the first five Universities or Conservatoires in a particular year.

Please contact Sally Richardson, Tashmina Artists, 020 7976 5041 or by [email](#)