

# Leonard Salzedo

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String Quartets 1, 5 and 10

ARCHAEUS QUARTET





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- 1 **String Quartet no. 1**  
(In One Movement) Opus 1 (1942) pub. Lopés edition **13:03**
- 2 **String Quartet no. 5**  
Opus 32 No. 1 (1950-52 second rev. 1995) pub. Lopés edition  
1st mvt: Andante – Presto **9:03**
- 3 2nd mvt: Lentissimo – Più mosso – Allegretto – Allegro vivo **14:43**
- 4 **String Quartet no. 10**  
Opus 140 (1997) pub. Lopés edition  
Presto – Andante lento – Allegro moderato –  
Larghetto – Allegro con spirito **20:15**

**Total playing time: 57:16**

*Panorama of the South Bank  
of the River Thames, London  
in the early 1950s, featuring the  
new Royal Festival Hall and the  
Skylon, both erected for the  
Festival of Britain in 1951*

In an article entitled 'The Younger Generation', published in the March 1960 issue of *The Musical Times*, Leonard Salzedo singled out the string quartet as one of the forms which most interested him. This release presents his first and last contributions to the genre, together with a quartet he considered to be among his best works.

Leonard López Salzedo was born in London on 24 September 1921. He was descended from Sephardic Jews driven from Spain by an anti-Semitic purge in the late 15th century. At the age of six he began learning to play the violin and six years later he started to compose. From 1940 to 1944 he studied at the Royal College of Music, where his principal teachers were Isolde Menges for violin and Herbert Howells for composition (he had previously taken lessons in composition with William Lloyd Webber). He also studied orchestration with Gordon Jacob, conducting with George Dyson and chamber music with Ivor James. In 1941 he gained the Associate of the Royal College of Music diploma for violin playing and additional harmony.

While still at college he began to produce his first acknowledged pieces, including two string quartets. Marie Rambert, founder of the Ballet Rambert Company, who was at the premiere of his String Quartet no.2, recognised a composer with a potential flair for ballet music and commissioned Salzedo to write for the Ballet Rambert. The resulting ballet score, *The Fugitive* (1944) turned out to be the first of seventeen examples he wrote for the medium. Premiered in November 1944, *The Fugitive* remained in the repertoire of the Ballet Rambert for six years, during which period it was performed more than 400 times.



Leonard Salzedo as a student while  
at the Royal College of Music

In 1945 Salzedo married the dancer Pat Clover. They were both strongly committed to the Ballets Nègres, an innovative and trailblazing mainly concert dance group. The company was founded in London in 1946; in that year Salzedo was their Music Director and wrote four dance scores for them: *De Prophet*, *They Came*, *Market Day* and *Aggrey*. Salzedo also strengthened his links with the Ballet Rambert and in 1946 he became their conductor and completed a re-orchestration of Adam's *Giselle* for their small-scale orchestral forces. The same year, Andrée Howard, choreographer of *The Fugitive*, asked Salzedo to write a work for her. The resulting score, *Mardi Gras*, was written for Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet.

From 1947 to 1950 he was a member of the London Philharmonic Orchestra. This was at the same time as another budding composer, Malcolm Arnold was first trumpet. Salzedo played in the premiere of Arnold's First Symphony as well as the first performance of Alan Bush's Nottingham Symphony (no 2) in 1949. From 1950 to 1966 he was a member of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and participated in several legendary Beecham recordings, including Haydn's *London* symphonies. Salzedo, who became the conductor's assistant, helped Beecham with his re-orchestration of Grétry and in return Beecham asked the young composer if there were any pieces of his that he might like to be performed. Salzedo immediately suggested his recently completed first symphony (1952) and consequently Beecham performed the work with the RPO in the Royal Festival Hall in 1956. On this occasion the composer was in the audience rather than on the concert platform.

Another work by Salzedo which Beecham performed was the concert suite from the ballet *The Witch Boy* (1955). This, the most successful of

all Salzedo's ballet scores, was premiered by the Ballet der Lage Landen in Amsterdam in May 1956 and gained more than 1,000 performances in thirty different countries. It was among the most successful pieces the composer ever wrote; the other two consist of the dramatic score for the Hammer film, *The Revenge of Frankenstein* (1958) and the opening bars of the Fanfare from the Divertimento for three trumpets and three trombones (1959) which for many years was used to introduce BBC broadcasts for the Open University.

In 1966 Salzedo gave up orchestral playing and became Music Director of the Ballet Rambert, a post he held until 1972 when he was invited to become Principal Conductor of the Scottish Theatre Ballet. He conducted the Scottish Theatre Ballet until 1974. His last position of responsibility in this field came in 1982 when he took on the role of Music Director of the London City Ballet, a post he relinquished in 1986.

After 1986, he decided to devote all his time to composition and in the next decade he produced a string of important compositions, including the *Requiem Sine Voxibus* ('Requiem without Voices') for large orchestra (1989), which he regarded as one of his finest achievements. Other notable scores from this late period are the *Stabat Mater* for soprano, alto, chorus and orchestra (1991), the Violin Concerto (1992), the Piano Concerto, written for Leslie Howard (1994), and a cello sonata (1997).

Due to increasing ill health, Salzedo gave up composing in 1997. He died at his home in Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire on 6 May 2000. His rich and diverse musical legacy benefits immensely from an insider's



knowledge of the orchestra and its various instruments. The 17 ballet scores form the backbone of his catalogue, while his 10 string quartets encompass his entire creative output. He also wrote many songs, works for brass, chamber music and eighteen film scores, seven of them for the Hammer film company. His own favourite genres were brass ensemble and percussion. Apart from the concerto of 1968, he demonstrated his love of percussion in many works, including *Diseños*, for six percussion (1964), a Canzona for clarinets and percussion (1986), a Sonatina for tuned gongs (four players) and piano (1991) and *Four Antiphons* for chorus, tuned gongs and piano (1992). It is no accident that he never completed a full-scale opera: he felt it was not his medium and much preferred writing instrumental music.

**String Quartet no.1** (1942), Op.1, dates from Salzedo's student years at the Royal College of Music. It won the prestigious Cobbett Prize for composition in 1942 and, as result, was performed six times by students competing for the performance element of the Prize. The group which won for playing the score consisted of Winifred Roberts, Neville Marriner, Maurice Meek and Pamela Hind. It was arranged that the winning group should play Salzedo's quartet again at a student concert but, on the day of the performance, Maurice Meek, the violist, was ill and could not perform. In the event the composer himself had to go on and play the viola part at sight, without rehearsal.

Salzedo decided that this string quartet would be his first acknowledged score. At the time he wrote it there already existed a few earlier works, including a string quintet, a symphony and a movement for string



quartet, but he considered that none of these pieces, which are now lost, were worthy of being assigned an opus number and relegated them to the status of juvenilia.

String Quartet no.1 is cast in a single, continuous movement, marked *Andante con moto*. Salzedo had recently played in a performance of J. S. Bach's *St John Passion* and the changing harmonies of the opening chorus of that masterwork gave the young composer an idea for the beginning of his own piece. The ideas contained in the preludial opening six bars, together with the ensuing repeated, moto perpetuo-like semiquaver figure in the first violin provide the material upon which most of the rest of the work is based. A central episode, based on a recurring pizzicato cello figure builds to a climax. In its aftermath, a hushed tremolando idea on second violin ushers in a new section which gradually picks up considerable speed. A gentle and artless coda reminds us of the initial, protean ideas that generated the rest of the score.

This early piece already contains several fingerprints of Salzedo's musical style. The tendency to construct a whole composition from a handful of phrases and ideas presented at the outset is established here and the composer's imaginative approach to rhythm and melodic fecundity is also present. He writes fluently and idiomatically for all four players and there is a strong sense that this music could not have been expressed so successfully using any other combination of musical forces. All these attributes serve notice of his mastery of the medium.

**String Quartet no.5**, Op.32, no.1 (1950-52, rev. 1995) was premiered by the Pro Musica Quartet at a Macnaghten concert in the Arts Council



The Savage Club resides within the National Liberal Club, London, in the bottom left of this photograph.

Drawing Room, Westminster on 19 February 1960. By this time Salzedo had established himself as an extremely versatile creative artist, offering an original perspective on traditional formats. This is especially apparent in the String Quartet no.5, one of the composer's most wide-ranging and deeply personal utterances.

The score is divided into two parts. The opening *Andante* is restless and mercurial and, characteristically, the opening bars contain the seeds of much that is to follow. An insistent rhythmic, repeated-note figure also assumes importance. There are several eloquent solo passages before the music comes to a radiant ending. The second part begins *Lentissimo*, with a veiled and haunting chordal introduction. As the music develops, rhythmic elements begin to dominate in a gripping sequence of dances, at first slow and intimate and then vigorous and life-affirming. Several passages sound as if the composer is drawing upon his Sephardic heritage. At the central point of the movement, the opening material of the quartet is recalled and integrated into the dance rhythms. There is a liberating, improvisatory quality to this music, which becomes more emotionally uplifting as it progresses. After a number of briskly affirmative parting gestures, the quartet is rounded off by a decisive flourish.

In this score Salzedo takes full advantage of his wide experience as a string player. Hence, he includes harmonics, tremolandos, glissandos, pizzicatos, trills and sections directed to be performed near the bridge of the instrument. So intrinsic to the musical argument are these effects that there is no suspicion of virtuosity for its own sake, but rather a keen sense that the composer is expanding his creative range by drawing upon all the technical resources of his instrumental forces. The writing seems

to gain in intensity and expressive freedom as the work unfolds. Both parts follow their own entirely cogently argued path rather than slavishly adhering to time-honoured forms. Salzedo believed this score to be one of his finest works. Worthy of a permanent place in the repertoire, it occupies an exalted position in the composer's chamber music.

On 23 October 1994 in Blackheath Concert Hall, the Archaeus Quartet premiered Leonard Salzedo's String Quartet no. 7 *Cuatro voces Ladinos* (1969). The composer was so pleased with their interpretation that he wrote them three further quartets. Consequently the Archaeus Quartet gave the concert debut of String Quartet no.8 in June 1995 in the Wigmore Hall and the first performance of String Quartet no.9 in December 1996 in the Purcell Room. In this recording, they present the premiere of the final piece Salzedo wrote for them, String Quartet no.10, Op.140 (1997). Like the composer's first quartet, it unfurls in one unbroken span divided into several clearly defined sections. The opening *Presto* is one of Salzedo's most spirited *perpetuum mobile*s. Its seemingly inexorable progress is eventually halted by intermittent interpolations of slow, sustained material. These interruptions become increasingly frequent and more prolonged until we arrive at the quartet's 'slow movement', an introspective *Andante lento* that incorporates an anguished and expressive theme for cello under a torrent of teeming demisemiquavers unleashed by the other instruments. Textures thin out before an audaciously extended, scherzo-like *Allegro moderato* section, played entirely pizzicato. This virtuosic segment owes something to the composer's love of percussion, especially in the sonorous chordal episodes. Bowing is resumed in a brief *Larghetto* bridging passage. In

the final *Allegro con spirito* the composer's command of canonic writing and counterpoint comes to the fore. The bravura closing bars are a fittingly triumphant and celebratory conclusion to one of the most individual and searching string quartet cycles in twentieth-century British music.

Paul Conway, 2018

Leonard Salzedo was a much loved member of the Savage Club, where Mike Purton (owner of MPR and Producer of this recording) is currently a member and who remembers Brother Savage Leonard with great affection, as well as having played French Horn under his baton for Scottish Theatre Ballet in the early 70s. The Savage Club was founded in 1857 and remains one of the leading Bohemian Gentleman's Clubs in London. Its membership is drawn from distinguished practitioners in Music, Art, Drama, Literature, the Law and Science and over the years has included members such as King George VI, Sir Edward Elgar, Sergei Rachmaninov, Captain Scott, Charlie Chaplin, Sir Henry Wood, Sir Alexander Fleming and a host of others. Mike would like to thank the Savage Club for agreeing to our use of its colours, its badge and a House Dinner menu card. He and the Archæus Quartet would also like to thank Caroline Salzedo (Leonard's daughter) and Patricia Braun for their generous support towards this project.

**The Leonard Salzedo Society** promotes performances and recordings of Leonard Salzedo's work. For more information or to join the Society please email [calsalzedo@gmail.com](mailto:calsalzedo@gmail.com) or [leonardsalzedo@yahoo.com](mailto:leonardsalzedo@yahoo.com)







## ARCHAEUS QUARTET

Ann Hooley, Rosemary Lock – violins  
Elizabeth Turnbull – viola  
Martin Bradshaw – cello

The Archaeus Quartet is a well-established group, formed in 1990, which has enjoyed a busy schedule from its very first season, performing in music clubs and arts centres throughout the UK and at the Wigmore Hall and Purcell Room in London. The group has toured in Europe and played at festivals including Warwick, Greenwich, King's Lynn, Wooburn and at the ICA in London.

As well as performing from an extensive traditional concert repertoire, the Archaeus has a strong commitment to the performance of rarely heard but high quality works of the 20th Century. Premieres include Ruth Crawford Seeger's Piano Quintet, Antonin Tucapsky' String Quartet, the London premiere of Leonard Salzedo's 7th Quartet, and world premieres of his 8th and 9th Quartets.

*"After I had heard my 7th String Quartet played by the Archaeus Quartet on October 30th last year I was so pleased with their performance that I decided to write a new quartet especially for them. I started it on October 31st and completed it exactly five weeks later, on December 5th."*  
Leonard Salzedo

This work received its premiere at the Wigmore Hall in June 1995 when the Archaeus made its highly successful London debut. Their fruitful friendship and collaboration with Salzedo resulted in two further Quartets and the Sonata for Violin and Viola.

CD recordings include the Quartet by Minna Keal; Quartets by York Bowen with the Quintet for bass clarinet with Timothy Lines; Quartets by Ethel Smyth, Amy Beach and Susan Spain-Dunk; Leonard Salzedo; and Quartets by Cyril Scott.

All five CDs have been received with critical acclaim. The recording of Salzedo's Quartets and the Sonata for Violin and Viola (performed by its dedicatees Ann Hooley and Elizabeth Turnbull) and released on Dutton Epoch (the recording produced by Mike Purton with Tony Faulkner as Recording Engineer), was selected as Editor's Choice in the Gramophone Magazine. The Archaeus plan to complete recording the Quartets of Leonard Salzedo with MPR.

The aspiration to play the complete Beethoven Quartets has always been important to the Archaeus. Having performed this cycle in Oxford, Cumbria and London in the late 90s the group is now giving further cycles in Eastbourne, Salehurst and Brighton.

For many years the Archaeus had a strong association with Trinity College of Music in London where the members regularly coached chamber music. The group has also been invited to coach and perform

at established summer schools such as Beauchamp House, and the Dartington International Summer School. There, in 1995, the Quartet performed Schubert's *Rondo* with Ruggiero Ricci. The Archaeus also ran its own Chamber Music Course in the Channel Islands.

In its early days the Quartet received regular coaching from William Pleeth and worked closely with Eli Goren and Sandor Devich.

The Quartet's repertoire is also extended to include quintets and sextets. The Archaeus has had the privilege of collaborating with many esteemed artists including Thea King, Timothy Lines, Ruggiero Ricci, Philip Fowke and several fellow cellists and viola players. In April 2013 the Archaeus gave the UK premiere of Csaba Erdelyi's exciting arrangement for string sextet of Mozart's "Sinfonia Concertante" K364.

[www.archaeusquartet.co.uk](http://www.archaeusquartet.co.uk)



Artists: The Archaeus Quartet  
Venue: St. George's Church, Benenden, Kent  
Dates: 8/9/10 August 2017  
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Recording Engineer: Tony Faulkner  
Editing: Mike Purton  
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