

MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL CHAMBER MUSIC COMPETITION



1-8 JULY
Melbourne Recital Centre
Australian National Academy of Music





Wilma Smith
Violinist / Artistic Director / Concertmaster /
World's Best Parallel Parker / Creative Victorian

Wilma Smith is Artistic Director of the prestigious Melbourne International Chamber Music Competition.

Creative Victoria proudly supports the competition and creative Victorians, see how at creative.vic.gov.au



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FOR YOUR CONCERT ENJOYMENT

As all concerts at the 2018 Competition will be radio broadcast, and the Grand Finals will be streamed live online, we ask for your cooperation in creating as quiet an environment as possible. This will also allow artists to provide their best possible performance.

Before every concert:

- Turn off mobile phones, alarm watches and paging devices.
- If you need to cough, please use a handkerchief or tissue to reduce the sound.
- Please be in your seat on time. Latecomers will not be admitted during performances unless there is a suitable break.

Though every effort will be made to present works in the order found in this program book, changes may occasionally be necessary. Wherever possible, these will be announced from stage before a concert.

Strictly no photography or recording during concerts.

CONNECT WITH US

The 2018 Competition is live and interactive. Share your photos and experiences with friends and other patrons online, and access exclusive photos and videos from the Competition.

-  Follow the Melbourne International Chamber Music Competition on Facebook
-  Join the conversation on Twitter using the hashtag #MICMC2018
-  Follow us on Instagram @MICMCompetition

WELCOME



MARTIN FOLEY
Minister for Creative Industries

Welcome to the 8th Melbourne International

Chamber Music Competition and a feast of fine music performed by the best young chamber musicians from around the world.

This year's competition will see 16 ensembles and musicians from eight countries in a celebration of virtuosity, spirited competition and exceptional talent—embraced by enthusiastic audiences here in Melbourne and, through 3MBS and ABC broadcasts, heard across Australia and around the world.

The Andrews Labor Government is a proud supporter of this competition which includes free public performances. International events like this contribute to Melbourne's status as one of the world's great music cities.

We're proud to join three of Australia's leading music organisations – Musica Viva, Australian National Academy of Music and Melbourne Recital Centre—in presenting this outstanding music making event and supporting the next generation of talent.

Victoria contributes to, and is shaped by, the wider global community. Our *Creative State* strategy is all about creativity, backing our talent, supporting career pathways and providing opportunities for our artists and audiences to engage with the best in the world.

I congratulate the ensembles selected for this competition stage and wish them every success.



SALLY CAPP
Lord Mayor of Melbourne

I am delighted to welcome the world's finest chamber

musicians to Melbourne to compete in the Melbourne International Chamber Music Competition. The competition is a celebration about both music and Melbourne and it features some of the world's finest young piano trios and string quartets.

The competition will be filled with glorious music, old and new, as sixteen ensembles from eight different countries strive to perform at their peak before a jury of international experts.

I wish all competitors the best of luck and thank you for bringing your beautiful music to Melbourne.



WILMA SMITH
Artistic Director MICMC

What a treat it is to welcome sixteen of the world's

finest chamber groups to Melbourne for an intensive week of music-making, relationship-building, career development and good fun. International competitions are simultaneously gruelling and bonding experiences and I hope that our competitors will find not only the career boost and professional connections that may have attracted them in the first place, but also lasting friendships with their fellow competitors, Melbourne hosts and amongst their passionate listening public.

While I've enjoyed previous MICMCs as an audience member and revelled in the inevitably intense discussion and commentary with opinionated colleagues, this time it has been my great privilege to be actively involved in the shaping of the competition and I trust we at Musica Viva, along with our partner friends at Australian National Academy of Music and Melbourne Recital Centre, can bring you an event that lives up to its reputation as a dazzling jewel in the crown of Melbourne's cultural life.

To those for whom MICMC is an unmissable pilgrimage, including our invaluable team of hard-working volunteers and our loyal returning subscribers and supporters, I think you'll agree with me that the quality of our competing groups this year is exceptionally high and I hope you'll enjoy the slight variations to this year's competition format. For those of you who are new to MICMC, thank you for your support for chamber music and for your faith in the new MICMC team - we welcome you with open arms! I know we are all in for an aural feast and that after this week there will be many new MICMC converts.

Thank you all for coming along to show these amazing young artists that what they've spent many of their young years honing and cultivating is vitally important and meaningful, in fact, more and more so. I wish all the competitors a fulfilling competition and a happy time in Melbourne.



MARY JO CAPPS
CEO Musica Viva

It might appear difficult to reconcile the principles of

fine music and competition. However, particularly in chamber music, competitions provide an essential avenue for "discovery" of a group by presenters, agents and audiences. Competing gives performers a focus for all that hard work and provides them with well-considered feedback from some of the greatest international artists and agents who make up the jury. These young musicians can benchmark themselves and will forge new international musical friendships and creative collaborations right here in the heart of Melbourne. Furthermore, these competitions stimulate conversation and interest in chamber music, attracting new audiences.

Whether one emerges the winner or not, all the elements of competing contribute enormously to a musician's professional development.

Musica Viva is deeply committed to developing chamber music and its performers across all our programs and we are honoured to take on the leadership role, in partnership with the Australian National Academy of Music (ANAM) and Melbourne Recital Centre (MRC), with the outstanding support of Creative Victoria, in presenting the 2018 Melbourne International Chamber Music Competition.

Thank you for giving these young performers the greatest gift of all – an enthusiastic audience. It all makes the future of chamber music look very bright indeed!



NICK BAILEY
General Manager ANAM

The Australian National Academy of Music (ANAM)

is delighted to join with Musica Viva and the Melbourne Recital Centre as a MICMC presenting partner, and as host to the preliminary rounds of this and future years' competitions.

Collecting together ensembles from around the globe in the engine room of the country's future chamber music activity—and in the home of the Competition's future Australian competitors—enables ANAM's musicians to experience an international range of musical personalities and approaches at first hand. This facilitates a rich learning experience for our musicians, whereby the Competition's competitors—and jury members—have the opportunity to leave a significant trace in the sand of Australia's future musical life.

We hope also that in welcoming these young professionals to ANAM—most likely a similar institution to those in which many of them will have trained and formed as ensembles—provides our visitors with a familiar environment in which to commence their Melbourne competition odyssey.

We wish all our visitors a rich and rewarding Melbourne experience and look forward to their return, whatever the competition outcome.



EUAN MURDOCH
CEO Melbourne Recital Centre

Melbourne Recital Centre is

delighted to have hosted the finals of the Melbourne International Chamber Music Competition since 2011. The Competition is a showcase of the very best of the next generation of chamber ensembles from Australia and around the world, reinforcing Melbourne as a global centre of musical excellence.

Great musicians deserve a great place to perform, and we're proud that Elisabeth Murdoch Hall is the setting for the climax to this inspiring event. It's our pleasure to welcome bold music-makers and passionate audiences to the Centre for the Competition Finals and many other superb chamber music concerts throughout the year. We congratulate Musica Viva Australia for so successfully presenting their inaugural MICMC, and thank ANAM, Creative Victoria and the University of Melbourne for their invaluable contributions to the Competition.

I share your excitement about meeting the musicians whose careers will skyrocket as a result of their participation in this internationally significant competition. On behalf of the Centre, I wish all competitors the best of luck.

SCHEDULE

HEATS

Sunday 1 July to Thursday 5 July

ANAM

South Melbourne Town Hall, 210 Bank Street, South Melbourne

SEMI-FINALS

Friday 6 July

ANAM

MUSIC IN THE CITY

Saturday 7 July

11.30am Queen’s Hall, Parliament House, Spring St East Melbourne

1.30pm Royal Society of Victoria, 8 La Trobe St Melbourne

3.00pm Atrium, Federation Square, Swanston St Melbourne

GRAND FINALS

Sunday 8 July

Elisabeth Murdoch Hall, Melbourne Recital Centre

Corner Southbank Boulevard and Sturt Street, Southbank

HEATS ROUND 1

Each ensemble will perform a work from the 18th and 20th centuries. In addition, groups will play a post-1998 work of their own choice in either Round One or Round Two.

SUNDAY 1 JULY

CONCERT 1 – 10.00AM

MOSA TRIO
HAYDN Piano Trio in E major, Hob. XV:28
SHOSTAKOVICH Piano Trio no 2 in E minor
WAMPER *Portrait of Light*

IDOMENEO QUARTET
HAYDN String Quartet in B minor, op 33 no 1
JANÁČEK String Quartet no 1 ‘Kreutzer Sonata’
ADÈS *The Four Quarters*

CONCERT 2 – 2.00PM

BUKOLIKA PIANO TRIO
HAYDN Piano Trio in C major, Hob. XV:27
M. GORECKI 6 Bagatelles

BAUM QUARTETT
MOZART String Quartet in D minor, K421
SZYMANOWSKI String Quartet no 2

AMATIS PIANO TRIO
HAYDN Piano Trio in C major, Hob. XV:27
SHOSTAKOVICH Piano Trio no 2 in E minor
AZIMI *Fragmented Impulses II*

CONCERT 3 – 7.30PM

QUATUOR AGATE
MOZART String Quartet in C major, K465 ‘Dissonance’
BARTÓK String Quartet no 3
CLOZEL *Volutes*

CLARENDON TRIO
HAYDN Piano Trio in E minor, Hob XV:12
TCHEREPNIN Piano Trio, op 35
STANHOPE *Dolcissimo Uscignolo*

MONDAY 2 JULY

CONCERT 4 – 10.00AM

ELIOT QUARTETT
HAYDN String Quartet in D major, op 71 no 2
BARTÓK String Quartet no 3
ADÈS *The Four Quarters*

TRIO SÔRA
HAYDN Piano Trio in C major, Hob. XV:27
WEINBERG Piano Trio, op 24

CONCERT 5 – 2.00PM

GILDAS QUARTET
HAYDN String Quartet in D minor, op 76 no 2 ‘Fifths’
BRITTEN String Quartet no 3

MERZ TRIO
BEETHOVEN Piano Trio in G major, op 1 no 2
SHOSTAKOVICH Piano Trio no 2 in E minor

THALEIA QUARTET
HAYDN String Quartet in D major, op 71 no 2
JANÁČEK String Quartet no 1 ‘Kreutzer Sonata’
NISHIMURA String Quartet no 5 ‘Shesha’

CONCERT 6 – 7.30PM

TRIO MARVIN
MOZART Piano Trio in B-flat major, K502
VASKS *Episodi e canto perpetuo*

GOLDMUND QUARTET
HAYDN String Quartet in G major, op 54 no 1
SOKOLOVICH *Commedia dell Arte III*
RIHM String Quartet no 4

TUESDAY 3 JULY

CONCERT 7 – 10.00AM

TRIO GAON
BEETHOVEN Piano Trio in E-flat major, op 1 no 1
FRANÇAIX Trio for Violin, Cello and Piano
CORTI *Musica discreta*

CALLISTO QUARTET
HAYDN String Quartet in B-flat major, op 71 no 1
BARTÓK String Quartet no 6

HEATS ROUND 2

Each ensemble will perform a 19th century work as well as the commissioned work for their category.

TUESDAY 3 JULY

CONCERT 1 – 2.00PM

BAUM QUARTETT
HARRISON *Balderdash*
MENDELSSOHN String Quartet in F minor, op 80
LAMPSON *Passacaglia*

CLARENDON TRIO
STANHOPE *Pulses* for Piano Trio
MENDELSSOHN Piano Trio in C minor

QUATUOR AGATE
HARRISON *Balderdash*
DEBUSSY String Quartet in G minor

CONCERT 2 – 7.30PM

AMATIS PIANO TRIO
STANHOPE *Pulses* for Piano Trio
MENDELSSOHN Piano Trio in D minor

IDOMENEO QUARTET
HARRISON *Balderdash*
MENDELSSOHN String Quartet in F minor, op 80

WEDNESDAY 4 JULY

CONCERT 3 – 10.00AM

BUKOLIKA PIANO TRIO
STANHOPE *Pulses* for Piano Trio
DVOŘÁK Piano Trio no 4 in E minor ‘Dumky’
SAARIAHO *Light & Matter*

GILDAS QUARTET
HARRISON *Balderdash*
FRANCES-HOAD *My Day in Hell*
RAVEL String Quartet in F major

CONCERT 4 – 2.00PM

MOSA TRIO
STANHOPE *Pulses* for Piano Trio
MENDELSSOHN Piano Trio in D minor

THALEIA QUARTET
HARRISON *Balderdash*
RAVEL String Quartet in F major

TRIO MARVIN
STANHOPE *Pulses* for Piano Trio
BRAHMS Piano Trio no 3 in C minor, op 101
ENCKE Piano Trio no 2

CONCERT 5 – 7.30PM

ELIOT QUARTETT
HARRISON *Balderdash*
DEBUSSY String Quartet in G minor

TRIO GAON
STANHOPE *Pulses* for Piano Trio
BRAHMS Piano Trio no 1 in B major, op 8

THURSDAY 5 JULY

CONCERT 6 – 10.00AM

CALLISTO QUARTET
HARRISON *Balderdash*
DEBUSSY String Quartet in G minor
COLL *Cantos*

MERZ TRIO
STANHOPE *Pulses* for Piano Trio
SCHUMANN Piano Trio no 3 in G minor, op 110
STAUD *Für Balint András Varga*

CONCERT 7 – 2.00PM

GOLDMUND QUARTET
HARRISON *Balderdash*
RAVEL String Quartet in F major

TRIO SÔRA
STANHOPE *Pulses* for Piano Trio
MENDELSSOHN Piano Trio in C minor
KAGEL Trio no 2

SEMI-FINALS

Each Semi-Final will feature a string quartet and a piano trio performing a work by Beethoven or Schubert. The Semi-Finalists will be announced at the completion of the Heats on Thursday 5 July.

FRIDAY 6 JULY

SEMI-FINAL 1
9.30AM

SEMI-FINAL 2
11.30AM

SEMI-FINAL 3
2.00PM

SEMI-FINAL 4
4.00PM

SEMI-FINAL 5
7.30PM

MUSIC IN THE CITY

SATURDAY 7 JULY

Music in the City is a free day-long celebration of chamber music by Semi-Finalist ensembles performed in iconic city venues.

11.30AM
Queen’s Hall, Parliament House, Spring St East Melbourne

1.30PM
Royal Society of Victoria, 8 La Trobe St Melbourne

3.00PM
Atrium, Federation Square, Swanston St Melbourne

GRAND FINALS

Three piano trios and three string quartets will each perform a work of their own choice not previously played in the competition, with the winner of both categories in the running to be awarded the Grand Prize of MICMC 2018. The six Grand Finalists will be announced at the completion of the Semi-Finals on Friday 6 July.

SUNDAY 8 JULY

PIANO TRIO GRAND FINAL
1.00PM

STRING QUARTET GRAND FINAL
6.00PM

AWARDS CEREMONY
9.00PM

ABOUT THE COMPETITION

Established in 1991 and staged every four years, the Melbourne International Chamber Music Competition (MICMC) is one of the most prestigious events of its kind. It is open to string quartets and piano trios of all nationalities whose members are under the age of 35. For the first time, it is being produced by Musica Viva Australia, the world's largest presenter of chamber music, in partnership with Melbourne Recital Centre and the Australian National Academy of Music.

OUR VISION

The Melbourne International Chamber Music Competition is one of the world's great chamber music launching pads.

We discover and nurture the next generation of ensembles, seeking out musicians who personify chamber music's ability to engage the head and the heart with performances that thrill, delight and inspire.

MICMC ensembles ensure a vibrant future for the artform, redefining the intimate relationships between players, audiences, and composers for the 21st century.

PAST WINNERS

NOGA QUARTET, GRAND PRIZE, MICMC 2015

Since winning first prize in the Melbourne International Chamber Music Competition in 2015, the quartet has been invited to perform in Germany, Austria, Scandinavia, Italy, The Netherlands, Belgium and France.

The [Noga Quartet](#) follows the great tradition of chamber music that enthral in performances of some of the greatest compositions of the string quartet repertoire.

For the [Noga Quartet](#), string quartet playing is the pinnacle of musical expression. "We love working together. Conveying life in this music is what we are about. There is nothing more satisfying than celebrating the great string quartet repertoire, from the classics of the past to more contemporary works."

The list of past winners of the Melbourne International Chamber Music Competition includes a raft of great performers. Take a look at our prize recipients dating all the way back to the inaugural MICMC in 1991.

7TH MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL CHAMBER MUSIC COMPETITION, 2015

Monash University Grand Prize Winner

[Noga Quartet](#)

Musica Viva Australia Prize Winner
[Giocosio String Quartet](#)

6TH MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL CHAMBER MUSIC COMPETITION, 2011

Monash University Grand Prize Winner

[Amaryllis Quartett](#)

Musica Viva Australia Prize Winner
[Kelemen Kvartett](#)

5TH MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL CHAMBER MUSIC COMPETITION, 2007

Primus Telecom Grand Prize

[ATOS Trio](#)

Musica Viva Australia Special Prize
[ATOS Trio](#)

String Quartet 1st Prize:
Robert Salzer Foundation Prize
[Badke String Quartet](#)

Piano Trio 1st Prize:
Clifford Hocking Prize
[ATOS Trio](#)

4TH MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL CHAMBER MUSIC COMPETITION, 2003

Primus Telecom Grand Prize
[Paizo Quartet](#)

String Quartet 1st Prize:
The Costel Vasilescu Prize
[Paizo Quartet](#)

Piano Trio 1st Prize:
John T Reid Charitable Trust Prize
[Eggner Trio](#)
Musica Viva Australia Special Prize
[Eggner Trio](#)

3RD MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL CHAMBER MUSIC COMPETITION, 1999

Daimler-Chrysler Grand Prize

[Aviv String Quartet](#)

String Quartet 1st Prize:
Mercedes-Benz Prize

[Aviv String Quartet](#)

Piano Trio 1st Prize:
Chrysler Prize
[Kungsbacka Trio](#)

2ND MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL CHAMBER MUSIC COMPETITION, 1995

Mercedes-Benz Grand Prize
[Trio Jean Paul](#)

String Quartet 1st Prize:
Dame Elisabeth Murdoch Prize
[Vertavo String Quartet](#)

Piano Trio 1st Prize: Vic Health Prize
[Trio Jean Paul](#)

1ST MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL CHAMBER MUSIC COMPETITION, 1991

The 1st International Competition was open to four categories – Piano Quartets, Piano Trios, String Quartets and String Trios.

Musica Viva Grand Prize (joint prize winners)

[Gould Piano Trio](#)

[Leningrad String Quartet](#)

String Quartet 1st Prize:
Dame Elisabeth Murdoch Prize
[Leningrad String Quartet](#)

Piano Trio 1st Prize: Vic Health Prize
[Gould Piano Trio](#)



Noga Quartet

YOUR YEAR-LONG FESTIVAL OF CHAMBER MUSIC



TICKETS FROM \$39

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FROM \$66**

Melbourne Recital Centre showcases the country's most amazing talent throughout the entire year. Experience classical masterpieces, world and Australian premieres, new music and familiar favourites in Melbourne's favourite place to hear.

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CENTRE

Cnr Southbank Blvd &
Sturt St, Southbank
melbournerecital.com.au



PRINCIPAL GOVERNMENT PARTNER

CREATIVE VICTORIA



Alexander MacDonald (NZ) viola
Photo by Pia Johnson

MORE THAN A CONCERT

Musicians at the **Australian National Academy of Music (ANAM)** share the stage with the world's finest artists, learning and transforming in over 180 public performances each year.

Being part of the ANAM audience means you play a significant role in the development of these future music leaders and share their journey of artistic exploration.

FIND OUT MORE

anam.com.au
info@anam.com.au



ABOUT MUSICA VIVA

Musica Viva is Australia's oldest independent professional performing arts organisation. Our story began in 1945 as a chamber music organisation focused on just one ensemble. Over the years we have evolved to embrace ensemble music of all styles and genres, presenting leading Australian and international artists to concert audiences and school students across the country. Today, our activities incorporate digital technologies to reach an even wider audience, and we are at the forefront of artist development – inspiring musicians and audiences alike in a shared passion for ensemble music of quality, diversity, challenge and joy.

Carl Vine AO, *Artistic Director*

INTERNATIONAL CONCERT SEASON

A season of seven national tours featuring the world's best international chamber musicians, presented in Adelaide, Brisbane, Canberra, Melbourne, Newcastle, Perth and Sydney.

COFFEE CONCERTS

A morning concert series, presented in Sydney and Melbourne, featuring performances by leading Australian and international classical ensemble artists, including pre-concert tea, coffee and cake.

MUSICA VIVA IN SCHOOLS

Musica Viva In Schools (MVIS) has been setting the standard in music education since 1981. We are dedicated to ensuring all Australian children have the opportunity to experience the joy of music, and we support teachers with professional development and curriculum-linked resources.

COUNTRYWIDE

Musica Viva's innovative regional touring program partners with performing arts centres, volunteer music societies and conservatoriums to deliver a range of exceptional music experiences to thousands of regional Australians each year.

MUSICA VIVA FESTIVAL

Presented in association with the Australian Youth Orchestra and the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, our biennial chamber music festival showcases the best local and international chamber music artists in four days of concerts, talks and masterclasses.

HUNTINGTON ESTATE MUSIC FESTIVAL

Australia's renowned chamber music festival is held in the beautiful surrounds of the Mudgee wine region in NSW, presented by Huntington Estate Winery in association with Musica Viva.

FUTUREMAKERS

Musica Viva's artist leadership initiative, FutureMakers, discovers and enables Australia's musical leaders of tomorrow. Through extensive mentoring and extraordinary opportunities, these brilliant and curious musicians are equipped with advocacy tools, entrepreneurial skills, platforms, audiences and a global network, providing them with the foundation to create new work that will shape and inspire cultural life in the 21st century.

MASTERCLASSES

Our Masterclass program connects students and ensembles with the world's finest chamber musicians. Interaction occurs in a variety of public learning environments, and members of the public and other students are able to observe this rich musical process as it happens.



MUSIC IN THE CITY

Saturday 7 July

Music in the City is a free, day-long celebration of chamber music in the live music capital of Australia. These concerts provide an opportunity to relax and reflect in the beautiful surrounds of iconic Melbourne venues that you might not have had a chance to visit.

Hear as some of the competing ensembles perform their choice of repertoire. Perfect for those who wish to follow a curated program or encounter music spontaneously. All are welcome, entry is free and there's no need to register.

11.30am Queen's Hall, Parliament House Spring Street, East Melbourne

The day begins with a string quartet performance in the majestic space and grandeur of the Queen's Hall. Built in 1879, the Hall has hosted parliamentary receptions, formal banquets, opening night festivities and major forums for respected political leaders. Portraits of former Victorian Premiers line the walls. This space is not usually open to the public. **Please arrive at least 15 minutes prior to the scheduled start time to clear security.**

1.30pm Royal Society of Victoria 8 La Trobe Street, Melbourne

Home of Victoria's science community, The Royal Society is the State's oldest learned society and a part of Australia's intellectual life since 1854. A string quartet will perform in the Burke and Wills Room, named after the famous explorers and rich in the history of their final expedition.

3.00pm Atrium, Federation Square Swanston Street, Melbourne

The Atrium is a galleria-like structure of glass and steel that provides an impressive indoor/outdoor venue for performances by two piano trios. Nestled between The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia, Flinders Street and the undulating Federation Square and surrounded by busy cafes and bars, it's a quintessential Melbourne spot to end the day.

Musica Viva would like to acknowledge the following for their generous support in providing performance venues for Music in the City, and giving the people of Melbourne free access to live chamber music at its finest:

- The Honorable Bruce Atkinson, MLC President of the Legislative Council - Queen's Hall at Parliament House, Melbourne
- Mike Flattley, CEO - The Royal Society of Victoria

Music in the City is proudly sponsored in part by 'House for Music', a group of dedicated volunteers lead by Ms Alla Petrov, who have hosted chamber music house parties in support of career development for early career musicians.



JURY



**ALASDAIR
TAIT**

UK

Scottish cellist Alasdair Tait studied at the Royal Northern College of Music (RNCM) with Emma Ferrand and Ralph Kirshbaum and in Basel with Thomas Demenga. As cellist of the Belcea Quartet until 2006 he performed internationally and was a 'Resident Quartet' member at London's Wigmore Hall. Recordings for EMI of Schubert, Brahms, Britten, Mozart, Fauré and Barber (collaborating with Ian Bostridge, Thomas Adès and Thomas Kakuska) were awarded both Gramophone Awards and a Diapason d'Or. The quartet were twice recipients of the prestigious Royal Philharmonic Society Award and were the first BBC New Generation Artists.

Alongside his now full-time role as Chief Executive of Young Classical Artists Trust (YCAT), he was Head of Chamber Music at Guildhall and RNCM, professor at Reina Sofia in Madrid and regularly teaches at the European Chamber Music Academy (ECMA) and at Aldeburgh Music. He has given masterclasses at the Banff Centre for the Arts and the Glenn Gould School in Canada, New England Conservatory and Stanford University in the USA. He is frequently invited as a jury member for international competitions such as Banff, Osaka, Wigmore and the Vienna/Haydn Competitions.

Alasdair has also collaborated with artists including Piotr Anderzewski, Christian Zacharias, Kathryn Stott, Imogen Cooper, Aleksander Madžar, Robert Levin, Isabelle van Keulen, Valentin Erben, Borodin Quartet, Heinz Holliger, Michael Collins, Simon Keenlyside, Dame Ann Murray and Christine Schäfer.

He is currently a council member for Snape Maltings (Aldeburgh) and the Countess of Munster Musical Trust. In 2013 he was made a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy for his contribution to excellence in Teaching and Learning. In 2016, he was awarded the ABO (Association of British Orchestras) for Artist Manager of the Year.

Alasdair also works as a psychodynamic psychotherapist in private practice in London.



**YURA
LEE**

Korea/USA

Violinist/violist Yura Lee is a multi-faceted musician, as soloist and as a chamber musician, and one of the very few that is equally virtuosic in both violin and viola. She has performed with major orchestras including those of New York, Chicago, Baltimore, Cleveland, San Francisco, and Los Angeles, to name a few. She has given recitals in London's Wigmore Hall, Vienna's Musikverein, Salzburg's Mozarteum, Brussels' Palais des Beaux-Arts, and the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam.

At age 12, she became the youngest artist ever to receive the Debut Artist of the Year prize at the Performance Today awards given by National Public Radio. She is the recipient of the 2007 Avery Fisher Career Grant, and the first prize winner of the 2013 ARD Competition. She received numerous other international prizes, including top prizes in the Mozart, Indianapolis, Hannover, Kreisler, Bashmet, and Paganini competitions.

Her CD 'Mozart in Paris' with Reinhard Goebel and the Bayerische Kammerphilharmonie received the prestigious Diapason d'Or Award. As a chamber musician, she regularly takes part in the festivals of Marlboro, Salzburg, Verbier, La Jolla, Music@Menlo, Chamber Music Northwest, Seattle and Caramoor, among many others.

Her main teachers included Dorothy DeLay, Hyo Kang, Miriam Fried, Paul Biss, Thomas Riebl, Ana Chumachenko, and Nobuko Imai. Yura teaches violin and viola at the Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University. She is a member of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center and the Boston Chamber Music Society. Yura lives in Portland, Oregon.



**KYRIL
ZLOTNIKOV**

Portugal

Kyril Zlotnikov is a founding member of the Jerusalem Quartet, recognised for its artistic creativity, and as one of the most dynamic and exciting young quartets currently performing. The musicians perform all over the world and have become Israel's leading string quartet. Since 2002 the Jerusalem Quartet has recorded exclusively for Harmonia Mundi.

Along with his extensive chamber music appearances Kyril has performed and been broadcast as a soloist with internationally renowned orchestras, such as the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra, the Ludwigsburg Symphony Orchestra, the Gulbenkian Orchestra, the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra, and at the Jerusalem Camerata. He enjoys artistic collaboration with acclaimed conductors including Daniel Barenboim, Zubin Mehta, Pierre Boulez, Lawrence Foster, Asher Fisch, and Simone Young. He has a wide repertoire covering the important cello works of the baroque, classical periods, romantic and contemporary music.

Kyril is a regular guest at major chamber music festivals such as the Proms Festival, the Bartók Festival, the Vancouver, Menton, Ravinia "Rising Stars", Schleswig-Holstein, Jerusalem and Schwetzingen Festivals. A keen recitalist and chamber musician, he has shared the stage with the foremost artists of today, such as Daniel Barenboim, Jessye Norman, Pierre Boulez, Elena Bashkistrova, Mitsuko Uchida, Natalia Gutman, Tabea Zimmermann, Miriam Fried, Hagai Shaham, Michael Tree, Asher Fisch, Nikolaj Znaider, Lang Lang and Richard Stoltzman.

Kyril has recorded the complete Mozart piano trios with Maestro Daniel Barenboim and violinist Nikolaj Znaider. The two CDs were released by EMI in April 2006.

He plays a 1710 Giovanni Battista Ruggieri cello which was loaned generously to him from a private collection for life.



**IAN
MUNRO**

Australia

Ian Munro is one of Australia's most distinguished and awarded musicians, with a career that has taken him to thirty-three countries in Europe, Asia, North America and Australasia. His award in 2003 of Premier Grand Prix at the Queen Elisabeth International Competition for composers (Belgium) is a unique achievement for an Australian and follows on from multiple prizes in international piano competitions in Spain, Italy and the UK, where his second prize at the Leeds International Piano Competition in 1987 established his international profile.

His international career began in the UK, where he has performed with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Philharmonia, English Chamber Orchestra, London Mozart Players, BBC Concert Orchestra, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and broadcast widely for the BBC. Elsewhere, he has performed with orchestras in Poland, Italy, Portugal, Russia, the USA, China, New Zealand and all the major orchestras in Australia in over sixty piano concerti. A widely experienced chamber musician, Ian joined the acclaimed Australia Ensemble in Sydney in 2000.

Ian has recorded CDs for Hyperion, Cala, Naxos, Marco Polo, Sony and Tall Poppies. Recent discs include music by Tasmanian composer Katharine Parker, Elena Kats-Chernin's second piano concerto, commissioned for him by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, and Andrew Ford's 'Waltz Book'. Increasingly in demand as a composer, he was featured composer for Musica Viva in 2011. Recently, his flute concerto and song cycle 'Three birds' received premieres by the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and Australia Ensemble respectively, and Ensemble Liaison premiered 'Aus tiefer Noth', a homage to Bach. Projects for 2018 include a collaboration with William Barton and Wilma Smith, a children's music theatre piece for Blue Mountains Opera and a song cycle for Lee Abrahamsen and the Omega Ensemble, as well as a CD recording of Ian's popular arrangements of Ravel, Debussy, Fauré and Nazareth.



**SONIA
SIMMENAUER**

USA/Germany

Sonia Simmenauer was born in the USA and grew up in Paris. From 1982 to 2008 she lived in Hamburg, where she founded Impresariat Simmenauer in 1989 as an agency exclusively for string quartets. The Alban Berg Quartet, the Cleveland Quartet, the Guarneri Quartet and the Tokyo String Quartet are among the artists Simmenauer represented in the latter stages of their careers.

In 2009, Impresariat Simmenauer moved its offices to Berlin, and today it represents a dozen internationally respected string quartets, among them the Arditti, Artemis, Hagen, Belcea, Quatuor Ébène, Cuarteto Casals and Jerusalem Quartets. Simmenauer also manages individuals such as violinists Isabelle Faust and Vadim Gluzman, cellist Jean-Guihen Queyras, pianists Piotr Anderszewski, Alexander Melnikov, Elena Bashkistrova, and more.

Simmenauer is a professor at the Musikhochschule in Hamburg, teaching a new area of studies called 'Music Transmission'. She has written a book about life in a string quartet entitled 'Muss es sein? Leben im Quartett'.

In addition to their service as jurors, Gerhard Schulz and Alasdair Tait have spent a week working with students at ANAM as part of our commitment to Australian artist development.



**GERHARD
SCHULZ**

Austria

Gerhard Schulz was born 1951 in Linz, Austria into a family of musicians and studied with Franz Samohyl in Vienna, with Sándor Végh in Düsseldorf and with Shmuel Ashkenasi in the USA. He was a founding member of the Salzburg String Trio and the Schulz Ensemble and 1st violinist of the Düsseldorf String Quartet. As a member of the world-famous Alban Berg Quartet for over 30 years, he played regularly in the most important music centres of the world. As exclusive artists, the quartet recorded a significant amount of repertoire for EMI records, garnering numerous awards.

After the ABQ retired in 2008, Gerhard Schulz founded the Waldstein Ensemble (a piano quartet). In 2009 he gave his debut as a conductor with the Copenhagen Philharmonic Orchestra and enjoys a busy life as a performer as well as a teacher.

Since 1980 he has been professor for violin at the University of Music in Vienna and from 1993 to 2013 guest professor for chamber music at the Hochschule für Musik in Cologne (Germany). From 2013 to 2017 he also taught chamber music at the Hochschule für Musik in Stuttgart.

In addition to their service as jurors, Gerhard Schulz and Alasdair Tait have spent a week working with students at ANAM as part of our commitment to Australian artist development.

Jury continued overleaf...

VOTING RULES AND REGULATIONS



SIMIN GANATRA
Pakistan/USA

Simin Ganatra is professor of violin and chair of the Strings Department at the

Indiana University Jacobs School of Music. She is also first violinist of the Pacifica Quartet, the school’s quartet-in-residence.

Ganatra has won wide recognition for her performances throughout the United States and abroad. She has performed numerous times in such prestigious venues as Lincoln Center’s Alice Tully Hall, the Kennedy Center, Wigmore Hall, the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, and Carnegie’s Zankel Hall. Collaborations include performances with Yo-Yo Ma, Anthony McGill, Lynn Harrell, and Menahem Pressler, among others.

She is the recipient of several awards and prizes, including a Grammy for best chamber music performance, the Naumburg Chamber Music Award, the Cleveland Quartet Award, and top prizes at the Concert Artists Guild Competition, Coleman Chamber Music Competition, Pasadena Instrumental Competition, and Schubert Club Competition.

Originally from Los Angeles, Ganatra studied with Idell Low, Robert Lipsett, and Roland and Almita Vamos. She is a graduate of the Oberlin Conservatory, where she was concertmaster of the Oberlin Conservatory Orchestra and recipient of the Louis Kaufman Prize for outstanding performance in chamber music.

She was previously professor at the University of Illinois, Champaign/ Urbana, Northwestern University, and the University of Chicago. She has many recordings on the Cedille Records label, including the complete string quartets of Felix Mendelssohn, Elliott Carter, and Dmitri Shostakovich. During the summer, she serves on the faculty of the Aspen Music Festival and School.

The 8th Melbourne International Chamber Music Competition (MICMC) is open to Piano Trios and String Quartets from across the globe and is presented by Musica Viva in partnership with Melbourne Recital Centre and the Australian National Academy of Music (ANAM).

Each member of competing ensembles must be under 35 on 1 July 2018. A person who was a member of a first prize winning ensemble in any previous Melbourne International Chamber Music Competition is not eligible to compete in the same stream of the Competition. A person may enter the Competition as a member of only one ensemble.

There are five stages to the 8th MICMC as follows:

- Preliminary Screening Round
- Heats Round One
- Heats Round Two
- Semi-Finals
- Grand Finals

Following a digital Preliminary Screening Round, ensembles were selected to compete in Melbourne. Held in October 2017, these screening auditions were conducted by Wilma Smith, Zoe Knighton and Timothy Young in Melbourne.

All ensembles accepted to compete in the 8th MICMC will perform in both Heats One and Two. Five piano trios and five string quartets are invited to proceed to the Semi-Finals at the conclusion of Round Two, as determined by the Jury. Following the Semi-Finals, three piano trios and three string quartets are invited by the Jury to compete in the Grand Finals on Sunday 8 July 2018.

The Jury adopts the same voting process for each stream. Following Round Two each Juror votes (in confidence) for his or her first choice. If no ensemble receives a majority vote of the Jury, a preferential voting system is adopted, dropping off ensembles until one ensemble receives a majority vote. This procedure is repeated until the Jury chooses five semi-finalists in each stream. The process is repeated by the Jury at the conclusion of the Semi-Finals to choose three finalists in each stream.

The Jurors are not allowed to discuss any applicant’s merits or weaknesses and must not disclose personal opinions at any time during the 8th MICMC. This includes making any positive or negative comments or gestures during performance. Competing ensembles communicating or attempting to communicate with a Juror may be disqualified.

The reputation of the 8th MICMC depends on the ability of the Jurors and the Jury Chair to ensure that each ensemble is given a fair and balanced hearing. To this end the Jury Chair, who does not vote, is responsible for ensuring that the Jury follows the competition procedures, rules and regulations.

PRIZES

GRAND PRIZE
(Supported by the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music at the University of Melbourne)
\$30,000

The Grand Prize is awarded to either the winning ensemble from the String Quartet division or the winning ensemble from the Piano Trio division and includes a \$30,000 cash prize, an Australian performance tour arranged by Musica Viva in November 2019, and career-enhancing professional development support. In awarding this prize, Musica Viva and the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music recognise the important role that the Melbourne International Chamber Music Competition plays in artist development.

STRING QUARTET PRIZES
1st Prize – The Robert Salzer Foundation Prize
\$30,000

Robert Salzer was born in Vienna and a lover of the arts and opera. Robert lived in the UK and Kenya before settling in 1961 in Melbourne, where he was responsible for the construction of many substantial buildings. His Foundation is a trust for the support of the arts, notably the performing arts.

In addition to a cash prize, the winners will be invited to perform at the 2020 Amsterdam String Quartet Biennale.

2nd Prize – The Evans Dixon Prize
\$20,000

Evans Dixon is a financial services business operating through two prominent wealth advice brands, Evans and Partners and Dixon Advisory. Recognised for cultivating personalised client relationships, Evans Dixon is proud to offer the Evans Dixon Prize for string quartet as an evolution of Dixon Advisory’s long-standing partnership with Musica Viva as Premier Coffee Concert Partner and avid supporter of the Musica Viva in Schools initiative connecting youth and music education.

3rd Prize – The Laura Brown Prize
\$10,000

The Laura Brown Prize is supported by Beth Brown and Tom Bruce AM in memory of Beth’s mother.

The Audience Prize for String Quartet
(supported by the Druce family in memory of Peter Druce)
\$8,000

Peter Druce was a Melbourne lawyer and arts patron whose wide-ranging interests included music, rowing, archaeology and the environment. This prize is supported by his family and friends.

Commission Prize – Silo Collective Prize
\$4,000

The Silo Collective is made up of individuals who collectively commission music. It was established to prove that you don’t need to be wealthy or powerful to be involved in commissioning. The Silo Collective Prize is awarded to the best performance of Holly Harrison’s new work ‘Balderdash’ that will be performed by each string quartet in their round two heat at ANAM.

PIANO TRIO PRIZES
1st Prize – The Tony Berg Prize
\$22,500

Tony Berg is Patron of Musica Viva Australia, and served on its Board of Directors from 1983 to 2000 including as Chairperson for 12 years. Tony is an Executive Director of Gresham Partners Limited and chairs the Investment Committee of Gresham Property Funds Management. He served as a Council member of the National Gallery of Australia from 1997-2003, is a Director of the National Gallery of Australia Foundation Board (where he was Chairman for 7 years) and was a member of the Australia Council from 1978-1982. Tony Berg was made a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in 1992, was Banker of the Year in 1993 and was awarded the Richard Pratt Business Leadership Award by the Australia Business Arts Foundation in 2002. This award is named in honour of Tony’s invaluable support for the arts in Australia.

2nd Prize – The Paul Morawetz Prize for Piano Trio
\$15,000

Paul Morawetz was born in Austria in 1914 and died in Melbourne in April 2001. His love of music, and chamber music in particular, led him to become involved with Musica Viva at the time of its founding in 1945. Paul took particular pleasure in supporting young musicians, often helping them to gain public recognition and furthering their talents. This prize is supported by the Morawetz Family in memory of Paul and his interest in nurturing young talent and a generation of concert artists.

3rd Prize – The Musica Viva Victorian Committee Prize
\$7,500

Members of the Musica Viva Victorian Committee act as ambassadors for the organisation’s music education, artist development and concerts programs in the State. This prize is proudly supported by the current members of the Victorian Committee.

The Audience Prize for Piano Trio
(supported by the Druce family in memory of Peter Druce)
\$6,000

Peter Druce was a Melbourne lawyer and arts patron whose wide-ranging interests included music, rowing, archaeology and the environment. This prize is supported by his family and friends.

Commission Prize – The Prize for Best Performance of the New Work *(supported by the Tribe family)*
\$3,000

Ken Tribe (1914 – 2010) trained and worked all his life in the law, but music was his greatest passion. In 1949 Charles Berg invited him to join the board of Musica Viva and he was instrumental in the change in direction of Musica Viva from ensemble to become a music presenter organising concerts for local and overseas musicians. His love of music, particularly chamber music, led him to become Chairman and Music Director of Musica Viva for 13 years. This prize is supported by the Tribe Family in memory of Ken and his love of all things musical.

COMMISSIONED WORKS

PAUL STANHOPE (b 1969)

Pulses for Piano Trio (2018)

Commissioned for Musica Viva and MICMC through the Ken Tribe Fund for Australian Composers

Paul Stanhope (b 1969) is Sydney-based and a leading figure in his generation of Australian composers. He has had prominent performances of his works in the UK, Europe, Taiwan and Japan, as well as North and South America. After studies with Peter Sculthorpe, Paul was awarded the Charles Mackerras Scholarship which enabled him to study at the Guildhall School of Music in London in 2000.

In May 2004, Paul's international standing was confirmed when he was awarded first place in the prestigious Toru Takemitsu Composition Prize. In 2011, he was awarded APRA/Australian Music Centre Awards for Instrumental Work of the Year and Vocal/Choral Piece of the Year and in 2015 was a finalist for the Orchestral Work of the Year. Paul is also the recipient of a Sidney Myer Creative Fellowship for 2013-2014 - the first composer to be granted this honour.

In 2010, Paul was Musica Viva's featured composer: his String Quartet no 2 received nationwide performances by the Pavel Haas Quartet as part of this season, as did his *Agnus Dei - After the Fire* for violin and piano, performed by the stellar duo Alina Ibragimova and Cédric Tiberghien. Other choral and chamber works received national tours by the Choir of Trinity College Cambridge and the ATOS Piano Trio from Berlin. Paul's music has also been featured at the Vale of Glamorgan Festival in 2009, The City of London Festival in 2011 and at the Australian Festival of Chamber Music in 2016.

2014 saw the premiere of *Jandamarra: Sing for the Country*, a major new dramatic cantata based on the life of the Western Australian Indigenous resistance hero. Scored for solo baritone, choirs, an Indigenous ensemble of singers, and dancers and orchestra, it was premiered by large forces including Gondwana Choirs and the Sydney Symphony. It has been hailed as a work of major cultural significance. Paul's Piccolo Concerto was featured in performances by the Melbourne, Adelaide and Tasmanian Symphony Orchestras in 2013 and was released on CD in the subsequent year. This work was followed up by a Cello Concerto, *Dawn and Darkness*, for the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and a Trombone Concerto for West Australian Symphony Orchestra in 2016 and 2017 respectively.

Paul has held many education roles, including Director of the Australian Composers' School with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra and the director of the Composers Program as part of Gondwana Choirs' National Choral



School. He holds the post of Senior Lecturer in the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, University of Sydney and is also the Artistic Chair of the Australia Ensemble based at the University of New South Wales.

Paul on *Pulses*

Although we might think of pulse as being a purely rhythmic element, musical pitches are, in fact, also pulsations of differing frequency. If you have ever heard a really low organ note, for example, you might even feel the sound beating. This Piano Trio uses such acoustic elements to suggest the material heard in the opening with high sounds being repeated in faster frequencies than middle and lower groups which pulsate at less frequent durations: this is heard in a series of repeated, poly-tonal chordal fragments in the opening. From these juxtaposed fragments, I derived a series of scalar and chordal patterns used throughout the piece which act in combination with the sorts of rhythmic ratios set up at the beginning.

The idea of pulse is also used in a structural sense, in that the underlying sense of 'beat' shifts from fast to slow in a series of metric modulations (where one rhythmic value equals another one in a new tempo). Here the sense of strict, rhythmic pulse heard in the opening seems to give way to a more lyrical approach with cello and violin solos searching for a more expressive and personal style. A playful piano solo with pizzicato string accompaniment marks the beginning of a slow return to a more 'metered' sense of pulse and upon a significant arrival, back to the original fast tempo. Transformed versions of material from the first third of the piece begin to return, climbing to an ever-accelerating high climax and then release to an echo of the opening 'pulsed' fragments.

For the purposes of this competition, I have written two possible endings with different characteristics which the different groups may choose between in order to add a little extra surprise into the performances.

Many thanks to Wilma Smith (violin), Julian Smiles (cello) and Bernadette Harvey for workshoping this trio in January 2018 and for their input into its development.

HOLLY HARRISON (b 1988)

Balderdash for String Quartet (2018)

Commissioned for Musica Viva and MICMC through the Ken Tribe Fund for Australian Composers

Holly Harrison is a young Australian composer from Western Sydney. Her music is driven by the nonsense literature of Lewis Carroll, embracing stylistic juxtapositions, the visceral energy of rock, and whimsical humour.

Holly's work *Lobster Tales and Turtle Soup* featured on Eighth Blackbird's (USA) Australian tour as part of Musica Viva's 2017 International Concert Season. The tour included performances by the four-time GRAMMY award-winning group at Perth International Arts Festival and Adelaide Festival. Upcoming projects include a concertino for bassoon and string quartet for Matthew Kneale (2017 Freedman Classical Fellowship winner) and Omega Ensemble, a sextet for Sydney new music champions Ensemble Offspring, a children's work for the Canberra International Music Festival, and a piece for Brisbane-based Kupka's Piano. She has recently completed a piece for shakuhachi legend Riley Lee and the Enigma Quartet, as part of their Five Elements Project.

Holly was the inaugural winner of the 2017 Sue W Chamber Music Composition Prize, awarded to an Australian female composer, for her work *Lobster Tales and Turtle Soup*. She was awarded first place at the 2014 Young Composers Meeting in Apeldoorn, the Netherlands, for her work *Cabbages and Kings*, and in 2013 was the winner of the inaugural Pyeongchon Arts Hall International Chamber Music Composition Competition (South Korea) with *Red Queen, White Queen, Alice and All*. Holly was a resident composer at the 2014 Mizzou International Composers Festival (USA) with *Alarm Will Sound*, and was one of two winners of The Riot Ensemble's (UK) 2014 Call for Scores.

Her works have been performed at festivals including Gaudeamus Muziekweek 2014/2016 (NL), November Music (NL), Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music (USA), Kontiki Racket, Perth International Arts Festival, Adelaide Festival, Australian Music Day, Limelight Australian Composition Seminar, Creativity Unlimited, Asian Composers' League Festival (TWN), and Now Hear This Festival (CAN). Holly's music has been performed in Australia, Asia, Europe, and the USA by ensembles and artists including Orkest de Ereprijs, Alarm Will Sound, Ensemble Offspring, Sydney Symphony Fellows, RKST21 (Ereprijs and Het Gelders Orkest), Michael Kieran Harvey and Timothy Phillips, Caroline Cartens, Sydney Youth Orchestras, The Riot Ensemble, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Cabrillo Festival Orchestra, The Sound Collectors, The Violet Collective, Minot Symphony Orchestra, Hwaum Chamber



Orchestra, Georgia Tech Strings, and National Taiwan Normal University Orchestra.

Holly currently teaches composition at MLC School, Burwood, and was previously composer in residence at Prairiewood High School. She completed a Doctor of Creative Arts under the supervision of Bruce Crossman and John Encarnacao at Western Sydney University, where she is currently a sessional academic.

Holly also plays drum kit and percussion in the improvised experimental rock duo Tabua-Harrison with Joey Tabua (electric guitar). Their debut record is expected for release in 2018.

Holly on *Balderdash*

Balderdash begins and ends with amplifier feedback: a sound that quickly makes us bring our fingers to our ears! The piece imagines an alternate world in which music is heard between the feedback – a sort of sub/hyper-sonic sound world which takes place in mere seconds.

With this in mind, the string quartet explores musical ideas inspired by electric guitar, including distortion, white noise, whammy bars, power-chords, dive-bombs, wah-wah, phaser effects, slap bass, and of course, speaker feedback. *Balderdash* makes high use of punk rock rhythms, dissonance, and percussive-based jams, which morph in and out of bluegrass, grunge, prog-rock, metal, and disco.

Given the piece was commissioned for a competition, I felt it might be fun to experiment with a battle-of-the-bands theme within the string quartet itself. Throughout *Balderdash*, players go rogue (especially the cello!), engage in one-upmanship, jam, duel, challenge, compete, interrupt, surrender, work together in teams, and cooperate as one. The piece is intended to be theatrical and encourages the quartet to perform with abandon.

I have called the piece *Balderdash* as it is a term used to refer to nonsense – of which I am quite a fan! The 'dash' part also resonates with the high intensity nature of the work, and the sense of moving somewhere quickly.

AMATIS PIANO TRIO

Netherlands/Germany/UK

Lea Clara Hausmann *violin* Samuel Shepherd *cello* Mengjie Han *piano*



ROUND ONE

HAYDN Piano Trio in C major, Hob. XV:27

SHOSTAKOVICH Piano Trio no 2 in E minor

AZIMI *Fragmented Impulses II*

ROUND TWO

STANHOPE *Pulses* for Piano Trio

MENDELSSOHN Piano Trio in D minor

The Amatis Piano Trio was founded in 2014 by German violinist Lea Hausmann, British cellist Samuel Shepherd and Dutch/Chinese pianist Mengjie Han.

Named BBC New Generation Artists 2016-2018, the trio has been selected as 'ECHO Rising Stars' 2018/19 by the European Concert Hall Organisation, following their nomination by the Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, Festspielhaus Baden-Baden, Konzerthaus Dortmund and the Philharmonie Cologne. The trio has emerged as one of the leading ensembles of the new generation, receiving enthusiastic responses from audiences and critics worldwide.

Only weeks after forming, the trio won the audience prize at the Grachtenfestival-Concours in Amsterdam, which quickly lead to their debut at the Royal Concertgebouw. Winners of the 2015 International Parkhouse Competition

in Wigmore Hall, the trio went on to win the International Joseph Joachim Competition in the piano trio category and was named Dutch Classical Talent 2016.

The Amatis Piano Trio is committed to contemporary music and thus founded the 'Dutch Piano Trio Composition Prize' in 2015, encouraging young composers to further the piano trio repertoire.

The Amatis Piano Trio has been a part of the European Chamber Music Academy since 2015 and will engage with the Verbier Festival Academy this year. Further musical influences include Lukas Hagen, Rainer Schmidt, Wolfgang Redik, the Trio Jean Paul, Fabio Bidini, Ilya Grubert, Anner Bylsma, Christian Schuster, Ib Hausmann, Imre Rohmann and Menahem Pressler.

BUKOLIKA PIANO TRIO

Poland

Roma Tic *violin* Joanna Gutowska *cello* Anna Szałucka *piano*



ROUND ONE

HAYDN Piano Trio in C major, Hob. XV:27

M. GORECKI 6 Bagatelles

ROUND TWO

STANHOPE *Pulses* for Piano Trio

DVOŘÁK Piano Trio no 4 in E minor 'Dumky'

SAARIAHO *Light & Matter*

The Bukolika Piano Trio is an ensemble recognised for its intensely expressive music-making, colourful performances and exceptional virtuosity.

Established in 2014, the Bukolika Trio is particularly interested in discovering and performing chamber works of the 20th and 21st centuries, especially from the group's native Poland. Recent achievements include being selected for the St John's Smith Square Young Artists Programme 2017/2018, reaching the finals of the St Martin's Chamber Music Competition in 2017 and collaborating with composer Hanna Kulenty.

The Bukolika Trio has performed in many renowned concert halls in Europe and the UK, such as St John's Smith Square, St Martin in the Fields, the Great Hall at Dartington, St James's Church in Piccadilly, Krakow Philharmonic Hall and St Peter's Church, as well as at important festivals including the Piano Festival and Russian Chamber Music Series at the Royal Academy of Music. In June 2017, the ensemble made its debut on BBC Radio 3. All members are currently studying at the Royal Academy of Music in London.

CLARENDON TRIO

Australia

Riley Skevington *violin* Jonathan Békés *cello* Berta Brozgul *piano*



ROUND ONE

HAYDN Piano Trio in E minor, Hob XV:12
TCHEREPNIN Piano Trio, op 35
STANHOPE *Dolcissimo Uscignolo*

ROUND TWO

STANHOPE *Pulses* for Piano Trio
MENDELSSOHN Piano Trio in C minor

The Clarendon Trio comprises violinist Riley Skevington, cellist Jonathan Békés and pianist Berta Brozgul, who met during their time at the Australian National Academy of Music (ANAM). They won first prize at the 2017 ANAM Chamber Music Competition and are the only Australian piano trio competing in the 2018 Melbourne International Chamber Music Competition. As individual musicians, they have had many notable successes in national competitions, as well as high profile performances throughout Australia as soloists in their own right. As passionate chamber musicians, they have appeared together with leading national and international artists in concerts throughout Australia.

A common feeling for sound, as well as a powerful curiosity about each composer's unique language, encouraged them to form the trio in 2017 in order to

explore the possibilities in the extraordinarily diverse repertoire for this instrumental grouping. They have sought input from leading specialists in various stylistic genres, among them Robin Wilson, Timothy Young and Howard Penny, to further develop their own interpretations.

The Trio has performed expansively and to great acclaim throughout the Melbourne metropolitan and regional area, and is rapidly establishing a strong reputation and following for its compelling and intelligent musical approach. The group is excited to build on its growing patronage and to include the widest variety of repertoire in its future concert appearances. Collaborations with leading young artists and composers are planned for future seasons.

MERZ TRIO

Australia/USA

Brigid Coleridge *violin* Julia Yang *cello* Eric Dionne *piano*



ROUND ONE

BEETHOVEN Piano Trio in G major, op 1 no 2
SHOSTAKOVICH Piano Trio no 2 in E minor

ROUND TWO

STANHOPE *Pulses* for Piano Trio
SCHUMANN Piano Trio no 3 in G minor, op 110
STAUD *Für Balint András Varga*

Formed in January 2017 as a collaboration between pianist Eric Dionne, violinist Brigid Coleridge, and cellist Julia Yang, Merz Trio was the recipient of a Judges' Special Recognition Award at the 2017 Plowman Competition and a finalist for a 2017 Tarisio Young Artists Grant for its Macbeth project (Spring 2018). Fuelled by a mission to transform and revitalize the traditional concert format, Merz Trio not only commits itself to chamber performance of the highest level, but also embraces a richly multidisciplinary approach to concert programming.

Taking its name from the early 20th-century 'Merz pictures' of German visual artist Kurt Schwitters, the trio draws inspiration from Schwitters' unique style of found-object collage that emerged in response to the fragmented and devastated world of post-WWI Europe. In keeping with Schwitters' aesthetic of creation from

pieced-together fragments, Merz Trio's projects promote dialogue between seemingly disparate musics, texts, and artifacts, weaving and juxtaposing the trio's repertoire within differing artistic worlds of visual art, dance, theatre, and culinary arts.

Upcoming programs for 2017-2018 include a multidisciplinary exploration of Haydn's style alongside works of Schwitters and excerpts from German author W.G. Sebald. Other show concepts include a multi-course 'tasting menu' of short musical selections paired with food, as well as a 'mainstage' show inspired by Shakespeare's Macbeth. Currently based in New York, Merz Trio engages in local education and outreach work outside of its concert performances and donates 10% of its earnings to local charities.

MOSA TRIO

Netherlands/Belgium

Alexandra Van Beveren *violin* Paul Stavridis *cello* Bram de Vree *piano*



ROUND ONE

HAYDN Piano Trio in E major, Hob. XV:28

SHOSTAKOVICH Piano Trio no 2 in E minor

WAMPER *Portrait of Light*

ROUND TWO

STANHOPE *Pulses* for Piano Trio

MENDELSSOHN Piano Trio in D Minor

The Mosa Trio's international career took off after it won numerous awards, including third prize and audience prize, at the Concours International de Musique de Chambre de Lyon, second prize at the 31st FNAPEC Concours européen Musique d'Ensemble (2017, FR), second prize and honorary prize for the most beautiful performance of the obligatory contemporary piece at the International Orlando Competition (2015, NL), 'Supernova – the Future Sound of Classical Music' in Brussels (2014, BE), as well as third prize, the audience award and the young jury award at the Concours International de Musique de Chambre d'Illzach (2013, FR).

"It's always a great pleasure for the audience to attend one of their concerts," says Vincent Coq of Trio Wanderer. The exciting choices in programming make a concert by the Mosa Trio a unique experience.

Since its foundation in 2010, the Mosa Trio has played in major venues in Belgium, the Netherlands and worldwide, including at the Concertgebouw Amsterdam, the Slovenska Filharmonia (Slovakia), the Sichuan Conservatory of Music (China) and the Festival International de Piano de La Roque d'Anthéron (France).

Currently, the trio is studying with Trio Wanderer at the Conservatoire à Rayonnement Régional de Paris in the 'Cycle Concertiste' program. It is also an Aspirant Ensemble of the European Chamber Music Academy.

TRIO GAON

Germany/South Korea

Jehye Lee *violin* Samuel Lutzker *cello* Tae Hyung Kim *piano*



ROUND ONE

BEETHOVEN Piano Trio in E-flat major, op 1 no 1

FRANÇAIX Trio for Violin, Cello and Piano

CORTI *Musica discreta*

ROUND TWO

STANHOPE *Pulses* for Piano Trio

BRAHMS Piano Trio no 1 in B major, op 8

Trio Gaon, formed in 2013 by three musicians of very different cultural backgrounds, was created with a vision, represented in the trio's name. The Korean word 'Gaon' has two different meanings: 'Centre of the World' and 'Generating Warmth'. Both these meanings can be connected to a concert performance in which the musicians aspire to make the musical work the 'centre of the world' at that moment and, through music, convey warmth and energy.

The ensemble was taught by Friedemann Berger and Christoph Poppen at the Munich Conservatory, and has won a number of prestigious prizes. Most recently, it was awarded first prize and two special prizes at the renowned international chamber music competition 'Premio Trio di Trieste' (2017). It was also a prize winner in the Joseph Haydn Chamber Music Competition

in Vienna (2015) and won first prize in the Kulturkreis Gasteig e.V. (2014), where it achieved the highest ranking of the entire competition. The Trio Gaon has performed regularly in Germany, Belgium, France, Austria and Korea, in venues such as the Munich Gasteig Philharmonic hall and the Seoul Arts Center.

The acclaimed musicologist of the Sueddeutsche Zeitung, Harald Eggebrecht, wrote in a concert review: "Along with the extraordinary soloistic capabilities of the three players, one was also astounded by their highly refined sense for transparency and balance of sound, as well as by the presence of that very spirit of what playing chamber music together can mean."

TRIO MARVIN

Russia/Kazakhstan/Germany

Marina Grauman *violin* Marius Urba *cello* Vita Kan *piano*



ROUND ONE

MOZART Piano Trio in B-flat major, K502

VASKS *Episodi e canto perpetuo*

The Berlin-based Trio Marvin was founded in 2016 in Leipzig by pianist Vita Kan, cellist Marius Urba and violinist Marina Grauman. Only a few months later, it was awarded first prize at the Mendelssohn-Bartholdy Competition 2017 in Berlin. This success formed a solid foundation for the young musicians, who have already cultivated an inimitable fusion in their short time together.

All three trio members are prize winners of various international competitions, pursuing their own busy concert careers both in Germany and abroad. Originating

ROUND TWO

STANHOPE *Pulses* for Piano Trio

BRAHMS Piano Trio no 3 in C minor, op 101

ENCKE Piano Trio no 2

from Russia and CIS countries, they have inherited a deep understanding of the music of Shostakovich and other USSR-born geniuses, while collaboration with such musicians as Jacques Ammon (Celloproject) or Gerald Fauth (Trio Ex Aequo), and participation in various workshops has enhanced their experience and professional skills.

In September 2017, Trio Marvin won second prize and two special prizes at the Concorso Internazionale Premio Trio di Trieste in Italy.

TRIO SÕRA

France/Latvia

Pauline Chenais *piano* Magdalena Geka *violin* Angèle Legasa *cello*



ROUND ONE

HAYDN Piano Trio in C major, Hob. XV:27

WEINBERG Piano Trio, op 24

Distinguished by a powerful on-stage unity and a rare sensibility, Trio Sõra was born of a passion for chamber music shared by close friends at the Paris Conservatoire.

Trio Sõra is the winner of the Parkhouse Award and a prize winner of international competitions in France as well as abroad. Having performed in the USA, Belgium, England, Finland, Germany, Latvia and Switzerland, they have been invited to play at such venues as the Philharmonie de Paris, Wigmore Hall and at festivals such as the Kuhmo Chamber Music Festival, La Folle Journée de Nantes, the Roque d'Anthéron Piano Festival, as well as the Festival International d'Art Lyrique d'Aix-en-Provence, where they shared the stage with the great violist Tabea Zimmerman.

ROUND TWO

STANHOPE *Pulses* for Piano Trio

MENDELSSOHN Piano Trio in C minor

KAGEL Trio no 2

Always striving to deepen their musicianship, Trio Sõra is working with Mathieu Herzog, the Artemis Quartet at the Queen Elisabeth Music Chapel, and Claire Desert at the Conservatoire Supérieur de Musique et de Danse de Paris. They have also been privileged to work with artists such as Menahem Pressler, Quatuor Ebène, Quatuor Danel, Belcea Quartet, Eberhard Feltz, Valentin Erben and Gary Hoffman. The Trio is a resident ensemble of the Singer-Polignac Foundation in Paris and ProQuartet-CEMC, as well as a European Chamber Music Academy ensemble. Trio Sõra is thankful for the support of the Safran Music Foundation, Adami, and Fondation Meyer.



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BAUM QUARTETT

South Korea

Sun Shin *violin* Onyou Kim *violin* Daekyu Han *viola* Hang-Oh Cho *cello*



ROUND ONE

MOZART String Quartet in D minor, K421

SZYMANOWSKI String Quartet no 2

ROUND TWO

HARRISON *Balderdash*

MENDELSSOHN String Quartet in F minor, op 80

LAMPSON *Passacaglia*

The Baum Quartett was founded in March 2016 in Seoul, South Korea by Sun Shin (violin), Onyou Kim (violin), Daekyu Han (viola) and Hang-Oh Cho (cello).

In August 2016, the group participated in the acclaimed 40th. Internationale Sommerakademie für Kammermusik Niedersachsen, bringing the beauty of classical music closer to the hearts of the audience while at the same time receiving lessons from renowned professors of music.

The quartet also performed in the 9th Trondheim International Chamber Music Academy in 2016 together with Peter Jarusek (Pavel Haas Quartet). Many concerts followed until their biggest success to date in September

2017, winning 2nd prize in the Salieri-Zinetti Chamber Music International Competition in Verona. Following this, they went on to participate in the Mendelssohn Musikfestival 2017, continuing in their quest to consistently improve their performance.

The name of the quartet comes from the German word for tree. A Baum (tree) symbolizes the beauty and unity of various elements, representing the four members and their instruments, which form a wonderful unity in their music.

The Baum Quartett are currently continuing their studies at the Musikhochschule Hamburg.

CALLISTO QUARTET

USA

Paul Aguilar *violin* Rachel Stenzel *violin* Eva Kennedy *viola* Hannah Moses *cello*



ROUND ONE

HAYDN String Quartet in B-flat Major, op 71 no 1

BARTÓK String Quartet no 6

ROUND TWO

HARRISON *Balderdash*

DEBUSSY String Quartet in G minor

COLL *Cantos*

Formed in 2016 at the Cleveland Institute of Music (CIM), the Callisto Quartet brings together four dedicated and passionate musicians who share a love for chamber music.

Members Paul Aguilar and Rachel Stenzel (violins), Eva Kennedy (viola), and Hannah Moses (cello) are all accomplished individual chamber musicians and have won prizes in various local and national chamber music competitions.

The quartet is currently one of six groups chosen to participate in CIM's Intensive Quartet Seminar where they work closely with Peter Salaff and the Cavani String Quartet. They have also had the opportunity to play in coachings and masterclasses for Mathieu Herzog, Noah Bendix-Balgley, Elliott Antokoletz, and members of the Alban Berg, Belcea, Escher, Ying, and Vermeer Quartets. The Callisto Quartet was selected as the CIM

Apprentice Quartet for 2017, a position which includes extensive education and performance activities throughout the Cleveland community and a recital in the Cleveland Chamber Music Society's concert series. They were quarter-finalists at the 2017 Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition and top prize winners at the 2017 Ohio String Teachers' Association Competition and the WDAV Young Chamber Musicians Competition. In the summer of 2017, the quartet attended the Juilliard String Quartet Seminar and the McGill International String Quartet Academy; they also received a fellowship to study at the Norfolk Chamber Music Festival with members of the Brentano, Miro, and Emerson quartets. This autumn the quartet will appear in concert with David Geringas at the Cleveland Cello Society's 20th anniversary concert and will also be featured in a collaboration with the Cavani Quartet performing Mendelssohn's Octet.

ELIOT QUARTETT

Austria/Russia/Germany

Maryana Osipova *violin* Alexander Michael Sachs *violin* Dmitry Khakhalin *viola* Michael Preuß *cello*



ROUND ONE

HAYDN String Quartet in D major, op 71 no 2

BARTÓK String Quartet no 3

ADÈS *The Four Quarters*

ROUND TWO

HARRISON *Balderdash*

DEBUSSY String Quartet in G minor

The Eliot Quartett was founded in 2014 and is the result of long-term friendship and musical experience. The Quartett is named after the American poet T. S. Eliot, whose famous work "Four Quartets" was inspired by the innovative late quartets of Ludwig van Beethoven. Eliot attempted to establish a connection between past, present and future by breaking away from the accepted classical forms of the time.

The four musicians began studying chamber music with Professor Hubert Buchberger and are currently studying with Professor Tim Vogler at the Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst Frankfurt am Main, and with Professor Günter Pichler at the Instituto Internacional de Música de Camera at the Escuela Superior de Música Reina Sofía in Madrid.

The Eliot Quartett has attended masterclasses with Valentin Erben, Alfred Brendel, and the Mandelring Quartett.

Shortly after its inception, the Eliot Quartett captured the Polytechnische Gesellschaft Frankfurt chamber music prize in November 2014. The quartet went on to win 3rd prize at the Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy Hochschulwettbewerb in the string quartet division in January 2016 and 2nd prize at the Irene Steels-Wilsing Foundation String Quartet Competition in October 2016.

In 2017, the Eliot Quartett was accepted into the Villa Musica Rheinland-Pfalz Scholarship Program and received the Academy Prize for the promotion of young talent from the Academy of Science and Literature in Mainz. The quartet has performed in various concert series throughout Europe, including a residency at the Kammermusikwoche at the Thüringische Sommerakademie where they performed with cellist Manuel Fischer-Dieskau.

GILDAS QUARTET

United Kingdom

Christopher Jones *violin* Gemma Sharples *violin* Kay Stephen *viola* Anna Menzies *cello*



ROUND ONE

HAYDN String Quartet in D minor, op 76 no 2 'Fifths'

BRITTEN String Quartet no 3

ROUND TWO

HARRISON *Balderdash*

FRANCES-HOAD *My Day in Hell*

RAVEL String Quartet in F major

The Gildas Quartet have performed to critical acclaim at major venues including Wigmore Hall and on BBC Radio 3. Praised for their 'energy, verve, and refreshing approach', they are establishing themselves as one of the most vibrant ensembles to emerge from the UK in recent years.

Equally passionate about new music and works from the quartet canon, the Gildas have a concert series called 'First Nights, Last Rites' in which they commission pieces to be partnered with late, well-loved quartets. For the first instalment, a new piece by Philip Cashian was conceived alongside Schubert's 'Death and the Maiden', receiving its première at the St Magnus Festival in 2017. They have also had the privilege of working with composers including Sir Harrison Birtwistle, Colin Matthews, and Howard Skempton, and have recently completed a debut recording

of two works by Cheryl Frances-Hoad to be included in a disc of the composer's music for the Champs Hill label.

The Quartet are City Music Foundation Artists and recently finished their tenure as Junior Fellows at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, where they will be graduating to Associate Ensemble. They have frequently been featured by the Park Lane Group young artists scheme and are grateful for awards and support from the Tunnell Trust and the Royal Northern College of Music. They are keen collaborators and in the past year have joined musicians such as Alexander Baillie, Robin Tritschler, and Matthew Barley. Future highlights include performances with oboist Nicholas Daniel, soprano Rafaela Papdakakis, and clarinetist Jack McNeill.

GOLDMUND QUARTETT

Germany

Florian Schötz *violin* Pinchas C. Adt *violin* Christoph Vandory *viola* Raphael Paratore *cello*



ROUND ONE

HAYDN String Quartet in G major, op 54 no 1

SOKOLOVIĆ *Commedia dell Arte III*

RIHM String Quartet no 4

ROUND TWO

HARRISON *Balderdash*

RAVEL String Quartet in F major

The Goldmund Quartet, formed by violinists Florian Schötz and Pinchas Adt, violist Christoph Vandory and cellist Raphael Paratore, is one of the most exciting young string quartets in Europe. Educated by Gerhard Schulz in Stuttgart and Günter Pichler at the Instituto Internacional de Musica de Camera de Madrid, the quartet has received important artistic impulse in masterclasses with the Hagen, Borodin, Melos, Belcea, Artemis, Ysaye and Cherubini quartets, Ferenc Rados, Eberhard Feltz and Alfred Brendel.

Since their debut at Munich's Prinzregententheater, the quartet has appeared at international festivals such as the Festival Aix-en-Provence, Festival de Música y Danza Granada and the Ludwigsburger Schlossfestspiele. Recitals have taken it to prestigious chamber music venues and series in Denmark, France, Norway, Spain, Italy, Switzerland, Canada, China and the USA. Regular chamber music partners include artists such as Ksenija Sidorova, Pablo Barragan, Christopher Park, Christoph Poppen and Arabella Steinbacher.

The 2016/17 season saw the Goldmund Quartet give its debuts at Vienna's Musikverein, Konzerthaus Dortmund, Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festival and Kissinger Sommer.

Many of the quartet's concerts have been recorded and presented by leading broadcasters in Germany such as Bavarian Radio, ARD and Deutschlandradio, with further broadcasts on networks such as SWR, NDR, WDR, ORF, Radio classique and ARD alpha. In October 2016, NAXOS released the group's debut CD with works by Joseph Haydn that earned glowing reviews from the BBC, The Strad Magazine, Gramophone Magazine, the American Record Guide and many others.

The Goldmund Quartet has been awarded several prizes and scholarships, amongst them the Yehudi Menuhin Live Music Now scholarship. In 2015, they received a scholarship from the Deutscher Musikwettbewerb, the Bavarian Young Artist Award and recently the Karl-Klinger-Prize during the 2016 ARD International Music Competition in Munich.

IDOMENEO QUARTET

Belgium/Hungary/Spain

Mark Derudder *violin* Bálint Váray *violin* Miguel Angel Rodriguez *viola* Pau Codina Masferrer *cello*



ROUND ONE

HAYDN String Quartet in B minor, op 33 no 1

JANÁČEK String Quartet no 1 'Kreutzer Sonata'

ADÈS *The Four Quarters*

Formed in 2009, the Idomeneo Quartet held the Chamber Music Fellowship at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama 2009-2011, studying with Alasdair Tait. They later continued their studies with Rainer Schmidt in Basel and the Vogler Quartet in Stuttgart.

In 2013, the Quartet was awarded 2nd prize at the Trondheim International Chamber Music Competition for String Quartets. Other accolades include the Tunnell Trust Award and being chosen by the Park Lane Group to participate in their concert series in London.

At the 54th Jeunesse Musicales course in Weikersheim (with Heime Müller and the Vogler Quartet), they were awarded the 'most convincing newcomer ensemble' prize by the Friends of the Jeunesse Musicales in Germany. They were invited back in the summer of 2015 for masterclasses with the Casals Quartet and Heime Müller.

ROUND TWO

HARRISON *Balderdash*

MENDELSSOHN String Quartet in F minor, op 80

The Idomeneo Quartet has held recitals in numerous concert venues all over Europe, including in Germany, the Netherlands, France, Italy, Austria, Greece, Norway and Belgium, as well as extensively throughout the UK in venues such as Colston Hall, the Barbican, Wigmore Hall, the Purcell Room, Royal Festival Hall and St Martin in the Fields. They have also given concert tours in Brazil and around Scotland.

They have performed at various international festivals, including MISQA in Montreal, the King's Lynn Festival, the White Crow Music Festival in the Netherlands and Heidelberger Frühling Internationales Festival in Germany.

QUATUOR AGATE

France

Adrien Jurkovic *violin* Thomas Descamps *violin* Raphaël Pagnon *viola* Simon Iachemet *cello*



ROUND ONE

MOZART String Quartet in C major, K465 'Dissonance'

BARTÓK String Quartet no 3

CLOZEL *Volutes*

The members of Quatuor Agate first met at the Conservatoire de Boulogne-Billancourt. After completing their respective studies at the Conservatoire de Paris (CNSMDP), they continued their studies in Berlin.

The quartet has been invited to perform at several international festivals with renowned partners. In 2016, with the support of Jérôme Pernoo and the Danel Quartet, they created the CorsiClassic Festival, a chamber music festival held in Corsica. They have also had the opportunity to work with Gerhard Schult, Tim Vogler, Michael Vogler, Stephan Forck, Yovan Markovitch, Luc-Marie Aguera, Andrej Bielow and others.

ROUND TWO

HARRISON *Balderdash*

DEBUSSY String Quartet in G minor

Quator Agate have an interest in contemporary music, and in 2017 had the opportunity to perform pieces by Bernadette Clozel, Michel Boédéc and Stéphane Delplace in the composers' presence. They currently study at the Hochschule für Musik "Hanns Eisler" in the class of Prof. Eberhard Feltz.

THALEIA QUARTET

Japan

Kako Yamada *violin* Rinako Osawa *violin* Sakuya Watabe *viola* Miu Ishizaki *cello*



ROUND ONE

HAYDN String Quartet in D major, op 71 no 2

JANÁČEK String Quartet no 1 'Kreutzer Sonata'

NISHIMURA String Quartet no 5 'Shesha'

The Thaleia Quartet was formed in 2014 by students from Tokyo University of the Arts. They are studying with Professor Kazuki Sawa, Katsuya Matsubara, Toshihiko Ichitsubo and Nobuko Yamazaki, and have participated in masterclasses with Gabriel Lipkind, the Škampa Quartet, the Chilingirian Quartet and Garfield Jackson.

ROUND TWO

HARRISON *Balderdash*

RAVEL String Quartet in F major

They were awarded third prize at the Salzburg-Mozart International Chamber Music Competition and second prize in the Munetsugu Hall String Quartet Competition. They have also given recitals and participated in the Lake District Summer Music program in 2016, as well as in the 2017 Chilingirian Summer Course.

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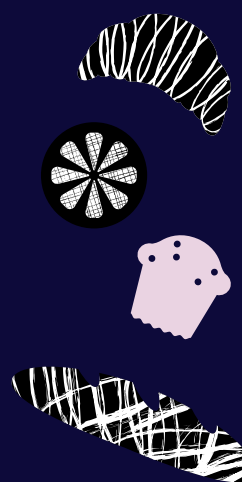
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PROGRAM NOTES

Piano Trios

Kaveh Tayaranian Azimi (born 1981)

Fragmentary Impulses 2 (2017)

Kaveh Tayaranian Azimi began piano lessons at 11 and soon thereafter began composing. At the Tehran University of Art, he completed his master's degree in composition with honours. Since 2007, Azimi has been active as a composer and as a university lecturer at the Tehran University of Art. His recent achievements include works for the Risuonanze Contemporary Music Festival in Italy (2015 and 2016), reaching the final rounds of both the ACIMC composition award (France) and the Mauricio Kagel Composition Competition (Vienna). Azimi's works have been performed in Italy, Austria, France, and Spain.

Fragmentary Impulses 2 follows on from a solo piano piece of the same title, and was the winning composition at the Haydn Competition held in Vienna's University for Music and the Performing Arts in 2017.

Forceful sliding string tremolos and piano glissades are at first sounded between moments of charged silence. The gestures gradually coalesce into an edgy and energetic counterpoint. Liquid piano writing rises slowly from the depths but the expected slow section is postponed by more terse gestures. The slow section that follows is no less forceful, though long-held piano chords and single notes from strings give it a weightless quality. Harmonic whistling and percussive sounds create a short, atmospheric coda.

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Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Piano Trio in E-flat major, op 1 no 1 (1795)

- I. Allegro* (fast)
- II. Adagio cantabile* (slow and lyrical)
- III. Scherzo. Allegro assai* (scherzo: very fast)
- IV. Finale. Presto* (finale: extremely fast)

In 1792, the 21-year old Beethoven, seeking the inspiration of one of Europe's major musical cities, and composition lessons with Joseph Haydn, headed for Vienna. Ferdinand Ries gives an account of the composer performing the three opus 1 trios there at the end of 1793. There are few published musical debuts as striking or as audacious. Beethoven's assured assimilation of classical structures and sheer boldness of approach defy their opus 1 label; indeed, they already provide indication of the musical revolution he would lead in the decades to come. In the first movement of the first trio, Beethoven's craft is already on display. Violin and cello have new levels of independence, which, alongside virtuoso scalar keyboard flourishes, boldly declare Beethoven's intentions. The second theme is chorale-like and hushed.

The Adagio cantabile opens with a lyrical piano theme in A-flat major. Somewhat unusually the movement is a rondo: the opening piano solo returns numerous times alongside

alternating episodes. The third movement Scherzo and trio is a first for the piano trio medium, and broke the ground for future composers. Beethoven's sense of humour pervades the Presto. The first movement's upward 'rockets', now going backwards, are tossed around with utter cheekiness. Following a stormy development section, unlikely key changes slide playfully under the gate, and the trio finishes with brilliance and bravado.

Adapted from a note © Angela Turner 2016

Piano Trio in G major op 1 no 2 (1794)

- I. Adagio – Allegro vivace* (slow – lively and fast)
- II. Largo con espressione* (broadly, with expression)
- III. Scherzo & Trio: Allegro* (fast)
- IV. Finale: Presto* (finale: very fast)

Of the three opus 1 Trios it may be that Beethoven's mentor Haydn would have most enjoyed the second, in G major. It begins with a slow introduction, a frequent feature of Beethoven's early compositions, leading to an extended Allegro in sonata form. The sunlit tonality of G major and essentially joyous mood that prevails throughout make this one of the most enjoyable and unproblematical movements in all of Beethoven. A much more serious note is struck in the Largo con espressione in E major, the emotional high point of the entire Trio, where Beethoven's expressive powers are at their youthful peak. The dance-like Scherzo is in a strong triple time. Its contrasting Trio (in this context, 'trio' has nothing to do with the title of the work, but refers simply to the middle section of a menuet or, in this case, a scherzo) is in B minor, featuring long trills in the piano part of the end of each of its sections. It is followed by a repeat of the Scherzo proper. The final Presto is cast in another of Beethoven's extended sonata forms but its brisk tempo and jolly themes make it fly by so quickly that the listener is hardly aware of the sheer length.

© Musica Viva Australia

Piano Trio in D major, op 70 no 1 'Ghost' (1808)

- I. Allegro vivace e con brio* (fast and lively and with enthusiasm)
- II. Largo assai e espressivo* (very broad and expressive)
- III. Finale: Presto* (finale: extremely fast)

The year 1808 was one of Beethoven's most productive, producing highly contrasting works such as the landmark Fifth and Sixth Symphonies, Choral Fantasy, Cello Sonata (op 69), and two grand Piano Trios (op 70). Beethoven's D major Piano Trio displays unrest and anxiety. The first movement opens with a theme played in octaves by the three instruments, quickly followed by a lyrical theme on the cello. The development is lengthy and contrasts are achieved by extreme changes of texture. A driving passage in unison or octaves gives way to contrapuntal imitations: a brief lyric interlude is interrupted by a vehement outburst of sound.

The uneasy atmosphere continues in the slow movement, which begins with the violin and cello in octaves. An eerie repeated figure is, according to Gustav Nottebohm, to be found in Beethoven's sketches for the opening scene of his unrealised 'Macbeth'. The desolation of this music suggested the nickname of 'Ghost' for the work. Several despairing climaxes are developed and die away in long descending scales. Like the opening movement, the slow movement is constructed from a minimum of material. The finale, Presto, is in sonata form. Throughout it there is the same compulsion to make much of little, the development principle taking possession of the entire movement. It is this characteristic which makes the D major Trio one of Beethoven's most passionate utterances in his chamber music.

Piano Trio in E-flat major, op 70 no 2 (1808)

- I. Poco sostenuto – Allegro, ma non troppo* (a little sustained – fast but not too fast)
- II. Allegretto* (moderately quick)
- III. Allegretto, ma non troppo* (moderately quick but not too much)
- IV. Finale: Allegro* (finale: fast)

The E-flat major Trio commences with a slow introduction, and it is the cello that sounds first, taking the opening role traditionally bestowed upon the piano. Without any sense of competition or dominance, we hear the opening ideas quietly passed between the strings and then to the piano. The introduction gently spins into the main, quicker body of the movement. Beethoven again surprises with both the second and third movements being Allegrettos. The second movement alternates between major and minor statements, a type of double-variation device that was one of Haydn's favourites. The third movement is a very civilised minuet. The opening theme, offered by the violin, is borrowed from the first movement of Beethoven's opus 26 Piano Sonata, also in A-flat major. As if saving a burst of energy for the end, the finale's Allegro marking makes a real impact after its more sedate companions.

Adapted from a note © Angela Turner 2013

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

Piano Trio no 1 in B major, op 8 (1853-1890)

- I. Allegro con brio* (fast, with enthusiasm)
- II. Scherzo: Allegro molto* (scherzo: very fast)
- III. Adagio* (slow)
- IV. Allegro* (fast)

Brahms first sketched out the Trio in B major, op 8 in 1853 and completed it in the following January. It was among the draft works which the 20 year old composer showed Schumann when the two met in 1853. The work was published in 1859 but over 30 years later in 1890, with the prospect of another edition of the work going to press, Brahms revised it radically. Throughout the long and complex first movement there are echoes of Brahms' own pianistic skill and idiosyncrasies, as well as folk-like rhythms, falling harmonic and melodic thirds, and melodies doubled in sixths.

After the intensity of the first movement, the Scherzo with its hunting horn motive comes as an exuberant contrast. In the Trio section the composer employs his characteristic parallel sixths to telling effect before the return in virtuoso mode of the main theme. The Adagio's stately chords convey an air of tragedy and grief which pervades the whole movement.

With the lightly accompanied opening cello melody, the final movement establishes itself around the key of B minor. Passing through a series of climaxes featuring brilliant runs in the piano, the movement presses on to an insistent, uncompromising conclusion.

Adapted from a note © Martin Buzacott

Piano Trio no 3 in C minor, op 101 (1886)

- I. Allegro energico* (energetic and fast)
- II. Presto non assai* (faster, but not too much)
- III. Andante grazioso* (at a graceful walking pace)
- IV. Allegro molto* (very fast)

After the hard work of creating his Fourth Symphony, the summer of 1886 was a blissful and productive time for Brahms, in the idyllic setting of Lake Thun in Switzerland. Musically reinvigorated, he completed three highly contrasted chamber works for strings and piano, including this dramatic Piano Trio in C minor: his third and final work in this genre.

From the outset, powerful declamatory chords and gritty rhythmic figures take hold – one of the most arrestingly bold and forthright statements in all of Brahms's output – providing the threads that form the basis of the entire opening movement. By contrast, the second movement was described by Donald Tovey as a piece that 'hurries by, like a frightened child.' Rarely venturing outside the realm of soft dynamics, and requiring muted strings, Brahms creates a sound world of shadows and whispers. In what is perhaps the most purely tuneful four minutes in all of Brahms's chamber music, the third movement imparts an air of contentment. There are seemingly no constrictions placed upon the melody to fit into a certain structure or number of beats: Brahms simply lets it unfold. The contrast with the final movement – a return to the intense drama of the first – could not be greater.

This C minor Trio was premiered on 20 December 1886, with Brahms at the piano, and two of the great string virtuosos of the time, violinist Jenő Hubay and cellist David Popper.

Adapted from a note © Angela Turner 2010

Frank Bridge (1879-1941)

Piano Trio no 2, H.178 (1929)

- I. Allegretto ben moderato* (moderately quick)
- II. Molto allegro* (very fast)
- III. Andante molto moderato* (a very moderate walking pace)
- IV. Allegro ma non troppo* (fast, but not too fast)

Bridge was the quietly radical kind of artist that Britain often produces. He had a fiercely independent mind – he was a

committed pacifist, for instance – and was more interested in finding a unique internationalist voice than in being part of a revival of English folk-song or older liturgical music.

In the 1920s his music, personal, emotive and more inclined to engage with the styles of composers like Berg, reached audiences as far afield as the USA, and his Piano Trio no 2 was commissioned by, and dedicated to, the doyenne of American philanthropists, Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge.

It is a decidedly un-English piece – a dark and uncompromising first movement is set off against a pointillist Molto allegro. There is a late Viennese lushness to the almost obsessive Andante, while the menacingly elfin finale explores unusual sonorities, contrasting delicate and brutally sardonic textures. The English critics hated it – too modern, too foreign, too Schoenbergian – and accused Bridge of wanting to ‘uglify his music to keep it up to date’. In fact Bridge’s fine ear for sound was one of the things that made his pupil Benjamin Britten adore him.

© Gordon Kerry 2018

Simone Corti (born 1986)

Musica discreta for piano trio (2016)

Simone Corti studied piano at the Giuseppe Verdi Conservatory Milan. At the same conservatory he obtained the Diploma of Composition with the highest marks under the guidance of Gabriele Manca. He also studied conducting at the Berliner Meisterkurse and the European Academy of Orchestra Conducting with Lior Shambadal, Julius Kalmar and Romolo Gessi. He then made further study of the direction of the contemporary repertoire under the guidance of Sandro Gorli.

He is much awarded, and works have been commissioned and performed by Divertimento Ensemble (Milan), Munich International Orchestra, San Fedele Foundation (Milan) and Chamber Music Association (Trieste).

Musica discreta, composed in 2016, is, as its title suggests, given over frequently to pointillist textures made up of discrete sounds and motifs. In one movement, its first section is bracing, with emphatic punctuations by the piano of string figures that range from terse motifs to passages featuring long glissandi. It is increasingly frenetic until a middle section when the music dissolves. Quiet disembodied semitonal dissonances from piano and distant bass tolling supports high harmonic glissandi for strings. More explosive piano motifs lead into a final section of driving rhythms and unquiet gestures whose energy finally dissipates.

© Gordon Kerry 2018

Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)

Piano Trio in E minor, op 90 ‘Dumky’ (1891)

- I. Lento maestoso (dumka) - Allegro (furiant)* (majestically flowing – fast)
- II. Poco adagio (dumka) - Vivace non troppo (furiant) - Andante (dumka) - Vivace non troppo (furiant)* (fairly slow – lively but not too much – walking pace – lively but not too much)
- III. Andante – Allegretto* (walking pace – moderately quick)
- IV. Andante moderato (dumka) - Allegretto scherzando (furiant)* (moderate walking pace – playfully quick)
- V. Allegro* (fast)
- VI. Lento maestoso (dumka) - Vivace (furiant) - Lento (dumka) - Vivace (furiant)* (majestically flowing – lively – flowing - lively)

The word ‘Dumka’ is sometimes literally translated from Ukrainian as ‘thought’. In classical music, it describes a style that moves unpredictably between sections, careening from energetic to dreamy. So perhaps it has developed over time as a way of capturing the free-flowing quality of stream of consciousness. Dvořák liked the idea of a dumka and used it in several works, but most famously in this trio. Though on paper all of its six movements look contrasting enough to be a single overarching dumka, each movement itself is also full of contrasts and interest. It was written in 1891, when the composer was having a bumper year of acclaimed premieres all over England and Europe, and then set off to America (tradition says it was his friend and mentor Johannes Brahms who proof-read this trio before publication, as Dvořák was overseas). Dvořák was always happy to break with convention when it suited his musical instincts, and this trio shows his artistic confidence. There is almost nothing in his form that follows the traditional structures established by Haydn and Beethoven for piano trios. Instead, Dvořák goes with the flow of his melodic inventiveness, allowing the form to evolve naturally and effortlessly in a gorgeous outpouring.

© Musica Viva

Thorsten Encke (born 1966)

Piano Trio no 2 (2017)

Thorsten Encke studied cello and conducting in Hannover, but after 2005 shifted his focus to composition. He has received numerous commissions from the North German Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen and the Hitzacker Summer Music Festival. His works are performed by artists such as Paavo Järvi, Christian Tetzlaff, Sharon Kam, Isabelle

Faust, Julian Steckel, and many other internationally active musicians. Committed to imparting new ways of listening and presenting concert experiences, he founded the orchestra Musica Assoluta in 2011.

The composer writes:

Composing this for Berlin’s Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy Hochschule Competition (Berlin 2017) was a challenge to show young musicians a bridge to today’s musical creation from that of the masters of the past. As the composers’ ideas are conveyed exclusively via the score (no peeping on YouTube!), it was important to me to write a piece that let the musicians’ imagination run wild.

Marked ‘fierce and fiery’, the piece alternates ad libitum passages and driving rhythmic sections, intensifying constantly until the arc of suspense suddenly breaks off in the turbulent climax. A pensive passage follows, in which the echo sound-effect of the middle piano pedal comes into play. A short virtuoso coda, leading from the lowest to the highest register, concludes the piece.

© Thorsten Encke 2018

Jean Françaix (1912–1997)

Trio for violin, cello and piano (1986)

- I. [No tempo indication]*
- II. Scherzando* (playful)
- III. Andante* (walking pace)
- IV. Allegrissimo* (very fast)

Famously praised as a child by Ravel for his artistry and curiosity, Françaix became one of the most prolific composers of the 20th century. A pianist of no mean gifts, he wrote concertante works for most solo instruments as well as music for opera, ballet and film. He was a devotee, in particular, of the French wind tradition, writing numerous pieces for soloists and wind ensembles, but was equally capable of writing engagingly for colourful ad hoc ensembles and for piano and strings. His music aimed ‘to give pleasure...to be jolly most of the time – even comical’.

His four-movement Trio dates from 1986, and begins with an untitled movement characterised by cheery music in 5/8 time. In mood it is unmistakably reminiscent of Satie or some of the composers known as Les Six, but Françaix writes distinctively tonal music and avoids the cynicism of what he called ‘the premeditated wrong note’. The first movement is succeeded by an equally happy scherzando. The Andante, while not slow does offer a moment of pensive respite, but Françaix’ good humour bursts out again, complete with some parodic touches, in the brilliant finale.

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Mikołaj Górecki (born 1971)

Six Bagatelles for Piano Trio (1997)

- I. Deciso* (decisive)
- II. Molto sostenuto* (very sustained)
- III. Presto* (extremely fast)
- IV. Lento* (flowing)
- V. Lento* (flowing)
- VI. Energico* (energetic)

Born in Katowice on 1st February 1971, Mikołaj Górecki began learning the violin when he was six and later took up the piano as well. He graduated from the State Secondary Music School in Katowice in 1990 and went on to study composition at the Karol Szymanowski Academy of Music in Katowice under his father, Henryk Mikołaj Górecki. He graduated with honours in 1995 and in the course of the next two years was awarded two scholarships at the Banff Centre for the Arts, Canada, where he further honed his skills as a composer. In 2000, he received his doctorate in composition from Indiana University in Bloomington, USA and he then lectured at McGill University in Montreal from 2000 to 2001. He currently lives and works in the USA.

His compositions have been performed both in Poland and abroad.

The musicians who have performed his work include Kaja Danczowska, Jadwiga Kotnowska, Agnieszka Duczmal, Gabriel Chmura, the Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra in Katowice, the Amadeus Chamber Orchestra, and the Brooklyn Philharmonic Orchestra in New York.

Dating from 1997 the Six Bagatelles reflect the strong influence of earlier Polish music in their varied series of character pieces. The piece premiered in Montreal in 1998.

© Mikołaj Górecki 2018

Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)

Trio no 25 in E minor, Hob. XV:12 (1788-89)

- I. Allegro moderato* (moderately fast)
- II. Andante* (walking pace)
- III. Rondo: Presto* (rondo: very fast)

Writing to his publisher Artaria in November of 1788, Haydn reported that, ‘as regards the three new Sonatas (Trios), one and a half are already finished’. While the publishers of the day did not shrink from bringing out a single work, more often than not sonatas, trios and quartets were issued in sets, three or six at a time. Whether the present trio was one of those already completed or still to be composed, we know that it was by early March of 1789. The opening Allegro moderato is one of Haydn’s most dramatic movements in which he avails himself fully of the thematic and tonal contrasts afforded by the sonata form. The Andante provides the tonal contrast of E major. Also cast in sonata form, but with varied reprise, it breathes a gentle lyricism that is not stilled in the least by its highly ornamented melodic line. Beneath the rococo decoration

one senses the simple and perfect contours of the essential thematic material. The final Rondo is a brilliant symphonic scale movement, full of unexpected turnings. Incredibly it seems to be constructed from a single thematic cell. It finds a balance between the modes: beginning and ending in E major, there is a long minor section, briefly recalled in the coda along with snippets of its tune presented in the major.

© Howard Schott

Trio no 43 in C major, Hob. XV:27 (c1796)

- I. Allegro* (fast)
- II. Andante* (walking pace)
- III. Finale: Presto* (finale: very fast)

Haydn’s last three Piano Trios (nos 43-45) grew out of his second trip to London, in 1795, where he hoped to repeat the artistic successes, not to mention the huge profits, of his first trip there. Probably composed in 1796, they were published the following year and are dedicated to Therese Jansen (‘Mrs Bartolozzi’), a brilliant British pianist for whom Haydn had composed three sonatas in 1794.

Despite, therefore, the gradual emancipation of the string instruments in trio writing over the course of Haydn’s life, these pieces are clearly meant as showpieces for the pianist, who is able to take advantage of the singing lines of the violin to indulge in rapid, right hand ornamentation. The first movement begins with a skipping gesture that flowers into glittering piano writing, while the strings introduce thematic material that is taken in some unexpected chromatic directions. The development section contains passages of contrapuntal intricacy for the strings. The genial Andante is in A major (relationships between keys a third apart becomes common at this stage in Haydn’s career) and allows the violin and cello moments of lyrical beauty amid sudden plunges into the minor. The sparkling rondo finale tosses virtuosic material between keyboard and strings, and makes much of accented syncopations and other rhythmic tricks.

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Trio no 44 in E major, Hob. XV:28, (c1796)

- I. Allegro moderato* (moderately fast)
- II. Allegretto* (fairly quick)
- III. Allegro* (fast)

In some ways this trio is the most original of Haydn’s late works. Many of its unusual features recall an earlier style, the mannerist phase of his compositions of the mid-1770s most particularly. The very opening of the Allegro moderato has the piano playing pizzicato too, except for the melody notes in the upper voice. This tender theme is strangely and totally transformed in texture and appearance when it recurs in the development in a resolute and assertive setting in full chords in A-flat (the enharmonic equivalent of G-sharp major), the true climax of the whole movement. The ensuing Allegretto (to be understood in somewhat the same sense as Beethoven’s use of this tempo marking in his Seventh Symphony) is a unique blend of Baroque,

Classical and pre-Romantic elements. The ground bass is soon abandoned, or at least treated very freely, with a richly embroidered upper voice sometimes three or even four octaves removed from the bass line. The finale partakes more of three-part than of rondo form. A long section in E minor between the two outer ones in the major, which mirror each other, contains a cunning bit of harmonic sorcery that would not be out of place in a work of the Romantics, a modulation that turns out not to modulate at all after passing through all sorts of distantly related chords. Here we have Haydn at his witty best.

© Howard Schott

Mauricio Kagel (1931-2008)

Piano Trio no 2 (2001)

[In one movement]

Mauricio Kagel was born in Buenos Aires to a Jewish family of Russian and German origin. He studied singing, conducting, piano, cello and organ privately, including sessions with Ginastera and Paz. At the University of Buenos Aires he studied philosophy and literature, and was influenced by the work of Jorge Luis Borges. He left Perón’s Argentina to study in Germany in 1957 where he was based until his death. Much of Kagel’s work, which often takes the form of avant-garde music theatre, is based in humorous engagement with and parody of the music of the past. But it grows out of a kind of respect, as he once noted: ‘How would composers of the past write if they were alive today? Viewing myself as part of a continual musical tradition, I have never ceased to reflect on that question and on the consequences it entails.’

Kagel’s Piano Trio no 2, composed in 2001, takes elements and gestures ranging from ‘high’ art music (some by his colleagues) through vernacular forms such as dance and film music, that are immediately familiar but slightly distorted; apparent collapses and sudden silences, and the juxtaposition of rage and sweetness, all help to maintain the sense of strangeness until the work’s enigmatic conclusion.

© Gordon Kerry 2018

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

Piano Trio no 1 in D minor, op 49 (1839)

- I. Molto Allegro agitato* (very fast, agitated)
- II. Andante con moto tranquillo* (moderately with motion, in a tranquil manner)
- III. Scherzo: Leggiero e vivace* (light and lively)
- IV. Finale: Allegro assai appassionato* (very fast, passionately)

In July 1839, Mendelssohn played his new opus 49 trio for his friend Ferdinand Hiller. Hiller expressed his deep admiration, but mentioned one small misgiving: he felt the piano writing was ‘somewhat old-fashioned’ and suggested ‘certain alterations’ on the basis of the experiments of

Chopin and Liszt. Initially reluctant, Mendelssohn reworked the piano part, giving a brilliance that one might now assume from a virtuoso composer-pianist of that period.

The opening of the trio features an arching, lyrical cello melody, which if not for the brooding, agitated pianist’s chords might even seem reflective. Though the piano writing bears the influence of the virtuoso Romantic school, there is never the impression of virtuosity purely for virtuosity’s sake.

The second movement is a ‘song without words’, with tender melody floating above the accompaniment figure. Marked ‘light and lively’, the third movement scherzo evokes the nimble, scurrying ‘fairy’ world of his overture to *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, with the opening theme tossed between instruments.

The finale returns to the largely serious disposition of the opening movement. Here, Mendelssohn masterfully manages to unite the brooding, agitated characters at the start of the trio with the tenderness of the second movement and impishness of the third, with a rhythmic energy that compellingly drives the work to its conclusion.

Adapted from note © Angela Turner 2017

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

Piano Trio no 2 in C minor, op 66 (1845)

- I. Allegro energico e con fuoco* (fast: energetic and fiery)
- II. Andante espressivo* (at a walking pace; expressive)
- III. Scherzo: Molto allegro quasi presto* (very fast)
- IV. Finale: Allegro appassionato* (fast and passionate)

The second trio’s opening movement has a serious, agitated atmosphere, largely due to its swirling theme, restlessly churning and chopping, but always remaining refined. The Andante second movement, too, is reminiscent of Mendelssohn’s piano pieces, the lyrical *Songs Without Words*. Indeed, beginning with piano alone, the movement is characteristically sentimental, with the strings offering their voices as an interweaving duo.

Mendelssohn himself described the Scherzo third movement as “a trifle nasty to play”, which, coming from one of the virtuoso pianists of the 19th century, delivers little comfort to present-day musicians! Evoking the nimble, scurrying ‘fairy’ world of earlier works like *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, this fleeting movement eventually evaporates in typical Mendelssohnian fashion with a progression of quiet, detached chords.

In the weightier Finale, an impetuous, leaping theme is launched before bouncing back down. Mendelssohn uses this theme to set up what has been described as ‘one of the most enchanting moments in all of chamber music’, when, in he middle of the movement, a chorale-like setting is suddenly introduced. The chorale is integrated with the Trio’s earlier themes; their concurrent transformations create a grand, quasi-orchestral sound world that pushes each of the instruments to its limits, all the way through to its majestic, major-key conclusion.

Adapted from a note © Angela Turner 2010

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Piano Trio in B-flat major, K502 (1786)

- I. Allegro* (fast)
- II. Larghetto* (fairly broadly)
- III. Allegretto* (fairly quick)

The Piano Trio in B-flat major, K502, was composed in November 1786, between *Figaro* and *Don Giovanni*. It is one of the finest of Mozart’s trios and provides a good example of the satisfactory solution which Mozart had evolved for dealing with the relative importance of the roles of the three instrumental participants.

The first movement has a principal theme reminiscent of the opening of the Piano Concerto of 1784, K450. The development section starts with a new melody before embarking on a short thematic workout, a peculiarity used by Mozart more often in his earlier years, but still found now and then in the more carefree works of his mature period. The second movement, in E-flat major, has a background of calm reassurance. It is in a rondo form, with repeats of the main theme alternating with two contrasting episodes.

The finale (Allegretto), in B-flat major again, is also cast in a rondo form, but one with a strong commitment to the closely worked development of its themes. Its mood is one of uninhibited gaiety and good humour.

© Musica Viva

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)

Piano Trio in A minor (1915)

- I. Modéré* (moderately)
- II. Pantoum (assez vif)* (quite lively)
- III. Passacaille (très large)* (very broadly)
- IV. Final (animé)* (animated)

Although not ostensibly programmatic, the Ravel Trio reflects the anxieties of a loyal patriot on the eve of battle. Rejected by the French infantry because of physical frailty, Ravel joined the ambulance corps and was awaiting call to duty in 1915 when he penned the three movements of this rather intense work.

The Trio is formally taut throughout the first three movements, with intensity the result of suppressed emotion rather than outspokenness. In the closing movement Ravel unwinds, offering a long, cheerful rondo theme, adorned with luminous tremolos, and virtuoso writing for all three parts. The finale reveals the composer’s keen understanding of both the solo and ensemble potentialities of his instruments.

In the second movement, Pantoum, Ravel seeks to imitate the rhythm of Malay poetry. The title refers to the characteristic Malay sun declamation, accompanied by instruments. The three themes consist of a repeated-note figure punctuated with wicked staccatos, a contrasting lyrical melody and a rhythmic elongation of the first subject. Eventually the three ideas are savagely pitted against one another.

© Laszlo Varga

Kaija Saariaho (born 1952)

***Light And Matter* (2014)**

[In one movement]

One of the most distinguished composers of her generation, Kaija Saariaho studied at the Sibelius Academy. She continued her studies in Freiburg with Brian Ferneyhough and Klaus Huber, at the Darmstadt summer courses, and, from 1982, at the IRCAM research institute in Paris. She recently became the first woman in over a century to have an opera performed at the New York Met.

The composer writes:

The starting point for the music is light kinetic energy, which is developed into more dramatic gestures and rapid exchanges among the instruments. The piece advances in spinning motion, moving from the original luminous fabric into more thematic patterns or towards the inertia of slow choral textures, before returning into the original weightlessness and starting a new flickering spin.

As a result, we hear three musical elements – kinetic texture, thematic motives and slowly moving choral material – in constantly changing combinations and orchestrations. I wrote this piece in New York, while watching from my window the changing light and colours of Morningside Park.

Besides providing me with the name for the piece, perhaps that continuous transformation of light on the glinting leaves and the immobile trunks of the solid trees became the inspiration for the musical materials in this piece.

© Kaija Saariaho 2014

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

Piano Trio no 1 in B-flat major, D898 (1827)

- I. Allegro moderato* (moderately fast)
- II. Andante un poco mosso* (at a walking pace, moving along)
- III. Scherzo. Allegro* (fast)
- IV. Rondo. Allegro vivace* (fast, lively)

It is believed that Schubert worked on the B-flat Trio between October and November, 1827. When Robert Schumann heard the Trio, he declared, ‘One glance at it and the troubles of our human existence disappear and the whole world is fresh and bright again.’ It opens in the cheerful key of B-flat major and there is much rhythmic interest.

In the Andante movement the piano’s accompaniment gently sets itself in the background, and the cello sings its expressive theme, relishing its time in the upper register. The theme is passed from instrument to instrument, as if all three players are engaged in eloquent dialogue. It appears Schubert originally intended a different second movement, posthumously published as the Notturmo, D897, but later changed his mind and composed the present movement in its place. The light-hearted third movement teases with merriment. Its brief trio section portrays a graceful Viennese

waltz. Alfred Einstein suggests that the theme of the Trio’s final movement bears a likeness to the composer’s 1815 song *Skolie*; ‘Let us in the bright May morning take delight in the brief life of the flower, before its fragrance disappears.’

Adapted from a note © Angela Turner 2010

Piano Trio no 2 in E-flat major, D929 (1827)

- I. Allegro* (fast)
- II. Andante con moto* (walking pace, but with movement)
- III. Scherzando. Allegro moderato* (playfully, moderately fast)
- IV. Allegro moderato* (moderately fast)

In Robert Schumann’s view, Schubert’s ‘Trio in E flat is active, masculine, dramatic...’ Be that as it may, the E-flat was an atypical success story for Schubert, with the work receiving public airings – and being accepted for publication – during his lifetime, and Schubert had it performed at his benefit concert in early 1828.

The first movement is often compared to Beethoven, in its bold contrasts of assertive and lyrical music (in triple time, which is relatively unusual for a classical first movement, but is how Beethoven casts that of his Eroica Symphony) and its development out of reiterated motifs passing though remote key areas, rather than Schubert’s usual practice of spinning out long melodies.

The slow movement has recently been proven to derive from phrases in a Swedish song, ‘Se solen sjunker’ (see the sun set), one of which is a two-note motif sung to the word ‘farewell’. It is in C minor, like the funeral march in Beethoven’s symphony, which work some have heard alluded to in the piano’s final figuration in the movement. After an energetic scherzo the finale is a tour-de-force, in which Schubert finds it hard to say farewell to his Swedish melody, and perhaps to Beethoven, who had died recently.

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Robert Schumann (1810–1856)

Piano Trio no 3 in G minor, op 110 (c 1851)

- I. Bewegt, doch nicht zu rasch* (Moving, but not too fast)
- II. Ziemlich langsam – Etwas bewegter – Tempo I* (fairly slow – with more movement)
- III. Rasch – Etwas zuruckhaltend bis zum langsameren Tempo – Tempo I* (fast – somewhat restrained to a slower tempo – Tempo I)
- IV. Kräftig, mit Humor* (Strongly, but with humour)

On 11 October 1851, Clara Schumann wrote in her diary, ‘Robert is working busily on a Trio for piano, violin and cello but he won’t let me hear any of it until he is completely finished. I only know that it is in G minor.’ When she did hear it for the first time a couple of weeks later she declared: ‘It is original and increasingly passionate, especially the scherzo, which carries one along with it into the wildest depths.’

With four movements, the G minor Trio was Schumann’s last for this combination – the previous two having been written in 1847 (no 1 in D minor and no 2 in F major), and the fourth ‘trio’, the *Phantasiestücke*, op 88 written in 1842. The G minor Trio is full of the lyrically passionate melodies for which Schumann is famous, as well as the quirky and unexpected, as evinced in the third movement scherzo, of which Clara spoke so highly. But his mental decline was accelerating, and, just five years later, Robert Schumann was dead at the age of 46.

© Hilary Shrubbs 2015

Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975)

Piano Trio no 2 in E minor, op 67 (1944)

The composer writes:

- I. Andante* (At a walking pace)
- II. Allegro con brio* (Fast, with enthusiasm)
- III. Largo* (broadly)
- IV. Allegretto* (Fairly quick)

Though many civilians had escaped the siege of Leningrad, the bleak conditions resulted in further deaths. Upon hearing of the tragic passing of the Leningrad Philharmonic’s Artistic Director, Shostakovich wrote to Sollertinsky’s widow: ‘I cannot express in words all of the grief I felt when I received the news of the death of Ivan Ivanovic. He was my closest friend. I owe all my education to him.’

The trio that resulted opens with cello alone, high in the instrument’s register using harmonics an eerie lament. The violin soon enters in counterpoint and the piano enters last with echoes of the same theme deep in its register. The ethereal character gives way to detached, repeated notes, and becomes increasingly chromatic, building in speed, drive and an angular, forced joviality.

Forced joviality turns into something more menacing and sarcastic in the second movement. In direct contrast

the third movement Largo opens with eight, sometimes surprising, piano chords that form a passacaglia, repeated in sequence six times with differing dynamic levels, whilst the strings grieve and entwine above.

Without pause, the piano sets the fourth movement in motion with a series of repeated notes. The finale twists the characters of despair and joy. Shostakovich seems to convey one thing on the surface, but unsettlingly something darker lurks below. In this movement, he uses a prominent Jewish dance theme and inflections. Jewish music, he explained, ‘is almost always laughter through tears.’

Adapted from a note © Angela Turner 2017

Paul Stanhope (born 1968)

Piano Trio *Dolcissimo Uscignolo* (2007)

The composer writes:

I had been drawn to *Dolcissimo Uscignolo* by Monteverdi, not only because of its heartbreakingly beautiful melodic lines, but because of its textual playfulness about the nature of song. In this madrigal, the poet reflects on how the nightingale sings so beautifully to its lover, and how it can fly away immediately. The freedom and beauty of the bird is contrasted with the earthbound misery of the poet who says he has no need of singing.

Fragments of the madrigal are heard throughout this single-movement Trio somewhat in the manner of half-recalled memories, forming the basis for much of the motivic material for the work. As a result, the piece is quite melodic in its nature, even though a range of expressive instrumental devices are used, ranging from overtly tonal material, through to more jagged, spiky textures.

My trio takes on a broad arch-like shape: the slow and reflective music of the opening and closing acts is like an outer frame to a long central section, which is fast, dance-like and exuberant. The piano has the role of maintaining much of the rhythmic momentum. The piece climaxes as a series of glissandi in the strings with repeated rising patterns in the piano. After a celebratory passage based around a chord progression of a descending cycle of fifths, longer passages of Monteverdi now flow, but it is not immediately apparent what is direct quotation, and what is my own elaboration and extemporisation.

© Paul Stanhope 2018

***Pulses* for piano trio (2018)**

[In one movement]

Commissioned for Musica Viva Australia for the 2018 Melbourne International Chamber Music Competition with support from the Ken Tribe Fund for Australian Composers.

The composer writes:

Although we might think of pulse as being a purely rhythmic element, musical pitches are, in fact, also pulsations of differing frequency: a really low organ note, for example, ‘beats’. This Piano Trio uses such acoustic elements to

suggest the material heard in the opening, with high sounds being repeated in faster frequencies than middle and lower groups which pulsate at less frequent durations. This is heard in a series of repeated, poly-tonal chordal fragments in the opening, from which I derived patterns used throughout the piece.

The underlying sense of ‘beat’ shifts from fast to slow in a series of metric modulations (where one rhythmic value equals another one in a new tempo). The sense of strict, rhythmic pulse heard in the opening gives way to more lyrical cello and violin solos. A playful piano solo with pizzicato string accompaniment marks the beginning of a slow return to a more ‘metered’ sense of pulse and upon a significant arrival, back to the original fast tempo. Transformed versions of material from the first third of the piece begin to return, climbing to an ever-accelerating high climax and then release to an echo of the opening ‘pulsed’ fragments.

For the purposes of this competition, I have written two possible endings with different characteristics which the different groups may choose between in order to add a little extra surprise into the performances.

Many thanks to Wilma Smith (violin), Julian Smiles (cello) and Bernadette Harvey for workshoping this trio in January 2018 and for their input in its development.

© Paul Stanhope 2018

Johannes Maria Staud (born 1974)

Für Bálint András Varga (2007-9)

Ten miniatures for piano trio

Austrian composer Johannes Maria Staud was born in Innsbruck. Soon after finishing his studies in composition and electronic music was taken up by publisher Universal Edition. His music includes orchestral and chamber works performed world-wide by such groups as the Arditti Quartet, Ensemble Intercontemporain, the Vienna Philharmonic, Berlin Philharmonic and Cleveland Orchestras under conductors such as Marc Minkowski, George Benjamin, Daniel Barenboim and Christoph Eschenbach. His opera *Die Antilope* premiered at the 2014 Lucerne Festival where he was composer in residence.

The composer writes:

Dealing with the concept of writing for a piano trio, while writing this piece between 2007 and 2009, was no compositional walk in the park. It was, rather, more like a strenuous hike which, because of the slippery terrain, could be mastered only in short stages, challenging both condition and safety. The ten miniatures, arranged into four sections (1-4, 5, 6-7, and 8-10), probe a spectrum of moments that are delicately internalized and unfettered and explosive, as well as wildly accelerating and lithely pulsating.

This work is a homage to writer Bálint András Varga, my mentor and advocate, my advisor and fatherly friend, to whom my music and I are so incredibly indebted.

© Johannes Maria Staud 2010

Alexander Tcherepnin (1899-1977)

Piano Trio in G, op 34 (1925)

- I. Moderato tranquillo – Allegro (moderate and tranquil – fast)
- II. Allegretto (fairly quick)
- III. Allegro molto (very fast)

The greatest member of a Russian dynasty of composers, Alexander Tcherepnin lived much of his long life outside his homeland. His family moved from St Petersburg to the Georgian capital, Tbilisi, in the wake of the 1917 revolution; when Communism came to Georgia in 1921, the family moved again – this time to Paris, where Alexander continued to study and to begin producing his first major works. Tcherepnin and his wife, pianist Lee Hsien Ming, found themselves trapped in Paris during the war, but in the late 1940s went on to teach at DePaul University in Chicago and took US citizenship there in 1958. His music retains echoes of Russian, Georgian and French influences.

His Piano Trio dates from 1925, the year he also won the Schott Prize, which was a great boost to his career. The trio is a short work that falls into three conventionally contrasting movements. Its musical language, based on a ‘synthetic’ nine-note scale, as well as traditional elements, is not far removed at all from the ironic neoclassicism of inter-war Paris, and, more particularly, to that on which his compatriots Prokofiev and Shostakovich built their own personal styles.

© Gordon Kerry 2018

Pēteris Vasks (born 1946)

Episodi e canto perpetuo (1985)

- I. Crescendo
- II. Misterioso
- III. Unisono
- IV. Monologhi: espressivo
- VI. Burlesca II
- VII. Canto perpetuo: dolcissimo ma molto espressivo
- VIII. Apogeo e Coda

Vasks was the son of a Baptist clergyman and suffered from official discrimination in Latvia as a result. He did, however, study double bass at the Riga Conservatory and in the comparative freedom of the Lithuanian Music Academy in Vilnius, and returned to Riga where he worked as a professional player while studying composition in the 1970s. His music began to be heard in the West in the late 1980s and since Latvia’s independence in 1991, has reached an even wider audience, especially through its use by dance companies.

His *Episodi e canto perpetuo* dates from 1985 and is subtitled ‘homage to Olivier Messiaen’. There are certain Messiaenic qualities to the piece: like the *Quartet for the End of Time* it is in eight movements, certain of which, like the metrically complex Unisono movement, or the florid solo against spare piano chord in the Monologhi, and even more

so the perpetual cantilena of the ‘title’ movement number 7, are quite frank in their homage to the French composer. In other cases, notably the *Misterioso* and *Burlescas*, Vasks seems to nod towards Bartók. As in Messiaen, the piece ends with a gradual ascent to the empyrean.

© Gordon Kerry 2018’

Sam David Wamper (born 1983)

Portrait of Light (2015)

[In one movement]

Sam David Wamper studied jazz and classical piano at the Conservatory of Maastricht, and composition and music theory at Codarts, the Conservatory of Rotterdam. Wamper’s commissions include a piano concerto for the Residentie Orchestra and set pieces for the International Orlando Competition in 2015 and 2017.

Wamper’s compositions are characterised by fantastical storytelling, the formal abstraction of much contemporary music, and dramatic expressionism, where sound takes precedence over the musical concept. His language is recognisably modern, yet accessible as most of his musical material is created vocally. He is inspired by composers as diverse as Frank Zappa, Giacomo Puccini, Alban Berg and Bill Evans.

The composer writes:

The piano trio *Portrait of Light* is a musical portrait of the composer’s beloved: Lucille (which translates to ‘light’). The indication ‘portrait’ is to be taken quite literally: ‘When writing the music I imagined her face, like a painter translating his model onto canvas. In the opening phrases you hear her curls. A bit further on there is a Shostakovich-like dance that represents the sparkle in her fiery eyes. The end depicts her mouth, which is embodied in conversing melodies: at first agitated, then full of tenderness, as the conversation between two loved ones can swiftly evolve into the intimacy of a kiss’.

© Sam David Wamper 2018

Mieczysław Weinberg (1919-1996)

Piano Trio, op 24 (1945)

- I. Präludium and Arie: Larghetto (fairly broadly)
- II Toccata: Allegro marcato (fast and emphatic)
- III Poem: Moderato (moderately)
- IV Finale: Allegro moderato (moderately fast)

In 1939 Weinberg (also spelled Vainberg or Vaynberg) graduated from the Warsaw Conservatory and soon after fled Poland for the Soviet Union, settling at first in Minsk. Members of his immediate family remained in Warsaw, and soon perished in the Holocaust. He spent some of the war years in Tashkent, and in 1943 moved to Moscow where he became a close friend and colleague of Shostakovich. He was prolific – sometimes reduced by politics to writing circus music – but composed in various genres including opera.

His Piano Trio dates from 1945 and inevitably draws comparison with his mentor’s work. Like Shostakovich’s Piano Quintet op 57 of 1940, Weinberg’s Trio begins with a ‘Baroque’ first movement, carefully channelling, in modern language, some of the gestures and manners of, say, Bach. The second movement, by contrast, strays into the sometimes, bitter world of Shostakovich’s fast movements and features irregular rhythms and insistent gestures. An extended slow movement sounds like it might be a Shostakovich-style passacaglia, but reaches moments of delicate lyricism. The lengthy finale allows all instruments to feature, and explores a number of moods, including sarcastic march-music, folk tunes in counterpoint, and a surprising ending.

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PROGRAM NOTES

String Quartets

Thomas Adès (born 1971)

The Four Quarters

- I. Nightfalls*
- II. Serenade – Morning Dew*
- III. Days*
- IV. The Twenty-Fifth Hour*

Born in London in 1971, Thomas Adès studied piano at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, and read music at King's College, Cambridge. A prodigious composer, conductor and pianist, Adès was described by the *New York Times* as one of today's 'most accomplished overall musicians.' Adès has won numerous awards, including the 2015 Léonie Sonning Music Prize and the prestigious Grawemeyer Award (2000), of which he is the youngest-ever recipient. Adès was Artistic Director of the Aldeburgh Festival from 1999 to 2008 and coaches piano and chamber music annually at the International Musicians Seminar, Prussia Cove.

Adès's second work for string quartet, *The Four Quarters*, was written for the Emerson Quartet and was premiered by them at Carnegie Hall in 2011. The winner of the 2012 British Composer Award for Chamber Composition, the 20-minute work charts the progress of a day. Glassy harmonics typify the opening movement, whilst playful pizzicati abound in *Serenade-Morning Dew*. A sombre third movement, *Days*, is underpinned by a searching ostinato before the work breaks free from conventional time in *The Twenty-Fifth Hour*, the glittering finale which swings and dances in the unusual time signature of 25/16.

Courtesy of Faber Music

Béla Bartók (1881–1945)

Which Béla Bartók do you prefer? There are two to choose from: the one who preserved and took inspiration from folk music; or the one who introduced innovations in harmonic and rhythmic technique, and was credited as a Modernist pacesetter. Bartók has been buffeted between these two ways of seeing for decades.

For Bartók himself, both creative modes, and the powerful tension between them, were the source of his inspiration, and each pulled at him with almost equal force. We could view Bartók's six string quartets as tracing the trajectory of his struggle with these forces: the first two luxuriate in the complex and expressive language that Bartók had, through his own extraordinary efforts of research, revealed in folk music from a rich variety of sources, while in the next two, he falls under the spell of modernity, extracting radical elements from his folk music discoveries and setting them in a quite aggressively modern context. By the time of his Fifth and Sixth Quartets, though, Bartók was aiming for a rapprochement, a more balanced musical language which has the two sides of his musical personality talking to each other as rational equals.

© James Koehne

String Quartet no 3 (1927)

- I. Prima parte: Moderato* (First part, moderately)
- II. Seconda parte: Allegro* (Second part, fast)
- III. Ricapitulazione della prima parte* (Recapitulation of the first part)
- IV. Coda: Allegro molto* (Coda: very fast)

Hard, dissonant, uncompromisingly clear, Bartók's Third Quartet (composed in Budapest in 1927, and first performed in London in 1929) explores the extreme possibilities of instrumental sound that can be produced by a quartet of stringed instruments. It is one of his most compressed works, encompassing in a mere quarter of an hour's music a catalogue of his most distinctive stylistic traits.

The single movement is divided into four sections. The Prima Parte begins and ends softly, with nocturnal insect-like sounds forming a background to a short sequence of harshly expressive, almost explosive, climaxes. A long trill from the second violin leads into the distinctly contrasted Seconda Parte. Here, the propulsive rhythmic drive so characteristic of Bartók's faster music comes to the fore, with folk dance elements, quasi-percussive gestures, and a brilliant exploitation of colouristic string devices such as glissandos and pizzicatos. The third section is a concise recapitulation of the Prima Parte (in spirit if not precisely in content), and the percussive rhythms of the Seconda Parte return in the Coda, a final manic dance spiralling to the hammered chords of the close.

© Graeme Skinner

String Quartet no 4 (1928)

- I. Allegro (Fast)*
- II. Prestissimo, con sordino* (extremely quick, with mutes)
- III. Non troppo lento* (not too slow)
- IV. Allegretto pizzicato* (fairly fast, plucked)
- V. Allegro molto* (very fast)

Bartók composed his Fourth Quartet in 1928. Everything about the piece betrays Bartók's obsession with mirror-images and symmetry, a hallmark of his mature style. These contrapuntal games are hardly unique to Bartók, but he saturated this music with them to an unusual extent.

The entire, five-movement layout of the quartet is symmetrical. Bartók cast the piece in an 'arch form', coupling the first movement with the fifth movement, the second with the fourth, and the third movement standing alone as the work's solitary capstone. The paired movements share various characteristics: basic soundscape, motivic material, and emotional heft.

The outer movements are lively, energetic and bold. Central to the movement is a galloping six-note idea, three rising

chromatic notes followed by three faster falling ones. This 'motto' returns in the last movement and binds the piece together. The second and fourth movements are lighter scherzo movements. The second is muted, weightless and fleet. Striking effects abound: glissandi that smear the canvas, the glassy sound of *ponticello* (playing near the bridge), harmonics and pizzicati. The third movement is night music, solitary and mournful. A chord fades in, note by note, at the beginning, and becomes a backdrop for a melody in the cello part, which sings, weeps, and yodels, questing ever upward through three ascending verses. The fourth movement is a charming, rustic tableau where the quartet plays only pizzicato. The strings are often strummed back and forth, guitar-like, and sometimes snapped harshly against the fingerboard: the 'Bartók pizzicato'. The fifth movement is a rugged, stamping folk dance. In the central, quieter episode, the galloping 'motto' idea from the first movement sneaks back in, starting in the cello part. The main material from the finale returns to do battle with this intruder, and they vie to the end of the movement, but the 'motto' theme gets the last word.

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String Quartet no 6 (1939)

- I. Mesto – Più mosso, pesante – Vivace* (sad – faster, heavily – fast and lively)
- II. Mesto – Marcia* (sad – march)
- III. Mesto – Burletta: Moderato* (sad – like a little joke: at a moderate pace)
- IV. Mesto* (sad)

Your first question about the Sixth Quartet, looking down the list of movements, will be, 'What is *mesto*?' When you see that it means 'sad', don't be crestfallen: you are not about to bear four movements of unrelieved melancholy. But each movement does open with a small prelude, developed with each recurrence, like a musical 'motto' or memorial of personal grief. In 1939, when Bartók was writing this piece, he was steeped in gloom: his mother was approaching death and the composer feared Hungary's looming subjugation to fascist rule.

In the first movement, the motto precedes a modernised peasant dance. The second movement recalls parade-ground marching. The title *Burletta* indicates that the third movement is an intermezzo in the character of an Italian comedy, though with an intensity that is pure Bartók. The last movement is sad, unrelievedly. Its artful blend of dignity and desperation arises out of nostalgia, heartache and resignation, all built from the *mesto* theme.

Adapted from a note © James Koehne 2013

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

String Quartet no 7 in F major, op 59 no 1 'Razumovsky' (1806)

- I. Allegro* (Fast)
- II. Allegretto vivace e sempre scherzando* (quite fast and lively, and always like a scherzo)
- III. Adagio molto e mesto* (very slow and sad)
- IV. Theme russe: Allegro* (Russian theme: fast)

String Quartet no 8 in E minor, op 59 no 2 'Razumovsky' (1805–06)

- I. Allegro* (fast)
- II. Molto adagio* (very slow)
- III. Allegretto* (moderately quick)
- IV. Finale: Presto* (very fast)

The three quartets published as op 59 derive their nickname from their commissioner, Count Andrey Razumovsky (1752–1836), the Russian Ambassador to Vienna. Razumovsky sponsored a quartet ensemble for his friends' entertainment, headed by leading violinist Ignaz Schuppanzigh; Count Andrey performed as the second violinist himself.

These quartets belong to Beethoven's middle period (after his groundbreaking *Eroica* symphony). The first movement of **String Quartet op 59 no 1** makes a grand announcement of his new ambitious intent. But there is not the *Eroica*'s sense of turbulence, rather a feeling of exuberance and confidence. In the second movement, the little pattern of repeated notes that each instrument plays one after the other to start it off was initially received as a weird eccentricity. Beethoven then essays a tempestuous course, switching wildly between contrasting sections and dynamics. Things settle down for the third movement, but with the appellation *mesto*, Beethoven warns us to expect sad music, and the minor key casts a gentle pall over proceedings; then the finale raises our spirits. A long trill connects the two movements, giving us a chance to adjust to the emerging sunlight. This is where Beethoven introduces a Russian tune, as Razumovsky had requested when commissioning the quartets: the song was originally a soldier's lament, though Beethoven presents the melody in an entirely jolly fashion.

'This piece is to be played with great feeling,' Beethoven instructs the performers on the score of his **String Quartet op 59 no 2**. Emotional volatility is the cornerstone of this work. After a first movement that is more about motifs and fragments than big melodies, we reach the second movement, the spiritual core of the Quartet, as suggested by Beethoven's leading pupil Carl Czerny, who recalled that this particular section had 'occurred to Beethoven when contemplating the starry sky and thinking of the music of the spheres.' In the jaunty Scherzo which follows, a little Russian folk tune gets swept up and carried along on the surging, plunging musical waves. There is vodka in the air at this picnic! The Quartet is capped by an energy-packed finale.

Adapted from notes © James Koehne 2013

String Quartet no 10 in E-flat major, op 74
‘The Harp’ (1809)

- I. Poco adagio – Allegro (fairly slow – fast)
- II. Adagio ma non troppo (slow, but not too slow)
- III. Presto – Piu presto quasi prestissimo – Tempo I – (very fast – even faster, as if as fast as can be – tempo I)
- IV. Allegretto con variazioni (moderately quick, with variations on a theme)

Beethoven’s String Quartet in E-flat major, op 74, was the first of his quartets to be published alone rather than as one of a set. This apparently superficial change in Beethoven’s approach to publishing is symptomatic, at a deeper level, of the composer’s growing awareness of his works as true ‘individuals’, each with its own idiosyncrasies of form and expression.

The first movement begins with a slow introduction: fragments of motives, shifting and evasive harmonies, interrupted by violent accents, rule the scene, until suddenly, a dominant-seventh chord appears, leading the listener from a state of musical uncertainty into the more settled tonality of the main part of the movement. Most of this section is bathed in a clear, bright sunlight. The entire Quartet gained its nickname ‘Harp’ from the plucked arpeggio accompaniment figure associated with the tail of this principal theme. The slow movement, in A-flat major, breathes a deep restfulness and serenity from its long, singing melody, which begins high on the first violin. The third movement (Presto) is a scherzo full of wild, demoniacal energy. Its initial theme has a strong affinity to the famous opening theme of the Fifth Symphony. When the scherzo material appears for the last time, the restless quavers, after the first loud statement, die down to a pianissimo whisper and, gradually modulating, lead directly to the finale, a set of six variations.

String Quartet in A minor, op 132 (1825)

- I. Assai sostenuto: Allegro (very sustained, fast)
- II. Allegro ma non tanto (fast, but not so much as before)
- III. Heiliger Dankgesang eines Genesenden an die Gottheit, in der Lydische Tonart: Molto adagio: Andante (Holy song of thanksgiving to the Godhead from a convalescent, in the Lydian mode: very slow; gentle walking pace)
- IV. Alla Marcia, assai vivace – Più allegro – (in march time, very fast – a little faster)
- V. Allegro appassionato – Presto (fast and passionate – very fast)

Prince Nikolai Galitzin, like Razumovsky a Russian nobleman and amateur musician living in Vienna, commissioned ‘up to three’ new quartets from Beethoven in 1822. After a long delay while busy with other projects, with opp 127, 132 and 130 (written in that order) Beethoven had completed Prince Galitzin’s commission, but found that he had by no means exhausted what he wanted to say. The

resulting five ‘late’ quartets are radical works and demand willing commitment from the listener as he leads us through his extraordinarily imaginative journey to see what arises when musical convention is tossed aside. Here chamber music demands to be taken as seriously as a symphony, or even a mass.

With the String Quartet op 132 the temptation to see Beethoven’s late quartets as a kind of private diary or escapist fantasy becomes almost irresistible. The ‘extra’ movement in this work is the ‘Holy song of thanksgiving to the Godhead from a convalescent’ and Beethoven’s work on the piece had indeed been interrupted by one of his frequent bouts of serious illness in mid-1825. The ‘song’ is in the deliberately archaic-sounding Lydian mode. In a section marked ‘feeling new strength’ Beethoven lays out a contrasting thematic idea, and then subjects each to his transformative variation form. He also uses this structural idea in the slow movement of the Ninth Symphony. By the time we reach the final Presto, in this small format of a string quartet we have lived through mighty emotional storms.

Adapted from a note © Gordon Kerry

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

Brahms had always been a highly self-critical composer. He looked up to Schubert and Mozart, but above all, to Beethoven, whose works in the genres of the symphony and string quartet were revolutionary. It is no coincidence that Brahms destroyed the sketches of some 20 string quartets before he produced the two quartets that made up his opus 51. It was predominantly piano works that were published before his 30th birthday: the symphonies and string quartets were only to appear later. His numerous experiments in this finally flowered with the two quartets of op 51.

String Quartet no 1 in C minor, op 51 no 1 (1868-73)

- I. Allegro (fast)
- II. Romanze (Poco adagio) (romance, a little slowly)
- III. Allegretto molto moderato e comodo – Un poco piu animato (very moderately and comfortably – a little more animated)
- IV. Allegro (fast)

From the outset, a sense of pressing – what Paul Griffiths refers to as ambition – is obvious in the Quartet op 51 no 1. The dotted, rising violin lines look to build, while the tremolandos in the viola and cello convey forward momentum. The second movement Romance provides distinct contrast by way of its spaciousness. The opening phrases are reminiscent of the second movement of Beethoven’s Violin Concerto, of which Brahms was particularly fond.

The Allegretto movement that follows opens at a comfortable pace, allowing each of the four instrumental voices time to speak without becoming breathless. A steady waltz offers a passing change of atmosphere, before returning to the earlier material.

For the finale, the quartet’s shortest movement, Brahms returns to the drama of the first movement, even using similar rhythmic and melodic patterns. Brahms’ desire for structural unity – something in which Beethoven had achieved mastery – would have been the model.

String Quartet in A minor, op 51 no 2 (1865)

- I. Allegro non troppo (fairly fast)
- II Andante moderato (at a moderate walking pace)
- III Quasi Minuetto, moderato (like a minuet; moderately)
- IV Finale. Allegro non assai (Finale. Fast but not very)

Almost 20 years prior to premiering his Quartet op 51 no 2, Brahms had written a scherzo to sit alongside movements by Schumann and Dietrich to form the ‘FAE’ (Frei aber einsam — free but lonely) violin sonata. That work is based on a motto theme by Joseph Joachim, and it is this motto which is heard again in the first movement of this Quartet.

The mood here is autumnal, but the subdued atmosphere does not hide the rugged grandeur of Brahms’s mastery of traditional sonata form. The second subject in particular is of undulating beauty, and typical of the composer in its profound assurance. In the second movement it is possible to hear an occasional recollection of the intense slow movements of Haydn’s late quartets. Brahms studied these works with great admiration, once exclaiming: ‘My Tenth Symphony must be like that!’

The Allegretto vivace hints strongly at the third movement of Brahms’s second symphony, with its agitated central section. A powerful theme of folk-like character opens the Finale, which is connected thematically with the first movement. Towards the end a halting phrase leads to a passage of haunting beauty, before the strenuous coda completes this glowing masterpiece.

© Musica Viva

Benjamin Britten (1913–1976)

String Quartet no 3, op 94 (1975)

- I. Duets: With moderate movement
- II. Ostinato: Very fast
- III. Solo: Very calm – Lively
- IV. Burlesque: Fast – Con fuoco (With fire)
- V. Recitative and passacaglia (La serenissima)

Britten wrote his first two string quartets in 1941 and 1945, and did not return to the genre until very late in his life, 1975. In place of the ebullience of the First Quartet, the Third is crafted in tones of a more complex aesthetic character. Britten never abandoned tonality, but it became more ambiguous in his later music, fitting the nature of the contemporary musical language. The intervening years had introduced some significant new influences upon Britten’s style, notably in this instance, Shostakovich, who died just before Britten began writing the Quartet. The spirit and character of Shostakovich (particularly his quartets) hovers over the Third Quartet, with its harsh contrasts between the intense gestures of the

second movement, the sparseness of the third, and the black humour of the fourth movement’s burlesque.

The emotional core of the Quartet is reached in the fifth and final movement, which is pure Britten: it is the long rumination of a man who was clearly preoccupied with death. The main substance of the movement is a passacaglia (where a repeated set of notes forms the base over which the composer invents his melodic material), probably Britten’s favourite structural form. The basic material of this movement is drawn from Britten’s own recent opera, *Death in Venice* (1973). Thomas Mann’s story had powerful resonances for Britten on a personal level, and these fed his own contemplations in this Quartet. Analysis of the movement shows various cryptic musical references to the character of Aschenbach in Mann’s story, particularly suggesting, according to composer David Matthews, his redemption. But the concluding bars leave us in a no-man’s-land with a final enigmatic gesture of an unresolved cadence, deliberately framed by Britten to answer an unknown question. In the end, the ruminative quality of this movement is probably the most useful clue for listening to it: as a focus for our own contemplation.

© James Koehne

Bernadette Clozel (born 1958)

Volutes (2013)

Born in Gap (Hautes-Alpes), Clozel studied piano and dance. Becoming interested in composition she studied electroacoustic music under Pierre Schaeffer and Guy Reibel at the National Conservatory of Music in Paris, and instrumental composition at the University of Paris VIII. During time spent in Brittany she turned definitively towards instrumental composition. She has since composed works for organ, harp, flute, piano, cello and percussion, trio and string quartet, most recently the *Chants étoilés* - Duo pour flûtes et percussions (2017). She is currently Professor of Music Training at the Jean Wiener Conservatory in Bobigny, near Paris, where she also runs a Creative Workshop.

Volutes, her first quartet, was composed in 2013 for the Équinoxe Quartet to play at the Festival Quatuor à l'ouest.

The composer writes:

I wanted to compose a rather playful and very ‘spatial’ piece, by combining different materials: subtle or bizarre vibrations, garlands undulating in space and supple woven melodies. Progressively a theme emerges (both melody and colour, polyphony and harmony). Different gestures unfold around it as its variations reappear throughout.

The title, *Volutes*, evokes the litheness and fluidity that I am looking for, most notably through certain moving forms, where the pace of the woven and overlapping melodies is left to the free choice of the performer.

© Bernadette Clozel 2018

Francisco Coll (born 1985)

Cantos (2017)

Francisco Coll studied at the Valencia and Madrid Conservatoires before moving to London as a private pupil of Thomas Adès, and a student at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. Coll's music has been performed by ensembles including Ensemble Intercontemporain, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Lucerne Symphony Orchestra and the London Sinfonietta. 2014 saw his chamber opera *Café Kafka* premiered to great acclaim.

The year 2016 saw his *Four Iberian Miniatures* for violin and chamber orchestra premiered at the London Proms, the premiere of *Mural* by the Orchestre Philharmonique du Luxembourg, and a new Harpsichord Concerto for Mahan Esfahani and Britten Sinfonia. Future plans include a second chamber opera, to a libretto by Meredith Oakes, and a Violin Concerto.

The composer writes:

This short movement for string quartet – a version of my *Hyperlude* no 5 for solo violin – was composed for Cuarteto Casals in 2017, who also premiered my Concerto Grosso. Commissioned by Cristóbal Soler and the Semana de Música Religiosa de Cuenca, *Cantos* has a spiritual and introspective character. Structured in a single movement, it is a consecutive series of cadences that in some way (as its title suggests) emulate the inflections of the human voice.

© Francisco Coll 2017

Claude Debussy (1862–1918)

String Quartet in G minor, op 10 (1893)

- I. Animé et très décidé* (lively and very decisely)
- II. Assez vif et bien rythmé* (quite lively and well paced)
- III. Andantino, doucement expressif* (with movement, but sweetly expressive)
- IV. Très modéré* (very moderately)

The String Quartet has a significant place in Debussy’s career, and in the process of his liberation from German musical domination. Aged 30, Debussy was influenced at this time by César Franck (a Frenchman who was an apostle of German music), and was beginning to shake off his enthusiasm for Wagner. It is through the mediation of Franck that the shadow of Beethoven hovers over Debussy’s String Quartet – Beethoven’s late string quartets represented a musical ideal for Franck. Indeed, the second performance of Debussy’s Quartet was given in a series organised by Franck’s supporters, the Société Nationale de Musique, in programs heavily featuring Beethoven’s quartets. This second performance actually did more to raise Debussy’s stature in Parisian artistic circles than the premiere had.

Reaching back to Beethoven via Franck (and Franck’s influential student d’Indy), Debussy borrowed the idea of ‘cyclic form’, which basically required the repeated development or reinvention of the same thematic material

throughout each movement of a piece. While the String Quartet is, as a result, more integrated in terms of the structure of its themes than Debussy’s later work would be, Debussy is highly flexible and variable in the way he treats his melodic ‘subjects’. There are elements of traditional sonata form’s thematic processes in the first movement, but Debussy plays so liberally with his themes that the formal aspects become quite secondary. He applies his notion of the melodic arabesque (the tendril-like elaboration of melodic lines) with splendid originality, making any ‘requirement’ for thematic cohesion almost irrelevant.

On the harmonic plane, Debussy also emulates some of the ways in which Beethoven applied the relationships between keys as a means to forge an extended musical ‘argument’. But here again, the similarity becomes elusive: Debussy’s harmony was already heavily inspired by a modal conception, which doesn’t lend itself to the tensions of chromatic key relationships: the sonorous effect of harmonic movement within the Quartet is more important for Debussy. The String Quartet is one of the last pieces in which Debussy felt compelled to tangle with conventional forms and ‘moulds’. Afterwards, he pursued a far more liberated and individual sense of musical architecture, employing the discoveries made through the process of composing the String Quartet.

© James Koehne

Cheryl Frances-Hoad (born 1980)

My Day in Hell (2008)

[In one movement]

British composer Cheryl Frances-Hoad was a winner of the Royal Philharmonic Society Composition Prize in 2007. As a result she was awarded the first ever Susan Bradshaw Composers’ Fund Commission to write *My Day in Hell* for the Cheltenham Festival 2008.

The composer writes:

My work was one of several commissioned by the Dante Quartet inspired by Dante’s *Divine Comedy*. I panic-bought a 13-hour audio book, listening to it during a bad bout of flu. Being half asleep through some passages and waking to descriptions of sinners submerged neck-deep in rivers of boiling blood did little to soothe my fever, and probably influenced my interpretation! I re-read *Inferno* and *Purgatorio* to find out how I’d end up being punished for my sins, and based the quartet on this unsavoury imaginary day trip.

Dante’s Hell is organised into nine circles: four of Incontinence (an uncontrolled appetite for all sorts of things), one of Violence, two of Fraud, one of Misbelief (the Heretics) and one of Unbelief (Limbo) and an additional Vestibule of the Futile. These ten divisions are organised into 3 groups (the number of the Holy Trinity) of 7 (the number of the deadly sins), 2 and 1. These numbers determine durations of sections, chordal structure, rhythmic organisation and melodic lines.

© Cheryl Frances–Hoad 2008

Holly Harrison (born 1988)

Balderdash

World premiere performances

Commissioned for MICMC by the Silo Collective

[In one movement]

Holly Harrison is an international award-winning composer, based in Sydney. Holly’s music is driven by the nonsense literature of Lewis Carroll, embracing stylistic juxtapositions, the visceral energy of rock, and whimsical humour. Her work has been performed in Australia, Asia, Europe, and the USA, by ensembles including Eighth Blackbird, Orkest de Ereprijs, Ensemble Offspring, Alarm Will Sound, and The Riot Ensemble, with performances at Gaudeamus Muziekweek, Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music, and Perth International Arts Festival. Holly is currently composer-in-residence at MLC School, Burwood, and plays drum kit in the experimental rock duo, Tabua-Harrison.

The composer writes:

Balderdash begins and ends with amplifier feedback: a sound that quickly makes us bring our fingers to our ears! The piece imagines an alternate world in which music is heard between the feedback – a sort of sub/hyper-sonic sound world which takes place in mere seconds.

With this in mind, the string quartet explores musical ideas inspired by electric guitar, including distortion, white noise, whammy bars, power-chords, dive-bombs, wah-wah, phaser effects, slap bass, and of course, speaker feedback. *Balderdash* makes high use of punk rock rhythms, dissonance, and percussive-based jams, which morph in and out of bluegrass, grunge, prog-rock, metal, and disco.

Given the piece was commissioned as the set piece for a competition, I felt it might be fun to experiment with a battle-of-the-bands theme within the string quartet itself. Throughout *Balderdash*, players go rogue (especially the cello!), engage in one-upmanship, jam, duel, challenge, compete, interrupt, surrender, work together in teams, and cooperate as one. The piece is intended to be theatrical and encourages the quartet to perform with abandon.

I have called the piece *Balderdash* as it is a term used to refer to nonsense – of which I am quite a fan! The ‘dash’ part also resonates with the high intensity nature of the work, and the sense of moving somewhere quickly.

© Holly Harrison

Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)

Haydn’s op 33 string quartets of 1781 had an enormous influence on the future of the genre. They were taken up by Mozart as models for his six, so-called ‘Haydn’ quartets; and they established Haydn as the unrivalled master of the form. His resulting reputation also paved the way for an important transition in his career. Upon the death of his employer Prince Nikolaus Esterhazy in 1790, the provincial Kapellmeister became a Viennese celebrity overnight and, within the space of a few years, a composer of international popularity and importance.

String Quartet in B minor, op 33 no 1 (1781)

- I. Allegro moderato* (moderately fast)
- II. Scherzo: allegro di molto* (scherzo: very fast)
- III. Andante* (at a gentle walking pace)
- IV. Finale: Presto* (finale: very fast)

In December 1781 Vienna feted the visiting Count and Countess von Norden with a series of musical entertainments, among them some of Haydn’s string quartets opus 33. The ‘von Nordens’ were, in fact, the Grand Duke Paul of Russia (later Czar), and his wife, the Princess of Württemberg, and it is for this reason only that the set is sometimes nicknamed the ‘Russian Quartets’.

Haydn had composed the set some months earlier and offered manuscript copies to several patrons. In his covering letter, Haydn claims that the works of op 33 were composed ‘in a new and special way’. This, as Charles Rosen noted, was not just a ‘commercial slogan’: here ‘not only is each instrumental part filled with life...but with the same life.’ In other words, Haydn had hit on a way of writing that gave all four players a piece of the thematic action, and making them sound, in the poet Goethe’s phrase, ‘like four intelligent people having a conversation’. This is clear in the dialogues between violin and cello in the first and third movements, the fragments that pass from voice to voice in the scherzo, and the good-humoured banter of the finale.

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String Quartet in G major, op 54 no 1 (c1788)

- I. Allegro con brio* (fast and with enthusiasm)
- II. Allegretto* (fairly fast)
- III. Menuetto: Allegretto & Trio* (Minuet: fairly fast, and Trio)
- IV. Finale: Presto* (Finale: as fast as possible)

In 1788, Haydn worked on a set of six quartets, broken for publication into two groups of three, op 54 and 55 respectively. Together with the final set of quartets to be written at Esterhaza, op 64, they are known collectively as the ‘Tost’ quartets, written for Johann Tost, a violinist in Haydn’s orchestra. Perhaps the engaging manner in which the first violin continually incites the other three instruments to match its flamboyance and virtuosity is a reflection of Tost’s musical personality.

The Quartet op 54 no 1 sees the first violin setting a brilliant mood and gradually leading its colleagues away from their repeated staccato-quaver accompaniment into a fluent four-way conversation in semiquavers. In the recapitulation section, these semiquavers become whirling scales. The repeated staccato-quaver accompaniment outlives the first movement, and becomes even more entrenched in the Allegretto. Here the first violin successfully tempts only the second violin to join it, when, on two memorable occasions, they combine in cascades of descending thirds. But for the rest, the leader is left to soliloquize in almost operatic fashion, an impression enhanced by its coloratura-like melody.

By the time the Menuetto begins, the abrupt repeated-note pattern has become the single most pervasive feature of the Quartet. In the Menuetto it is confined to the cello, but in the Trio the roles are reversed radically, and the cello takes the limelight with decorative roulades of undulating quavers. Finally, the pattern is reduced to a stutter, separating the episodes and repeats of the theme in the Finale. This vivacious movement alternates whirling activity with these halting interruptions, and ends in an exhibition of pure instrumental brilliance.

String Quartet in B-flat major, op 71 no 1 (1793)

- I. Allegro (fast)
- II. Adagio (slow)
- III. Menuetto & Trio: Allegretto (Minuet & Trio: fairly fast)
- IV. Finale: Vivace (Finale: lively)

Upon a visit to London in February 1794, Haydn brought with him six new string quartets. They had been commissioned by an old friend and patron, the Count von Apponyi. It was customary for a commissioner to have exclusive performing rights of such works for a period of years, but in this case Haydn obviously intended the works – completed in the previous year, 1793 – not so much for Apponyi and his Austrian friends, as for the forthcoming season in the fashionable concert rooms of his London impresario, the violinist Johann Peter Salomon.

One of the features of the 1793 quartets is the introductory gambit with which Haydn attracts the attention of his concert hall audiences. In the case of the Quartet op 71 no 1, this is simply five incisive fortissimo chords, to signal that the piece is about to begin and that conversation should, ideally, cease. There is also a tendency among the quartets to concentrate the emotional centre in the slow movement, and this too holds true in op 71 no 1 which has as its centrepiece a serene Adagio, with a somewhat Mediterranean lilt. An attractive Menuetto precedes a similarly approachable Vivace finale.

String Quartet in D major, op 71 no 2 (1793)

- I. Adagio – Allegro (slow – fast)
- II. Adagio cantabile (slow, singing)
- III. Menuetto: Allegro & Trio (Minuet: fast, & Trio)
- IV. Finale: Allegretto – Allegro (Finale: fairly fast – fast)

The D major Quartet, op 71 no 2, is the most brilliant of the series, and also the one where Haydn exploits violinist Peter Salomon’s virtuosity (he led the performance in his own concert rooms) the most. There are parts of the opening Allegro which verge on being a violin concerto. In this work, the slow introduction is no easing-in, but an arresting gesture which stamps its way in octave leaps from cello up to the first violin. The octave leaps then keep appearing in one guise or another throughout the movement, producing (and, from the players’ point of view, expending) enormous amounts of energy. Since his listeners unused to swathes of such high-powered music, Haydn keeps the movement astonishingly short.

By way of balance, the second movement begins virtually in slow motion; and a majestic calm seems to pervade throughout. Though not strictly a theme and variations movement, all the material used is based on the opening, and Haydn alters his theme by means of arabesques, appoggiaturas and subtle changes of rhythm.

The Menuetto, almost like a cheery scherzo in feeling, is a lively example of the then-new ‘concert minuet’, in which the Trio seems almost to be the same movement; that is, not a separate piece, as was almost the case earlier. The Finale starts out like a typically witty Haydn rondo, but is a curiously slowish tempo (Allegretto). Later in the movement the tempo suddenly jumps forward to Allegro and there is a return of the virtuoso violin writing of the first movement. The punchy staccato runs in the first violin are later joined by all the other instruments, and the end, a brilliant flourish, is another sparkling tribute to Salomon’s prowess.

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String Quartet in D minor, op 76 no 2 ‘Fifths’ (1797)

- I. Allegro (fast)
- II. Andante o piu tosto allegretto (moderately or rather moderately fast)
- III. Menuetto. Allegro ma non troppo (Menuetto: fast, but not too fast)
- IV. Vivace assai (very quickly)

The String Quartet op 76 no 2 is one of six commissioned by Count Joseph Erdödy in 1796. They are among the last of Haydn’s purely instrumental music – he spent most of his final years writing works with voice. The Erdödy quartets have an air of effortlessness about them, written by a master at the top of his game. Haydn opens no 2 with an extremely simple thematic idea: four notes, consisting of two descending intervals, each five notes apart. This gap of a ‘perfect fifth’ is crucial to any study of Western music because we tend to hear it as the end of a piece (a perfect cadence), or as a means of changing key. Fifths are sometimes ambiguous, because for example a D-major and a D-minor three-note chord have the same outer fifth interval, D to A – it’s the F, the third note in the middle that makes all the difference, and Haydn plays with this minor/ major intrigue throughout the Quartet.

As Jane Austen wrote of her character Elinor Dashwood, ‘Her feelings were strong, but she knew how to govern them’; so too Haydn was superb at creating expressive music contained within a formal Classical structure, as he does in the first movement of the Quartet. The opening theme is elegantly transmuted as it passes around all the instruments.

The second movement seems to confirm Haydn’s contemporaneous fascination with vocal music, as the first violin offers an aria-like melody, over a light accompaniment. It flowers into a series of variations, much as a fine soprano would dazzle her audience with musical embellishments. Nicknames followed ‘Papa’ Haydn around. This Quartet is sometimes called the ‘Bell’ as well as ‘Quinten’ (‘Fifths’) and even ‘Donkey’, for the supposed coarseness of the finale. The third movement is sometimes called the ‘Witches

Minuet’: the violins have a unison theme which is repeated three beats later by the viola and cello together, in strict canon. Haydn thus weaves it together – magically? – as a simultaneous theme and accompaniment.

With the Finale, Haydn takes the dark energy of the Minuet and transforms it into something sprightlier, as though the witches are seen, in daylight, to be merely cheerful peasant grandmas. The minor key is eventually defeated by some resounding major arpeggios and a triumphant final chord.

Adapted from a note © KP Kemp

Leoš Janáček (1854-1928)

String Quartet no 1 ‘Kreutzer Sonata’ (1923)

- I. Adagio – Con moto (slow – with movement)
- II. Con moto (with movement)
- III. Con moto – Vivo – Andante (with movement – lively – walking pace)
- IV. Con moto – (Adagio) – Più mosso (with movement – (slow) – more quickly)

The melodic shapes of spoken language, observed and notated by Janáček as he went about his daily life, formed the basis for the attractive, natural melodies that are fundamental to his music. It’s an unmistakable quality: that you can immediately imagine words going with the tune.

The First Quartet takes its inspiration from Leo Tolstoy’s story *The Kreutzer Sonata*, about a repressed woman who seeks liberation from her dreary existence with an unloving husband. Her liberation is finally attained after a performance of Beethoven’s ‘Kreutzer’ Sonata inflames her passion for another man. But the liberation is short-lived: the consequence of this consummation is her death, and Tolstoy leaves us with a moral lesson about the damaging consequences of music’s power to erode self-control.

In Janáček’s string quartet, we can trace components of Tolstoy’s story, but with significant inflections that fundamentally change its ‘moral lesson’. Indeed, Janáček’s own interpretation of Tolstoy’s story inverted this morality. The (unnamed) woman’s quest for romantic-sexual liberation was, in Janáček’s view, entirely natural and to be celebrated, while her tragic fate reflects no failing on her part, but instead reveals the repressive forces in society itself. Thus, for Janáček, Beethoven’s music brings a powerful (if temporary) gift of liberation, rather than unleashing a demon.

Tolstoy tells his story entirely through the voice of the woman’s husband, but in Janáček’s quartet, the second violin takes the dominant part and can be read as the woman’s persona. The other instruments interact around the second violin’s contours and material in quite detailed ways, placing her at the centre of the action. The music expresses key emotional moments and turning-points in the story, reaching a climax in the third movement, the woman’s moment of passionate liberation. The final movement creates a complex emotional ambivalence, interweaving thanksgiving and sadness.

Janáček’s empathy for the heroine of Tolstoy’s story derived from a mix of personal experiences – his own unsatisfactory marriage; the death of his daughter; and his passion for a younger married woman, his muse Kamila Stösslová. If something about Janáček’s interpretation of the Tolstoy story suggests Puccini to you, that’s not a bad way to approach this quartet: as a kind of verismo chamber music.

© James Koehne

Elmar Lampson (born 1952)

Passacaglia (2003/2015)

Born in Koblenz Elmar Lampson studied composition and violin at the conservatories in Hannover and Würzburg. He has worked as a freelance composer, conductor and cultural events manager, which included the establishment of the Orchester-Akademie in Hamburg. He is president of the Hamburg Hochschule für Musik und Theater, and teaches composition and theory there. His oeuvre as a composer includes chamber music, works for soloists and ensembles, orchestral and choir music, and an opera.

The composer writes:

The Passacaglia for string quartet (originally the first movement, Canzone, of my Third Quartet) grows out of a small choral piece that I wrote in 1986 for the baptism of my first son. Years later, I took this piece as the starting point for a string quartet, which was premiered in 2003 in Vienna by the Quatuor Danel. I wrote a piece where the modal sounds of this ‘baptismal’ music dissolves into harmonics-based textures and blends into shimmering soundscapes. The raw material, which alternates between F major and A minor, is freed from the patina of the familiar and finally appears as a pure colour or a delicate fragrance.

This virtuoso Passacaglia only reached its final form in 2015, when the revised version was premiered in the summer of that year by the Zemlinsky Quartet in France.

© Elmar Lampson 2018

György Ligeti (1923-2006)

String Quartet no 1, Métamorphoses nocturnes (1953-4)

- I. Allegro grazioso (fast, graceful)
- II. Vivace, capriccioso (lively, playful)
- III. Adagio, mesto (slow, sad)
- IV. Presto (very fast)
- V. Prestissimo (as fast as possible)
- VI. Andante tranquillo (at a calm walking pace)
- VII. Tempo di Valse, moderato, con eleganza, un poco capriccioso (Waltz tempo, moderately, with elegance, a little playful)
- VIII. Subito prestissimo (suddenly very fast)
- IX. Allegretto, un poco gioviale (Rather fast, a little jovial)
- X. Prestissimo (as fast as possible)
- XI. Ad libitum, senza misura (play at liberty, without keeping time)
- XII. Lento (slow)

When György Ligeti composed his Quartet no 1, the political and ideological climate of his native Hungary was opposed to the artistic avant-garde. Ligeti felt compelled by his artistic integrity to write such pieces, but he kept them hidden in his desk drawer until circumstances proved more favourable. The Quartet’s premiere came two years after the composer had fled from Hungary, and took place in Vienna.

The major musical challenge faced by Ligeti in writing this work was how to progress beyond his compatriot Bartók’s great quartets. While several of these works were on the index of compositions banned from public performance in Hungary, Ligeti knew them in score and admired them. To address the challenge, Ligeti paid homage to the outstanding achievement of his predecessor, but did so in his own voice and manner.

Ligeti commented that the structure of this Quartet could be interpreted as either a single movement or as a number of shorter, linked sections. Each of these sections is contrasted to each other with regard to expression, tempo, texture, timbre and internal structure. The work begins with a melodic cell made up of two major seconds a semitone apart (repeated literally three times during the course of the quartet). This cell is accompanied by a type of rhythmic neutrality in which no strong sense of metre is projected. As the work proceeds, the interval of a major second gradually expands to a major seventh and minor ninth and is often combined with changes in both tempo and texture.

Ligeti makes use of more unusual tonal colourings, such as a quarter-tone trill-like figure in the cello part. Other striking gestures are the mechanical reiteration of a single note, most noticeably in the strong pizzicatos in the cello part near the end of the quartet, as well as Ligeti’s own direction at the beginning of the *Prestissimo* to play ‘very evenly, like a precision mechanism.’ There is also a brief fugal section and the use of other contrapuntal devices. At the very conclusion of the quartet the direction ‘senza misura’ (unmeasured), ensures the work ends, in a finely balanced, symmetrical way, with the same sense of rhythmic freedom with which it began.

Adapted from a note © Robert Forgacs

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

String Quartet in F minor, op 80 (1847)

- I. Allegro vivace assai* (very fast and lively)
- II. Allegro assai* (fast)
- III. Adagio* (slow)
- IV. Finale: Allegro molto* (very fast)

Nine years elapsed between the last of Mendelssohn’s op 44 quartets and the F minor quartet, op 80 of 1847. Yet in terms of mood this gap could well have been even greater. The most obvious external reasons for the composition of this furious and tragic work are the recent death of Mendelssohn’s sister Fanny (a loss from which he never recovered), and the composer’s own ill-health and impending premature death. Whereas the earlier

quartets had often given the impression of highly developed and expressive salon music, this later quartet has a new strength and drama. For many listeners, the sheer sense of foreboding in the work (Mendelssohn died only two months after its completion) made it the embodiment of his finest, most committed musical argument, in fact the summation of his life’s work in chamber music.

The opening movement is full of the passionate urgency of a man too clearly conscious of his own mortality. The mood bears a distinct resemblance to the fiery intensity of Beethoven’s late-period outbursts: here, too, a desperate sorrow pervades even the quickest sections. It is manifested in the syncopated rhythms and sometimes harsh dissonances of the triple-time dance (Allegro assai) which forms the second movement. And it achieves its fullest expression in the Adagio, with its pronounced dynamic variations and its removal to the remote key of E major and E minor. The Finale can be heard as a desperate search for an unattainable goal.

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Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

String Quartet in C major, KV465 ‘Dissonance’ (1785)

- I. Adagio – allegro* (slow – fast)
- II. Andante cantabile* (at a walking pace, lyrical)
- III. Menuetto: Allegro & Trio* (Minuet: fast & Trio)
- IV. Allegro molto* (very fast)

Mozart did very well out of the six quartets he dedicated to Joseph Haydn. In 1785 the publisher Artaria paid him 450 florins for the set, as much as he would normally receive for a full-scale opera. Hearing three of the works earlier that year, Haydn himself made his famous statement to Leopold Mozart that ‘your son is the greatest composer known to me’.

It hadn’t been easy, however. The quartets were written ‘on spec’ over the unusually long period of two years. Mozart, naturally, had to give priority to paid work, and we know that they were the ‘fruits of long and laborious study’.

The set follow the four-movement design of Haydn’s mature works. The most obviously novel feature of Mozart’s C major Quartet is the slow introduction to its first movement. Haydn used this device frequently, as a way of gradually building up tension before the eruption of a first movement’s principal, fast music. Mozart’s beginning this way may well be an act of homage, but his introduction is light-years away from Haydn’s work in the mid-1780s. Indeed, for all of his complimentary remarks about Mozart’s genius, Haydn is alleged to have found this passage baffling.

In C minor, the introduction is, as the nickname suggests, dissonant in the extreme – so much so, in fact, that later musicians have well-meaningly tried to ‘correct’ Mozart’s errors. But it has a precise dramatic function, as Solomon puts it, to depict the ‘lineaments of chaos at the moment of its conversion into form’, with the effect that the faster C

major music is ‘soaring and liberated’. Haydn must have seen the potential of Mozart’s innovation, as he used a very similar music to depict the move from chaos to order (symbolised, there too, by C major) in his oratorio *The Creation* more than a decade later.

© Gordon Kerry

String Quartet in D minor, K421 (c 1783)

- I. Allegro moderato* (moderately fast)
- II. Andante* (moving along)
- III. Menuetto: Allegretto* (fairly fast) – *Trio*
- IV. Allegretto ma non troppo* (fairly fast, but not too fast)

Mozart was highly impressed with Haydn’s String Quartets op 33, published in 1781, which Haydn justifiably claimed had been written ‘in an entirely new way’. In short, he had discovered a way of making all four instruments into equal participants in the musical discourse, freeing the cello, for instance, from merely supplying the bass line. Haydn breaks his themes up into memorable but elastic motifs that are threaded through the texture. In his ‘Haydn’ quartets, Mozart marries that technique with the contrapuntal practices of Bach, and Bach’s use of emotive chromatic harmony.

D minor was often the key of revenge in late Baroque opera, and in Mozart it is associated with the turbulence of his Piano Concerto K466, *Don Giovanni* and the Requiem. The Quartet K421 has much of this tragic sense in the tense chromaticism of its harmony. It also relies heavily on Baroque counterpoint, as in the first movement where the theme is imitated (repeated sequentially) by the different instruments. The Andante is simple and lyrical, a foil to the energetically tense minuet and trio. In later years, Constanze Mozart remembered that her husband was composing this movement while she was in labour with their first child, and would divide his time between composing and comforting her. The finale is a variations movement, perhaps a tribute to Haydn, as the theme bears a passing resemblance to the G major quartet from Haydn’s op 33.

Adapted from a note by Gordon Kerry © 2006

Akira Nishimura (born 1953)

String Quartet no 5, Shesha (2013)

- I. Awakening of Shesha*
- II. Samudra manthan (Churning of the ocean of milk)*
- III. Amrita (The nectar of immortal life).*

Nishimura was born in Osaka 1953. He studied composition and musical theory to post-graduate level at Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music. In 1977 he won the first of numerous prizes at the Queen Elizabeth International Music Composition Competition with *Heterophony* for string quartet (1975).

Nishimura principally employs heterophony, a characteristic device of Asian traditional music, thereby subtly transforming the intervals, rhythm and melody of his dense multi-layered

textures. Though similar to the ‘micropolyphony’ of Ligeti, an Asian perspective informs his technique. He has been commissioned by many overseas music festivals and ensembles such as Arditti Quartet, Kronos Quartet, ELISION Ensemble, Hannover Society of Contemporary Music and so on. He is currently a Professor at the Tokyo College of Music and the Musical Director of the Izumi Sinfonietta Osaka, and the Kusatsu International Music Festival.

This work, which received its premiere by the Arditti Quartet at London’s Wigmore Hall in October of 2013, was written in honour of Irvine Arditti’s 60th birthday. For the composer, the word ‘shesha’ refers to ‘the name of a gigantic snake with thousands of heads, which appears in an Indian myth. It lives beneath the ground and supports the earth. Shesha’s awakening means the earth’s awakening’. Nishimura describes the piece as a ‘celebratory small ring of sound’.

Courtesy of Schott Music

Maurice Ravel (1875 – 1937)

String Quartet in F major (1902-03)

- I. Allegro moderato: Très doux* (moderately fast, very sweet)
- II. Assez vif: Très rythmé* (quite fast, well-paced)
- III. Très lent* (very slow)
- IV. Vif et agité* (lively and agitated)

Ravel’s Quartet is so assured, original and admired that it’s hard to believe it was his first real go at writing serious chamber music. Still harder is it to comprehend why so many of his teachers and professors felt that, on this evidence, he should give up composing and stick to the piano. It is dedicated to one of the more encouraging tutors at the Paris Conservatoire (Gabriel Fauré).

This Quartet is often linked with that of Debussy’s, written ten years earlier. The two works do make an interesting comparison – Debussy’s is all about harmonic innovation; Ravel’s is more tightly grounded in counterpoint and form. One of the things which makes us describe a composer as ‘great’ is an early sense of a distinct and individual voice, and each quartet has this quality in abundance. Each, too, shows one of the great recent musical innovations, attributed to Franck – thematic unity across all movements, where themes ‘cycle’ throughout the work. This technique gives a very satisfying sense of cohesion through four quite different movements.

The opening Allegro moderato introduces one of the principal themes, while a second theme (doubled at two octaves between violin and viola) has a widely-spaced texture which gives the movement a sense of light and clarity: not unemotional, but not sweatily passionate in the way so much late-Romantic music can be.

The second movement, fast and rhythmic, launches into an arresting pizzicato theme. There is a contrasting middle section (a chance for the cello to shine) before the opening music returns to round off the movement at breathless pace. The minor key tonality of the third movement provides something

of a respite after all the pizzicato that preceded it, and also sets up the finale. The final movement, Vif et agité, is dazzling. It effortlessly links and combines themes and motifs from all over the work, presenting them in new ways and sustaining the interest right up to the climactic moments.

Adapted from a note by KP Kemp © 2009/2017

Wolfgang Rihm (born 1952)

String Quartet no 4 (1980-1)

- I. Agitato - Allegro alla marcia - Allegro, ma non troppo* (agitated – fast in march time – fast but not too fast)
- II. Con moto - Allegro - Andante - Allegro molto* (with movement – fast – at a walking pace – fast)
- III. Adagio* (slow)

Wolfgang Rihm draws on material ranging from the rigorous music of the post-Webernian avant-garde to the ‘anarchic’ delights of Schumann. In the 1970s he explored a sound world of lushness and high emotional charge; in the 1980s and 1990s there was a discernable paring back and use of smaller forces.

At the time of the premiere, Rihm wrote:

Dedicated to the Alban Berg Quartet, this is indeed a string quartet – but not The Fourth; perhaps it is a Ninth – no one knows.

It is in three movements, two of which are fast (although not really that fast) and one of which is slow (but not only slow).

I composed the Fourth Quartet during the winter of 1980/81. It is a straggler and a harbinger at one and the same time...I’m looking forward to its poesy, which doesn’t interest me at all anymore today, because it has already passed through the ‘interesting’ stage, which is much more interesting – or as uninteresting as permissible today. But that is another story – think up something for yourselves, for goodness’ sake. Music isn’t behind the music or in the words alongside the music – guess what it is and win a prize. And yet this string quartet is anything but cheery...

© Wolfgang Rihm 1981

Franz Schubert (1797–1828)

String Quartet no 14 in D minor, D810 ‘Death and the Maiden’ (1824)

- I. Allegro* (fast)
- II. Andante con moto* (At a walking pace, but with movement)
- III. Scherzo: Allegro molto – Trio* (Scherzo – very fast – trio section)
- IV. Presto* (extremely fast)

Legends, stories and fables of a maiden’s encounter with Death go back centuries. Of all the forms of meditation on death, this one seems to have exerted a powerful force – as an effort, one presumes, to understand the unfairness of life,

the randomness of mortality. This is what drew Schubert to the theme, and for profoundly personal reasons.

It was in April 1823 that Schubert’s syphilis was diagnosed, and with it, the recognition came upon him that conventional marriage was impossible, and it was likely death lay inevitably ahead in the not too distant future. Schubert’s miserable contemplations, however, did not lead him to total despair. Even in this quartet (written in 1824), where Schubert is confronting unpleasant reality, he never gives in to misery, but continues to write so much attractive, unburdened music. For Schubert, the awareness that he would soon die was alleviated by the promise of ‘fairer worlds’ in the life beyond.

The ‘Death and the Maiden’ reference specifically relates to the second movement (Andante con moto) which takes its main melody from Schubert’s earlier song setting of a poem of that title by the minor German poet, Matthias Claudius. The words suggest the ambiguities between the experience of Death as fearful tragedy or ultimate consolation; as punishment or deliverance. Through a substantial series of variations, Schubert conveys the turbulence of this kind of philosophical reckoning, flashing between angry outbursts, gentle reflection and serene dreams, building to a dramatic climax but ending in a cadence of resignation.

The other movements have this sense of ambiguity and conflicting sentiments, too: the first (Allegro) presents motifs of fear and questioning set against a second theme of tender hopefulness; the third (Scherzo) contrasts grim jocularity against paradisiacal dreamery, and the fourth (Presto) has a racing impetuosity that ends with determined finality.

Adapted from a note © James Koehne 2014

Robert Schumann (1810–1856)

String Quartet in A major, op 41 no 3 (1842)

- I. Andante espressivo – Allegro molto moderato* (expressively at a walking pace – very moderately fast)
- II. Assai agitato – Un poco adagio – Tempo risoluto* (Very agitated – a little slow – resolute tempo)
- III. Adagio molto* (Very slow)
- IV. Allegro molto vivace* (Fast and very lively)

Schumann composed his three string quartets op 41 in rapid succession in the months of June and July, 1842. He had made previous attempts at the genre. In a letter to his future wife Clara Wieck in 1836 Schumann wrote, ‘The thought of [writing] quartets gives me pleasure. The piano is getting too narrow for me. In composing now I often hear a lot of things I can barely suggest.’

Clara was a supremely gifted concert pianist in her own right. While on a concert tour of north German cities in 1842, Schumann was snubbed by court officials in favour of his talented wife. Not content to play the ‘handbag’, he returned alone to Leipzig, finding solace in contrapuntal exercises. He also pored over the string quartets of Haydn and Mozart. After Clara’s return, they studied these scores together at the keyboard.

Critically and collegially well received, the op 41 quartets have nevertheless drawn some criticism as being ‘music for string quartet, but not string quartet music’. The seven-bar introduction to the first movement of no 3 immediately presents an audio cue for the listener – a descending interval of a fifth which then heralds the beginning of the first theme, plays a significant role in the second theme, and recurs throughout the remaining movements. An unsettled Agitato assai takes us away to the minor key and plays ambiguously with the sense of pulse. A set of variations follows: the first a determined fugue, the second marked this time by a rising fifth, while the third presents the theme again, this time with a firm metre.

The slow movement is in some sense composed backwards: Schumann’s first meandering, decorated theme is gradually pared back over successive statements to a more humble conclusion, as if working back towards first principles. A dotted rhythm marks the opening of the final Allegro molto vivace, and there follow many typical final-movement compositional devices, contrapuntal imitation and an extended rondo among them.

Adapted from a note © Genevieve Lang

Ana Sokolović (born 1968)

Commedia dell’ Arte III (2013)

- I. Brighella*
- II. Signora*
- III. Innamorati*

After study in Belgrade, Serbian-born composer Ana Sokolović has lived in Canada for two decades, and teaches composition at the Université de Montréal.

Her work is suffused with her fascination for different forms of artistic expression and is often inspired by Balkan folk music and its asymmetrical festive rhythms. She works in a variety of genres, frequently for the stage, and recently received a prestigious commission from the Canadian Opera Company for a main-stage opera that will be premiered during the 2019/20 season.

Commedia dell’ Arte III was commissioned by the Anima Quartet in 2013, who premiered it at the Hochschule Hanns Eisler, Berlin. The piece won the Boris Pergamenschikow Prize for Chamber Music. It has three movements, each one inspired by one of the Commedia dell’arte’s characters. Here the music represents Brighella the cynical and sometimes cruel servant with his wooden sword who is also a fine musician; La Signora, who often appears as wife of the older Pantalone; the Innamorati are the lovers – usually unmasked – whose affair often causes all the trouble between their fathers.

The whole cycle of three Commedia del Arte works, composed between 2010 and 2013, has 10 movements.

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Karol Szymanowski (1882-1937)

String Quartet no 2, op 56 (1927)

- I. Moderato (moderately)*
- II. Vivace, scherzando (lively, jokingly)*
- III. Lento (fairly slow)*

Szymanowski was an exact contemporary of Stravinsky and a year younger than Bartók. He was a key figure in the rebirth of Polish music in the early years of the 20th century. In the earlier part of his career he was influenced by Chopin, Scriabin, Wagner and Strauss, and visits to Sicily and Africa in 1901-11 and 1914 strengthened the fascination that Arabic culture had already begun to exert over him.

The first of Szymanowski’s two string quartets dates from 1917, the second from 1927; it was performed in Paris in 1929, but it is not certain whether this was its premiere. The first of its three movements is in ternary form, with a lyrical main theme first presented by first violin and cello in octaves, against a shimmering accompaniment. (The frequent use of tremolo, trills, harmonics, pizzicato and sul ponticello here and elsewhere in the quartet gives the music much of its highly individual flavour.) There is a free, rhapsodic middle section, followed by a surprisingly literal reprise. The second movement is a brilliant vigorous scherzo, with a dark, brooding trio and a varied reprise. The slow movement comes last, and is largely fugal in style, except for its central development. The initial fugue subject is played in diminution and with the rhythmic scheme varied, and it is this second exposition that forms the basis of the agitated recapitulation.

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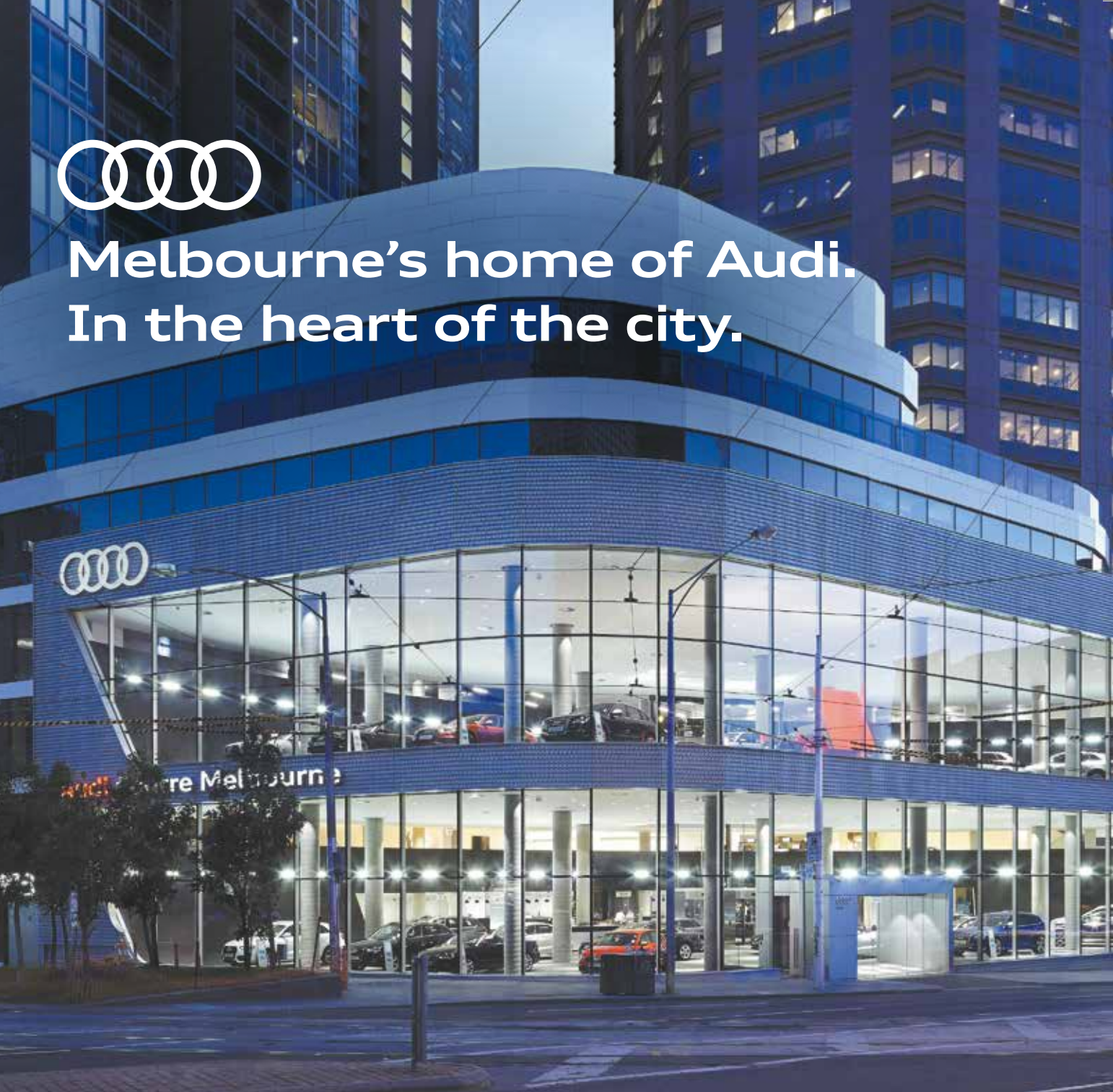
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