

# FLINDERS QUARTET

## & Schubert 2017

### SCHUBERT GALA with TIMO-VEIKKO VALVE

Hobart Town Hall ~ Thursday 15 June, 8.00pm  
The Independent, North Sydney ~ Sunday 18 June, 3.30pm  
Hawthorn Arts Centre ~ Tuesday 20 June, 7.30pm

SHANE CHEN violin  
NICHOLAS WATERS violin  
HELEN IRELAND viola  
ZOE KNIGHTON cello  
TIMO-VEIKKO VALVE special guest, cello

Is it possible to identify a composer's country of origin simply by the sounds they use? In the cases of Peter Sculthorpe and Luigi Boccherini, their choices of soundbites from their natural surrounds permeate their compositions, leaving the listener with more than a postcard from their respective homelands. (We say homeland in the case of Boccherini, but this particular postcard comes from his adopted Spain, rather than his native Italy.)

#### PETER SCULTHORPE 1929-2014

**String Quartet No. 18** (composed 2010, jointly commissioned by Edinburgh Festival for Tokyo String Quartet and Peter and Leila Doyle for Flinders Quartet)

- I. Prelude
- II. A Land Singing
- III. A Dying Land
- IV. A Lost Land
- V. Postlude

Having said on a number of occasions how proud he was to have written more string quartets than Beethoven, Peter Sculthorpe's 18th string quartet was his last, and in many ways, his most poignant. He wrote:

"My String Quartet No. 18 is a heartfelt expression of my concern about climate change, about the future of our fragile planet. Rather than attempt to write a work that addresses the plight of the planet itself, I chose to use Australia as a metaphor for it. The work is in five movements: 'Prelude'; 'A Land Singing'; 'A Dying Land'; 'A Lost Land'; and 'Postlude'.

'Prelude' introduces the alternation of the pitches 'A flat' and 'G', a recurring motif in the work. Insect sounds also appear in this movement. Cries of birds first appear in the next movement, 'A Land Singing', which is based upon an energetic Indigenous chant known as "Windmill". This is juxtaposed with episodes derived from it that contain brief suggestions of didgeridu patterns. The patterns give rise to the somewhat impassioned thematic material of 'A Dying Land'.

'A Lost Land' is the emotional heart of the work. Its desolate outer parts embrace a section that follows the contours of a nostalgic Torres Strait Island song, "Waiye". There are no references to the didgeridu or birds in this movement. These return in 'Postlude', which presents two statements of "O God, our help in ages past". Sung on national days of mourning and regularly in Aboriginal communities, this hymn provides the comfort of hope for the future.

The alternation of the pitches 'A flat' and 'G' in every movement but the fourth is a reference to the motif that the astronomer Kepler believed to be the sound of Planet Earth. These movements are founded upon a low 'C'. In my music a low 'C' always represents God, the God of all religious beliefs."

#### LUIGI BOCCHERINI 1743-1805

**String Quintet in D major 'Fandango'** (composed 1798)

- I. Pastorale
- II. Allegro maestoso
- III. Grave assai - Fandango

Luigi Boccherini's portrait is hung in the National Gallery of Victoria, on the second level, and anyone can wander in and be met by his confident gaze which borders on a prodigious smirk. There can be no doubt from his compositions that he was one of the finest virtuosos of his day and indeed (although it could never be proven categorically), one of the finest virtuosos on his instrument throughout all of history. (All this without an end pin, as well!)

That self-satisfied smirk was well earned. Boccherini was a work-horse, delivering 100 string quintets, close to 100 string quartets, and some 150 other chamber works, including more than thirty cello sonatas. His speciality became the quintet for string quartet and extra cello which he performed himself on the first cello with the Font family (father and three sons) whilst he was serving as "virtuoso of the chamber and composer of music" at

the Aranjuez court of the Infante Don Luis, younger brother of the king of Spain.

The sounds of his adopted Spain find their way into many of his compositions. One quintet, nicknamed "The Aviary", is filled with hunting sounds and bird calls. Another uses church bells and bugle calls from the military garrison and bears the inscription, "Nocturnal Music of the Streets of Madrid". The heart of the quintet in today's program is the Fandango final movement which instructs the second cellist to down their bow and avail themselves of some castanets. The choreography of the Fandango as a dance involves two dancers - most commonly two male dancers, but any combination is possible - in a friendly face off of toe tapping displays of intricate and light footwork. They each wait their turn, vying for the more eye-catching movements.

It was not unusual to fulfil a commission by using different movements from pre-existing works. On this particular occasion, it does get a trifle confusing. This quintet uses the same movements as the guitar quintet, but the guitar quintet itself uses two different string quintets as a starting point. Boccherini transcribed the Pastorale and the Allegro maestoso of the D major Guitar Quintet from the first two movements of a 1771 string quintet in the same key (G.270, Op. 12, No. 6); the Grave assai and the colourful Fandango he borrowed from the opening of another D major string quintet (G.341, Op. 50, No. 2), written in 1788. We'll forgive Boccherini - one can't accuse him of being lazy, and these movements go so well together. They're also immensely fun to play.

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## INTERVAL

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**FRANZ SCHUBERT** 1797-1828  
**String Quintet in C major, D.956** (composed 1828)

- I. Allegro ma non troppo
- II. Adagio
- III. Scherzo
- IV. Allegretto

Schubert's origins may not make such an obvious contribution to his compositions like Sculthorpe or Boccherini, but one can't deny that the Viennese sensibilities of form, structure, and intensely well-crafted melodies are well on display. As his last chamber work before his death (he didn't live to see his 32nd birthday) one may expect a work that is more weighed down with the sense of mortality. Quite the opposite is true: here is a work of aching perfection. There is not one note that is out of place nor any moment where the intensity of emotion wanes.

Benjamin Britten put it brilliantly in his Aspen address in 1964 when he said:

"It is arguable that the richest and most productive eighteen months in our music history is the time when Beethoven had just died, when the other nineteenth-century giants, Wagner, Verdi and Brahms had not begun; I mean the period in which Franz Schubert wrote his *Winterreise*, the C major Symphony, his last three piano sonatas, the C major String Quintet, as well as a dozen other glorious pieces. The very creation of these works in that space of time seems hardly credible; but the standard of inspiration, of magic, is miraculous and past all explanation. Schubert knew exactly what he was doing (make no mistake about that), and he had thought profoundly about it - but by the renewal of the magic: each time, the mystery remains."

As with the great G major string quartet written two years earlier, the same tune occurs a number of times throughout the first movement, each time with a different pairing of instruments. The movement even begins the same way as the G major quartet with a perfectly voiced major chord swelling in a crescendo, but this time, Schubert delivers the listener with a beautiful tune rather than the harmonic struggle between major and minor.

The second movement opens and closes with one of the most beautiful strung out melodies, punctuated by cello pizzicati guiding the tune like a watchful parent. The middle section probably the most overtly emotional outburst in the piece.

After the rollicking third movement (which includes an incredibly profound and wisely spoken trio) the fourth movement delivers a number of tunes featuring the two cellos once again. This movement has it all - catchy rhythms, a fugue, beautiful melodies and a whirlwind sprint to the end. One wonders if this piece of pure perfection meant Schubert was able to leave this earth with more than a worthy contribution made; but just imagine if he had lived even five more years.

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### FLINDERS QUARTET'S UPCOMING CONCERTS

- June 23 - Peninsula Music Society, Mornington
- June 25 - The Lost Ones Gallery, Ballarat
- June 27 - Collins Street Baptist Church, Melbourne
- Sept 15 & 16 - Craven Creek Music, Rookhurst NSW
- Sept 22 - Albury Chamber Music Festival, Albury
- Sept 24 - The Capital, Bendigo
- Sept 26 - Collins Street Baptist Church, Melbourne
- Sept 27 - Colac Otway Performing Arts Centre, Colac
- Sept 28 - Melbourne Recital Centre, Southbank
- Oct 1 - Montsalvat, Eltham
- Oct 7 - Wesley of Warragul, Warragul
- Oct 8 - Spring Music Series, Daylesford

Visit [flindersquartet.com](http://flindersquartet.com) for full details and bookings

## FLINDERS QUARTET

*"... precision and wonderful understanding."* — CLASSIKON, April 2017

Flinders Quartet (FQ) is instantly recognisable as one of Australia's most loved chamber music ensembles. A quartet for the twenty-first century, FQ continues its second decade with acknowledged musical skill and maturity. Their dynamic and stirring performances of a full spectrum of repertoire have audiences and critics articulating their esteem, and the quartet is now a highly-respected force in Australian chamber music.

FQ regularly commissions and premieres works by Australian composers. In 2016, the quartet premiered works by Stuart Greenbaum and Elena Kats-Chernin, while Calvin Bowman and Iain Grandage commissions and arrangements are slated for 2017. In their ongoing mission to further the Australian tradition of chamber music, FQ has previously commissioned and premiered works by Katy Abbott, Ross Edwards, Richard Mills, Paul Dean, Paul Grabowsky, Andrew Ford, Ian Munro, Tom Henry and Peter Sculthorpe. In 2016, FQ launched its inaugural composer workshop initiative, working with emerging Australian composers.

Vanguards of the Melbourne chamber music scene, FQ initiated their own annual subscription series in 2002. The series has gained momentum each year, and the quartet now enjoys programming and presenting their own season in four Melbourne venues.

FQ's first commercial CD release, *Reinventions* with Genevieve Lacey, met with critical and popular acclaim and was re-released on the ABC Classics label in 2015, reaching #1 on the ARIA Core Classical Album Chart. Also on the ABC Classics label is their ARIA-nominated 2011 release, *Fandango*, with Karin Schaupp, and 2015 release *Intimate Voices: Sibelius String Quartets*. In 2017, FQ will record and release a CD of Australian works commissioned and/or premiered by the quartet.

*"Their shading, rhythmic pliability and tautness of ensemble are impeccable."* — LIMELIGHT MAGAZINE (reviewing "Intimate Voices"), December 2015

The members of Flinders Quartet have a steadfast commitment to the development of Australian chamber music, musicians and audiences. As teachers and mentors they regularly work with the Australian Youth Orchestra and its developmental programs for young chamber groups. They also work with the Victorian Amateur Chamber Music Society, and are regularly invited to tutor at secondary and tertiary institutions throughout Australia including the University of Melbourne.

[flindersquartet.com](http://flindersquartet.com)

Want to get in touch with Flinders Quartet?  
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T: 0417 798 523 Wendy Avilov, Manager

## TIMO-VEIKKO VALVE

Timo-Veikko "Tipi" Valve is one of the most versatile musicians of his generation performing as a soloist, chamber musician and orchestral leader on both modern and period instruments.

Valve studied at the Sibelius Academy in his home town of Helsinki and at the Edsberg Music Institute in Stockholm, Sweden, focusing in solo performance and chamber music in both institutions.

Tipi has performed as a soloist with all major orchestras in Finland and as a chamber musician throughout Europe, Asia, Australia and the US. He works closely with a number of Finnish composers and has commissioned new works for the instrument. Most recently Valve has premiered concertos by Aulis Sallinen and Olli Virtaperko as well as two new cello concertos written for him by Eero Hämeenniemi and Olli Koskelin. ACO's 2015 season included the world premiere of an arrangement of Olli Mustonen's Sonata for cello and chamber orchestra, commissioned by Valve and the ACO.

In 2006 Valve was appointed Principal Cello of the Australian Chamber Orchestra with whom he frequently appears as soloist. He also curates the ACO's chamber music series in Sydney. Tipi is a founding member of Jousia Ensemble and Jousia Quartet.

Valve plays a Brothers Amati cello made in 1616. The Amati was purchased by the ACO Instrument Fund.

*"His tone was so stunningly beautiful that a single note emitting from his instrument communicated more than others can express in a lifetime."* — CHICAGO CLASSICAL MUSIC

*"His technical command of a magnificent Guarneri instrument allowed a wider range of dynamics, enabling him to unlock more imaginative possibilities from the notes on the page...his awareness of sonority within the ambient space allowing vividly shaped phrases to hang in the air...This was deeply expressive playing."* — LIMELIGHT MAGAZINE

[timo-veikkovalve.fi](http://timo-veikkovalve.fi)



# FLINDERS QUARTET

& Schubert 2017

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