

FLINDERS QUARTET

20th Anniversary Season

BEETHOVEN 130

The Clifford Hocking Concert: music in the memory of Australia's great impresario, Clifford Hocking AM

Montsalvat Barn Gallery ~ Sunday 1 March, 2.30pm
Primrose Potter Salon ~ Wednesday 4 March, 7.00pm

THIBAUD PAVLOVIC-HOBBA violin
WILMA SMITH violin
HELEN IRELAND viola
ZOE KNIGHTON cello

This concert is dedicated to impresario, Clifford Hocking AM. Clifford was instrumental in enabling Flinders Quartet to focus solely on becoming a string quartet of the highest calibre, and it is his spirit of programming that has infused this concert. A melding of words and music are the best of collaborations between audience and performers.

ANTON WEBERN 1883-1945

Six Bagatelles for string quartet, Op. 9 (composed 1911-13)

- I. Mäßig
- II. Leicht Bewegt
- III. Ziemlich Fließend
- IV. Sehr Langsam
- V. Äußerst Langsam
- VI. Fließend

These little vignettes are some of the most perfect examples of twelve tone music. Webern said of composing the bagatelles,

"I had the feeling that when all 12 notes had gone by the piece was finished ... In my sketchbook I wrote out the chromatic scale and crossed off the individual notes. Over in an instant, every single note has been painstakingly chosen and the amount of detail on every note can be excruciating for the player."

This comment on his process reminds us of the way a wordsmith will agonise over a syllable in a Haiku poem, and therein lay the foundations for our project to invite our audience to write Haikus to match this music. On each subsequent listening of these gems, they gain clarity and meaning with layer upon layer being infused into 20-40 short seconds.

Webern was most famously a pupil of Arnold Schoenberg and engaged in what some would determine hero worship. In letters Webern wrote to Schoenberg, he told him,

"You are set up in my heart as my highest ideal whom I love more and more, to whom I am more and more devoted", and in another letter, "What I am, everything, everything is through you; I live only through you."

It seems that Webern was a troubled soul, finding it difficult to have consistent employment. Between 1908-13 he took up and quit five jobs conducting in theatres; and between 1911-20 he applied for, was offered and subsequently changed his mind about a job conducting at the Deutsches Landestheater in Prague. He applied for the job seven times and held it, in total,

for about six months across separate occasions in 1916, 1917 and 1920.

While Webern successfully campaigned twice to have Schoenberg excused from military service, Webern came to grief himself as the victim of a military accident when he was mistakenly shot whilst having a cigar during a sting operation at the end of the second world war.

The entire works of Webern fit onto three CDs, and are shorter in combined duration than the one late Beethoven quartet played later in this concert program.

FRANZ SCHUBERT 1797-1828

Quartettsatz (composed 1820)

This short movement by Schubert represents one of his three incomplete string quartets. It stands so wonderfully as a complete piece, it is hard to imagine the movements that might have followed this tarantella-like 'first' movement. One can speculate about why this work was abandoned, but we can be fairly sure that Schubert was not in a healthy state of mind while he was composing during this time in his life. Was there something going on in his personal life that was reflected in this piece of music? It could be that he was experiencing the early symptoms of syphilis, with which he was later diagnosed.

Like Beethoven, string quartets were an integral part of Schubert's overall compositional output and he returned to them throughout his career. As a teen, he played in the family quartet, so composing in this form was somewhat of a necessity. He composed over twenty quartets (trumping Beethoven) but many were lost. There are sixteen surviving quartets, three of which are incomplete.

While Schubert and Beethoven are never reported to have met formally, there is one story of Schubert seeing Beethoven in a coffee house and being too nervous to say hello. For two titans of the early 19th century, it seems unfathomable that they remained practically strangers until Beethoven's death. Beethoven is said to have been given some of Schubert's songs to peruse on his deathbed, and Schubert in turn called for Beethoven's Op. 131 string quartet to be brought to him while he lay bitterly ill before his own death. The fact that Schubert was a pall-bearer at Beethoven's funeral says more about his standing in the Viennese community rather than his close association with Beethoven. As was his wish, Schubert was

buried next to Beethoven.

This work is heavily chromaticised, using chromatic decoration of motives and larger harmonic progressions such as through a D flat chord, and a modulation to the distant key of B flat major. It is these experiments with modulation that give the work such complex flavour with unexpected twists and turns.

DEREK BROOKES 1965-

String Quartet No. 1 (composed 2017)

- I. Kisetsu no Oto ('sounds of seasons')
- II. Tsubasa no Oto ('sounds of animals')
- III. Views of Edo

FQ 'discovered' Derek Brookes in our 2018 Composer Development Program and was immediately taken with how these works complement the Six Bagatelles of Webern. It was Derek's pairing of Haiku poetry and music that inspired us to put a call out to explore the connections with Haiku and music further.

A note from the composer:

"This piece emerged at a time when I was exploring different ways of expressing joy in music. In this case, I was trying to find poems and images that would embody or even evoke the qualities of joy. The idea was that I could then draw on these sources to inspire the compositional process.

I started looking more closely at the qualities of joy. One key feature of this emotion, I discovered, is its ephemeral, elusive, transient quality. Joy tends to arise in situations such as falling in love, witnessing a sunset, making a discovery, receiving a gift, the birth of a child, playfulness, and so on. There seems to be an underlying connection between all these situations. We can at least say that joy is usually evoked by (and perhaps reveals) what we value and cherish in life, no matter how small or commonplace.

Reflecting on these qualities of joy led me to explore 'haiku', an aphoristic form of Japanese poetry. A haiku has been called 'the poem of a single breath': each consists of a mere 17 syllables, ordered in a 5-7-5 structure. Haiku are designed to have the force of immediacy, a 'lightning flash' of insight which can illuminate the essence or value of something in the world, no matter how (seemingly) insignificant or familiar. They reflect the view that life can only be lived in the 'now', and that a lack of attention to the present moment can result in a kind of squandering of one's life. Each haiku is open-ended, with little or no resolution. Yet it will hint of connections with the past and what is yet to come. Indeed, there is often an underlying continuity or cyclical pattern within any collection of these poems.

I selected 12 beautiful haiku to serve as the inspiration for the first two movements of this piece. What emerged was a sequence of 12 highly condensed, discrete 'moments' of music. Each 'moment' was inspired by the imagery, structure and mood of the corresponding haiku. But there are also connections across the sequence - the first eight haiku represent two complete cycles of the seasons. The next 4 each focus on a winged animal (a chick, woodpecker, sparrow and a firefly). Musical themes are also occasionally restated, especially where there is a connected subject (e.g. fireflies).

For the final movement I decided to use images as my 'source' for the expression of joy. In keeping with the Japanese aesthetic, I selected two woodblock prints from Utagawa Hiroshige's "100 Famous Views of Edo" (1857). The first print is of an eagle as it prepares to dive for prey in the wintry marshes below. The

second portrays a starlit sky, with fishing boats gently rocking in the port and Tsukudajima Island lying silent in the distance. I then asked the simple question 'what do I see?' The dramatic and emotive aspects of the images seemed to come to life in my imagination. I was especially aware of the joy that I felt in this encounter with the sheer beauty of the woodprints. I started composing by ear, guided only by my reflection on what I was seeing, my emotional responses and my sense of the 'inner logic' of the music itself. The final movement was the organic result of this process."

While the translations of the twelve Haiku poems don't fall into the standard syllabic constraints of a traditional Haiku, their concise beauty is worth considering while listening to the music.

Movement I

1. Snow melts ~ and the village floods ~ with children
2. Summer rain ~ it drums on the heads ~ of the carp
3. The moon ~ wanders around the pond ~ all night long
4. No escaping it ~ I must step on fallen leaves ~ to take this path
5. On the ebb tide beach ~ everything we pick up ~ is alive
6. Cool clear water ~ and fireflies that vanish ~ that is all there is
7. The harvest moon ~ rabbits go scampering ~ across Lake Suwa
8. It's play for the cranes ~ flying up to the clouds ~ the year's first sunrise

Movement II

9. Unexpectedly ~ a chick has hatched ~ midwinter rose
10. In the far depths of the forest ~ the woodpecker ~ and the sound of an axe
11. The footsteps of a sparrow ~ walking on the tatami floor ~ sound familiar
12. From the cage ~ fireflies one by one ~ turn into stars

DEREK BROOKES (composer) has a B.Mus in composition from the Elder Conservatorium (Adelaide University) and a M.Mus in composition (HD) from the Sydney Conservatorium, supervised by Ross Edwards. Derek also has a PhD in philosophy (ANU), and has worked in both academia and a range of social justice areas, including restorative justice, disability, domestic violence and child abuse prevention.



INTERVAL

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN 1770-1827
String Quartet No. 13 in B flat major, Op. 130 (composed 1825)

- I. Adagio, ma non troppo – Allegro
- II. Presto
- III. Poco scherzoso. Andante con moto, ma non troppo
- IV. Alla danza tedesca. Allegro assai
- V. Cavatina. Adagio molto espressivo
- VI. Finale. Allegro

Controversy and a significant re-write shaped the development of the last of the string quartets commissioned by Prince Nikolay Gallitzin. The prince, a cellist and patron of Russian music, wrote to Beethoven in 1822 asking if he would compose up to three quartets for him. Opus 130 was the last of these quartets and was written just two years before Beethoven's death.

Conceived as a six-movement work, the quartet in B flat major was premiered by the Schuppanzigh Quartet in March 1826. In fact, when this piece was premiered, two of the movements had to be encored (proof that audiences indeed clapped between movements). Beethoven told Karl Holz, second violinist of the Schuppanzigh quartet, that *"the Cavatina was composed in the very tears of misery and that never had one of his own pieces moved him so deeply, and that merely to relive it in his feelings always cost him a tear"*. However it was the response to the last movement that had the public and critics divided. This lengthy fugue (the 'Grosse fuge') was so rich and complex, both musicians and listeners found it difficult to follow. One critic described the quartet as, *"serious, dark and mysterious, and sometimes bizarre, abrupt and capricious"*.

After the premiere, Beethoven's publisher Mathias Artaria suggested that the final movement be arranged into a piano version, to help players and audiences understand it more easily. While a piano version was arranged, Beethoven was later persuaded to separate the Grosse Fuge into a quartet in its own right. So the fugue became Opus 133 and a new finale was composed for Opus 130. Sadly, the revised version of the quartet with its new final movement was not published until after Beethoven's death, however he did agree that the rewritten final movement was an improvement and was disappointed that the engravers published the first edition with the Grosse Fuge ending.

It was during the composition of the 'second' finale that Beethoven and his nephew Karl went and stayed with Beethoven's brother Johann at his country estate in Gneixendorf, so that Karl could recover following a failed suicide attempt. Indeed, one can hear the rollicking sunshine in this replacement finale movement.

Musicologist Angus Warson wrote, *"Beethoven spent most of his time during those weeks in Gneixendorf enjoying the countryside and composing a new finale for the last of his Gallitzin quartets; he completed it appropriately on St Cecilia's Day, 22 November 1826. The first version of op. 130, with the Grosse Fuge as finale, had already been engraved by Artaria in August 1826, but because of the proposed changes it was withheld from publication. The second version with the new Gneixendorf finale, rightly hailed by Schuppanzigh as 'exquisite', was published posthumously in 1827 by both Artaria in Vienna and Schlesinger in Paris."*

Beethoven was never paid for this work. At the time of his death

Prince Gallitzin owed Beethoven 50 ducats for this quartet, an amount of approximately \$10,500 in today's currency.

Program notes copyright © 2020 Flinders Quartet. All rights reserved.

FLINDERS QUARTET is instantly recognisable as one of Australia's most loved chamber music ensembles. Their dynamic performances of a full spectrum of repertoire have audiences and critics articulating their esteem, and the quartet is a highly-respected force in Australian chamber music.

"... exciting and effervescent ... had the audience sitting up in their seats paying close attention to the impeccable intonation, rhythmic unity and open communication of the four players..."
- CLASSIC MELBOURNE, March 2019

2020 sees Flinders Quartet celebrating their 20th anniversary and undertaking their annual Melbourne subscription series; performing recitals and masterclasses in various parts of metropolitan and regional Australia; continuing their role as Artistic Patrons of John Noble's Quartet Program, a program that provides ongoing professional mentorship to student ensembles in regional Victoria; premiering new works by Deborah Cheetham AO, Katy Abbott and Ella Macens; and supporting emerging composers through the quartet's fifth annual Composer Development Program.



PHOTO CREDIT: PAUL JOHNSON

COMING UP...

6-10 May 2020 ~ Canberra International Music Festival
including the world premiere of Katy Abbott's *"Hidden Thoughts II: Return to Sender"*

June 2020 ~ Concerts in Melbourne and regional Victoria
including the world premiere of Deborah Cheetham's *"Bungaree"*

3-9 August 2020 ~ Composer Development Program
with open-to-the-public workshops, and performances in both Melbourne and Sydney

Full details can be found at flindersquartet.com

Want to get in touch with Flinders Quartet?

E: admin@flindersquartet.com W: www.flindersquartet.com T: 0417 798 523 Wendy Avilov, Manager

FLINDERS QUARTET

Flinders Quartet profoundly values the support of its sponsors, patrons and advisors.

PLATINUM PATRONS \$20,000+

Julian Burnside AO QC*
Kaye Birks*
Annamila (with special thanks to Julie Kantor AO)
Peter and Leila Doyle*

GOLD PATRONS \$10,000+

Andrew Dixon
Kim Williams AM
Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM
Peter Kingsbury
Andrew Domasevicius-Zilinskas and Aida Tuciute

SILVER PATRONS \$5,000+

Anthony Adair and Karen McLeod Adair
John and Chris Conquest
Beth Brown*
Carrillo Gantner AC and Ziyin Gantner
In memory of Maggie Dowling
Baillieu Myer AC
Mary Vallentine AO
Anonymous [1]

PATRONS CIRCLE \$1,000+

Chris Arnold and Margot Costanzo*
Sylvia Geddes
Helen Brack
Robert Heathcote and Meredith King
John and Sue Warburton
Australian Communities Foundation: Benjamin Fund
Geoff and Jan Phillips
Dr Garry Joslin and Prof Dimity Reed AM
Dr Cyril Curtain
Sieglind D'Arcy
Morag Fraser
Kate Tribe
Geoff Hayes
Linda Herd
Hon John Middleton QC and Judith Middleton
Dr Bruce and Mrs Leona Sterling

PATRONS up to \$999

Richard Gubbins
David and Elizabeth Thompson
Janet McDonald
Dr Barry Jones AC and Rachel Faggetter
Brad and Maggie Robinson
Malcolm and Janet Cole
John Smyth
Hon Clive Tadgell AO and Chris Tadgell
Barbara Moriarty
Kingsley Gee
Barbara Reed
Nicholas Garnham
Greg Coldicutt
David and Judy Cotterill
Anne Patterson
Barry and Judy Hocking
Brendan Murphy
Helen Hewison
Joanna Baevski
Meg Breidahl
Tim Rowley
Nick and Heather Safstrom
Calvin Crisp
Greg and Jenny Lindsay
Andrew Anderson
Irene Kearsey and M. J. Ridley
Nancy Lane
Jet Shoon Chong
Barbara Kilfoyle
Frederic Pomeranz
Frances Higgins
Matthew Bond
Naomi Brown
Samuel McLean
Hywel Sims
Sandra Dent
Di Bresciani
Judith and Alasdair McCallum
John and Irene Garran
Lois Goodin

E & E Tucker
Margaret Ayres
James O'Brien
Sam and Elizabeth Golding
Sarah Hunt
Anne Frankenberg
Yvonne von Hartel AM and Robert Peck AM,
peckvonhartel architects
Alister Rowe
Charmain Boyakovsky
Eric Bumstead
Anthony Rossiter
Anonymous [4]

INDIVIDUAL INSTRUMENT FUND SPONSORS

Viola John and Chris Conquest, Geoff and Jan Phillips

FLINDERS QUARTET BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Julian Burnside AO QC *Chair*
Mary Vallentine AO
Sarah Hunt
Sandra Stoklossa
Zoe Knighton
Helen Ireland
Wendy Avilov

** Ongoing supporter of FQ musician 'chair'*

Flinders Quartet would also like to thank:

ABC Classic FM
3MBS Fine Music Melbourne
Des Collinson
Anne Junor

Collins Street Baptist Church
Adrian McEniery
John and Irene Garran

Paul Dooley and the staff at
Footscray City College
Claire Higgins

Ian Roberts
Kim Williams AM
All of our subscribers and patrons!

Flinders Quartet acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we work, live and learn, and recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and culture. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

