

PERSONNEL UPDATE

- Wilma recovering from shoulder surgery (which went smoothly) until March 2024
- Zoe Black engaged for Emerge composer program, John Noble Itet program, and Clare Strong recording in the December 2023 to February 2024 period
- Brigid Coleridge engaged for John Noble Itet program and Clare Strong recording (December 2023)
- In case Wilma is unavailable for 2024 Program 1, the quartet will look at either bringing in a guest violinist (Zoe Black/Sulki Yu/Thibaud/Brigid) or potentially bringing in a guest artist of another instrument to play with Liz Helen and Zoe as a string trio
- Sulki Yu and Jenny Khafagi to be guest violinists for the MRC Making Waves project (December 2023)

ACTIVITY SINCE AUGUST 2023 UPDATE

- Successful studio recording of Brenda Gifford Dissipate and filmed concert at Monash
 - To be uploaded to FQ Digital before end of year and used in end of year communications
- Successful recording of Julian Yu Goldberg Variations and filmed concert at Monash
 - To be uploaded to FQ Digital before end of year and used in end of year communications
- Successful premiere of Natalie Nicolas By the Tide of the Moon at private concert for Aida Ticute's 55th birthday
 - In house recording and video sent to Andrew and Aida, possibility of recording the piece in the future
- 2023 Program 3 was very successful and well received with the projections of posters/backdrops by Mac.Robertson Girls' High School at MRC. Audience reaction to Shostakovich particularly moving.
- Resonance String Orchestra end of year concert was a resounding success. They greatly value FQ's support as Artistic Patrons and Zoe met an advisor to Cybec Foundation who was at the concert.

FINAL ACTIVITY IN 2023

- **Clare Strong Premiere**
Commission supported by Julian Burnside with the brief to write a piece to be used in our education programs. The piece is quasi minimalist with an emphasis on rhythmic interplay, which is an element we often find needing attention in students. It is relatively challenging, but definitely has scope for future performances
 - Piece premiered Dec 3 as part of the end of year Itet concert

- Studio recorded Dec 5
- **Itet end of year concert**
Held in Iwaki Auditorium Dec 3, the concert brings together ensembles from Mildura, Bendigo, outer Melbourne, Bairnsdale, Traralgon, Horsham and Shepparton. FQ members play alongside the musicians in a side-by-side experience
- **Emerge live streamed open workshop**
Public, live streamed workshop at Docklands library 10:30-4:30pm on Dec 6
- **MRC Making Waves project**
FQ is working with secondary school composer Chloe Dewhirst from Wodonga as part of the 2023 MRC Making Waves program. Live streamed as part of the Virtual School Victoria program

2024 CONCERTS

- Weekday 1pm concerts at St Johns Southgate have replaced the of 1pm MRC concerts
- A pilot “community concert” will be held at Docklands library Performance Space July 27
 - Docklands library has indicated they will partner with FQ for this event, providing venue and marketing support
 - This concert is aimed at attracting audiences wanting to try chamber music with short concerts, low or no cost, and bringing the City of Melbourne (CoM) community together (as part of CoM 2-year funding)
 - 30-40 minute concert with repertoire to comprise movements/elements of Beethoven from 2024 Program 2
 - While it won't be advertised as a “relaxed performance” we will hire the Community Space outside the Performance Space to enable the door to remain open and allow for audience to easily exit and enter, if desired
 - The concert is timed to serve as a practice performance for the quartet
 - To be advertised to Docklands community, City of Melbourne U3A audiences, family friendly websites, Melbourne Youth Music Community
- Open rehearsals will continue as in previous years.
- Montsalvat and Flinders (Mornington Peninsula) subscription series will continue unchanged

NB 2024 ticket sales to MRC and Montsalvat concerts have been high compared to this time last year

COMPOSER ACTIVITY - ESTABLISHED/EMERGE/ASCEND

Commissioned composers:

- Maria Grenfell - “Silhouettes” commission delivered with premiere in October subscription series concerts (funded by FQ Syndicate #5). A very successful piece and the quartet believes it will prove to be useful in the future.
- Clare Strong - “The Waiting Game” premiere December 3, recording Dec 6. The quartet believe it will prove useful and be a piece for advanced students.
- Natalie Nicolas - “By The Tide of The Moon” Very successful premiere, the quartet would like to record the piece in the future.

- Gordon Kerry - creative development scheduled early 2024 and premiere currently scheduled for 2024. Score has been delivered.
- Caroline Shaw - we had hoped to commission Caroline Shaw with international partners but Omega Ensemble has beaten us to it. We will be talking to our international friends for other ideas.
- Ollie Mustonen (Finland) is a composer we are eager to commission. Zoe has had discussions with Anthony Adair about funding this commission which could lead to international connections.
- Idea of commissioning international composers with a reciprocal Australian composer is still viable.

A Tale of Two Composers - Melody Eötvös and Rishin Singh:

- A musical letter writing project between two composers funded through the current A Tale of Two composers campaign
- Development throughout 2024
 - This project is different to normal commissions and is highly organised with a workflow map to ensure it stays on track. The quartet will be involved in the development process and will provide the composers with recordings of various sections where needed.
- Premiere in the 2025 subscription season as part of the 25th birthday celebrations.

Emerge:

- Evaluation conducted at the end of score study was overwhelmingly positive with further evaluation to be undertaken after the final workshop and performance. Suggestions to be implemented for next Emerge program: engagement of guest composers for the discussions (Lee Bradshaw as guest was very warmly received); less scores to study to enable deeper analysis; possibility of utilising members of the quartet to spend a few days talking through how to write for string quartet; and score study in person, with the members of the quartet. There is the potential for this to be well organised, crafted and quasi scripted so it can be filmed as a composer resource.
- Scores written by the Emerge composers have shown to be of a much higher level compared to submissions to the previous composer development program model.
- Premiere Emerge performances confirmed for 21 February 2024 at Noisy Ritual (an urban winery) in Brunswick. The concert will also be live streamed.

Ascend:

- Ascend program had 68 submissions
- Standard of submission very high
- \$6,000 fee payable to successful Ascend applicants, with the option to work with up to 4 composers dependent on funding (2 composers with no funding). Decision of how many composers to accept depends on notification of Ian Potter Foundation funding. IPF decision expected mid December, successful composer applicants will be notified January 2024.
- Concert for Ascend to be held at the Monash David Li Sound Gallery with the University supporting the project with venue hire (staffing and ticketing costs will still apply). If successful with IPF funding, FQ will endeavour to tour the Ascend concert program.

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

- **HUSH FOUNDATION**

Ben Northey (Musical Director of Hush) has indicated he is interested in a project with FQ. The recordings are usually new material written for purpose.

Potential ideas:

- Ngulmiya (First Nations singer)
- Strike a Chord involvement
- Involvement of a selection of past composer development participants

- **NEW ZEALAND TOUR 2025**

We have submitted an expression of interest for touring in 2025 with Chamber Music New Zealand, and will pursue an independent tour through Wilma's contacts if unsuccessful. The intention is for it to be a tour that will be self-sufficient financially.

FIRST NATIONS ENGAGEMENT AND ACTIVITY

- Brenda Gifford piece "Dissipate" with the quartet inserting words from Brenda's traditional language (Dhurga). A successful piece with the potential to be used in mentoring activity.
- Potential of working with Ngulmiya, a wonderful singer in a separate project (potentially Hush CD project)
- Tony Birch potential collaboration
 - First Nations award winning author will meet with Zoe and Liz with a view to a future collaboration. No agenda for this so far, just an initial discussion.
- Idea of having an Elder in Residence (inspired by Camerata in QLD) potentially funded by Annamila

2024 REGIONAL TOURING ACTIVITY UPDATE

- Idea of concerts in regional galleries did not gain momentum or much response from the galleries.
- Horsham "Art is" festival in June is a community festival working with the John Noble Itet program to boost the string community in Horsham. FQ will perform a side by side concert with Itet members and then an FQ concert.
- 2024 engagements include Macedon, Trentham, Northern Tasmania with anticipated concerts in Bendigo, Yarra Ranges, Albury, Avenel and Shepparton Art Museum.

THE FUTURE OF FQ DIGITAL

- See separate paper

EDUCATION ACTIVITY

- See separate paper