



Australian
String
Quartet

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**Cue the music: stellar national tours,
new Australian commissions and major collaborations
- the Australian String Quartet unveils its 2020 National Program**



From left Dale Barltrop plays a 1784 Guadagnini Violin, Turin, Stephen King plays a 1783 Guadagnini Viola, Turin, Sharon Grigoryan plays a c.1743 Guadagnini Violoncello, Piacenza, 'Ngeringa', Francesca Hiew plays a 1748-49 Guadagnini Violin, Piacenza. Photo: Jacqui Way

As a national ensemble with agility at its core, the Australian String Quartet (ASQ) is heard by more and more each year. Set to perform three country-wide tours featuring six master works, two world premieres of new Australian music and the return of a much-loved guest, the Australian String Quartet's 2020 National Tours are set to be a highlight of Australia's musical calendar.

In a nod to Virginia Woolf's seminal text *A Room of One's Own*, the ASQ's first tour **Dvořák with Konstantin Shamray** includes Australian composer **Anne Cawrse's** new exploration of what it means to be a woman composer in the 21st century. The Quartet then ventures into the dark with **Béla Bartók's** String Quartet no 4 before being joined onstage by multi award-winning pianist **Konstantin Shamray** to end the concert on a radiant high with **Antonin Dvořák's** joyous Piano Quintet in A major op 81.

Seeking harmony in diversity is a theme that runs through the ASQ's second tour **Intimate Letters**, beginning with **Mozart's** famous String Quartet no 19, aptly nicknamed *Dissonance*. One of Australia's most renowned composers **Ross Edwards** contributes his fourth string quartet comprising a vast array of musical influences, and **Leos Janáček's** *Intimate Letters* refers to over 700 letters the composer wrote to his reluctant muse Kamila Stösslova in what might be the most emotional outpouring of unrequited love ever documented.



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The ASQ's third tour **Late Beethoven** combines two epic seven-movement quartets back-to-back. **Beethoven's** monumental String Quartet in C sharp minor op 131 is a revelation and it was the writing of this great artist that inspired 20th century French composer **Henri Dutilleux** when creating his only string quartet *Ainsi la Nuit*, an evocative, poetic and sensuous piece.

Looking beyond its National Tours, the ASQ pays homage to Beethoven in the 250th anniversary year of the composer's birth by teaming up with renowned **experience design studio Sandpit**, (a company of designers, developers, artists and engineers behind innovative projects for Google's Creative Lab, the Australian Centre for Moving Image, Museum Victoria, ACMI, Melbourne Zoo and more) to present an interactive choose-your-own-adventure event culminating in a new and unique Beethoven quartet experience every time. Titled **Project Ludwig**, this experience will pop up in Adelaide, Melbourne, Brisbane and Sydney.

The ASQ is also set to feature in the **Perth Festival** with an inspiring multi-day project juxtaposing Beethoven's six opus 18 string quartets with its Quartet & Country project. Joined by artists including **William Barton**, **Lou Bennett** and **Stephen Pigram**, these programs interweave Western Art Music with the Songlines of this country. Full details about these events will be released by Perth Festival later in 2019. Staying in Western Australia, the ASQ joins the **West Australian Symphony Orchestra** to perform John Adams' *Absolute Jest* in a thrilling program that also includes Beethoven's Symphony no 7.

Located in regional Australia, the ASQ's Festivals are three-day intimate musical escapes that engage local communities. The **Dunkeld Festival of Music** in Victoria's Southern Grampians features guest musicians **Andrea Lam (piano)** and **David Greco (baritone)**, and the **Margaret River Weekend of Music** in Western Australia will include **Genevieve Lacey (recorder)** and **Fiona Campbell (mezzo-soprano)**. The Margaret River Weekend of Music will also feature the world premiere of a new work by Western Australian composer Lachlan Skipworth. For the first time, the ASQ takes its festival format to the historical town of Dungog in regional New South Wales, gateway to the Barrington Tops National Park.

After the stellar success of its 2018 collaboration, the ASQ joins **Sydney Dance Company** in partnership to present a brand-new work combining the choreography of **Rafael Bonachela** with the music of The National's **Bryce Dessner**. Titled *Impermanence* and commissioned by the ASQ and Sydney Dance Company, this exciting new work will be presented with seasons in Sydney and Melbourne.

As part of ASQ's mission to break down barriers of classical music, the Quartet's award-winning **Close Quarters** series continues with quick and intimate events popping up in unexpected locations around the country.

With blistering programs, powerhouse collaborations and celebrating local voices in music, the Australian String Quartet's 2020 year is set to excite and inspire.

MORE INFORMATION

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QUOTES

“There is nothing like live music. From concert halls to intimate spaces, and partnerships with diverse practitioners, in 2020 we are thrilled to offer more unique live experiences for people all over Australia” **Dale Barltrop - violin**

“The Australian String Quartet is a local company, to every person across the land. In 2020, through our extensive touring and inspiring partnerships we’ll connect with more people through the celebration of music” **Francesca Hiew, violin**

“Our musical year in 2020 will be bright, bold and colourful. We travel around the country to celebrate music with an array of wonderful artists, and contribute new Australian music to our cultural landscape” **Stephen King - viola**

“Our 2020 program really explores life from many musical perspectives. Through our programs, we hope to enrich the days of everyone with whom we share our time” **Sharon Grigoryan, cello**

BIOGRAPHY – AUSTRALIAN STRING QUARTET

For 35 years, the Australian String Quartet (ASQ) has created unforgettable string quartet performances for national and international audiences. Dedicated to musical excellence with a distinctly Australian character, the Quartet’s purpose is to create chemistry and amplify intimacy through experiences that connect people with string quartet music.

From its home base at the University of Adelaide, Elder Conservatorium of Music, the ASQ reaches out across Australia and the world to engage people with an outstanding program of performances, workshops, commissions and education projects. The Quartet’s distinct sound is enhanced by a matched set of 18th century Guadagnini instruments, handcrafted by Giovanni Battista Guadagnini between c.1743 and 1784 in Turin and Piacenza, Italy. These precious instruments are on loan for the ASQ’s exclusive use through the generosity of UKARIA.



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