



Musica Viva  
Australia

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PARTRIDGE  
STRING QUARTET  
& JAMES MORLEY

Tue 1 March, 7pm & Sat 5 March, 7pm – Melbourne Recital Centre





**Wesfarmers Arts**

MUSICA VIVA &  
WESFARMERS  
ARTS / MAKING  
THE IMPOSSIBLE  
POSSIBLE

Paul Kildea, Artistic Director



*Musica Viva Australia acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the many lands on which we meet, work, and live, and we pay our respects to Elders past and present – people who have sung their songs, danced their dances and told their stories on these lands for thousands of generations, and who continue to do so.*

P R O G R A M

**Holly HARRISON (b. 1988)**

*Balderdash* (2018) 15 min

**Franz SCHUBERT (1797-1828)**

String Quintet in C major, D. 956 (1828) 50 min

- I Allegro ma non troppo*
- II Adagio*
- III Scherzo. Presto – Trio. Andante sostenuto*
- IV Allegretto*

<b>Mana Ohashi</b>	<i>violin</i>
<b>Jos Jonker</b>	<i>guest violin</i>
<b>Eunise Cheng</b>	<i>viola</i>
<b>Daniel Smith</b>	<i>cello</i>
<b>James Morley</b>	<i>cello</i>

Meet the Artists  
after the concert  
on 1 March.

With special thanks to the Producers' Circle and the Amadeus Society for their support of the 2022 Concert Season, and to our Concert Champions the Musica Viva Victorian Committee and The Continuo Collective Syndicate.

# ABOUT THE ARTISTS

## Partridge String Quartet

As Musica Viva Australia's 2020–2022 FutureMaker artists, the award-winning Partridge String Quartet are fast becoming a force within the Australian classical music scene as one of the leading string quartets of its generation. Brilliant and dynamic chamber musicians, the quartet strives to connect and surprise audiences through their vibrant performances and creative collaborations.

Formed at the Australian National Academy of Music, the quartet received national recognition as first prize winners of the inaugural Queensland International Chamber Music Competition (2019) and ANAM Chamber Music Competition (2018). In 2018, the quartet were recipients of the Husky Energy Artist Award after they were selected as one of 10 string quartets internationally for a string quartet program residency at the Banff Centre of Arts and Creativity in Canada where they were mentored by music faculty from Harvard and Juilliard, the JACK Quartet, Eybler Quartet, Parker Quartet and prolific American composer Paul Wiancko.

Throughout their studies, the quartet received tutelage and mentoring from the music faculty of ANAM and members from the Dover Quartet, Australian String Quartet, Borodin String Quartet, Trio Dali and Alban Berg Quartet.

The quartet has performed alongside highly recognized Australian and international chamber musicians nationally and featured on ABC Classic, Violin Channel, CutCommon and Limelight Magazines. Passionate advocates of Australian composers, Partridge performed an entire five string quartet cycle by Richard Mills AM and were recipients of the Musica Viva Chamber Music Prize for their performance of Paul Stanhope's Second Quartet. They have presented collections of Australian works at the MPavilion, National Gallery of Victoria, Ian Potter Centre and National Film and Sound Archive Theatre in Canberra and are engaged in exciting projects and music festivals in the upcoming future.







© Alan Weedon

## James Morley *cello*

James Morley is currently based in Melbourne, having recently completed studies with Howard Penny at the Australian National Academy of Music (ANAM), where he received numerous accolades. He has also studied in Sydney with Julian Smiles, and Adelaide with Rachel Johnston, Janis Laurs, and Hilary Kleinig.

James' work incorporates a wide array of styles and influences. He has performed concertos with Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, Ensemble Apex, Sydney Youth Wind Orchestra, and Adelaide Youth Orchestra. In 2019 James was the Australian Chamber Orchestra Emerging Artist for cello and was a finalist for the 2020 Freedman Fellowship. He will be giving his UKARIA solo debut for Adelaide Festival this year, as well as performing for Tempo Rubato, Melbourne Chamber Orchestra and Wilma & Friends.

James' career is also very new music oriented, and solo premieres include compositions by the likes of Liza Lim, Johannes MacDonald and Josephine Macken. He is also a member of Rathdowne Quartet and performs chamber music regularly, often collaborating with Penny and Partridge Quartets.

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## Musica Viva Australia: Making Australia a more musical place

At Musica Viva Australia, we're proud to be one of the world's leading presenters of chamber music. Passionate about creating a vibrant musical future for Australia's artists and audiences, we feel fortunate to nurture both established and emerging talent from around the country. We're also committed to learning from our First Nations friends and colleagues how to most effectively include in our work the many peoples and languages that, together, comprise the oldest living culture in the world.

Musica Viva Australia is committed to the future of classical music, and to being at the forefront of its evolution. Our dedication to the commissioning and programming of new Australian works is key to our vision, and through eclectic and thoughtful programming, we endeavour to lead the industry in presenting concerts that challenge and thrill all audiences.

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# ABOUT THE MUSIC

**Holly Harrison** 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 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.

© HOLLY HARRISON

*Balderdash was commissioned for the 2018 Melbourne International Chamber Music Competition, through the support of the Silo Collective.*

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**Schubert** lived a life which seemed mostly dedicated to having a good time with his friends whenever possible; but he worked very hard too, turning out symphonies, chamber music, piano music, 10 resoundingly unsuccessful operas and 600 of the best songs ever written. Standing five feet one inch tall in shoes, balding, bespectacled and with the unprepossessing nicknames ‘Mushroom’ or ‘Fatso’, he yet had a passionate soul and was unafraid to reveal it in his music.

Sadly, by 1828 the Bohemian life had caught up with the rollicking young man of the Schubertiade parties. Syphilis ruled out the marriage-and-kids phase his social circle was settling into, so he went looking for a different kind of stability: he seemed to be thinking about getting a church job, and signed up for lessons with court organist Simon Sechter to improve his counterpoint. This may seem unduly modest in someone who’d just completed two piano trios, three magnificent piano sonatas, *Winterreise* and this Quintet, but Schubert was a pragmatic artist – a fact which should be borne in mind regarding this work.

It’s too easy, with hindsight, to see it as the last, dying, heavenward-looking statement of a tragic composer. However, there are many of Schubert’s songs from years before with a similar gamut of expression, and most of the evidence suggests that although he was aware of the possibility of death (difficult not to be, in a time when you were lucky to reach 50) the Quintet was written with no particular sense of foreboding.

Very little is, however, known about why it was composed, and for whom. There are no extant sketches nor manuscript copy. It wasn’t performed in public until 1850 (in a Viennese concert led by the son of one of the composer’s classmates), and not published until 1853. One theory

suggests that he intended to supply a publisher with a C major quintet – with the successful quintets in that key by Mozart and Beethoven in mind.

Unlike those works, however, Schubert opted for an instrumental line-up which included two cellos rather than two violas. This has obvious benefits in terms of depth of sound, richness, volume and mellowness; but it also, tellingly, frees up the viola. This was Schubert's own preferred instrument when playing chamber music, and it's fascinating to hear the viola's chameleon role, first taking sides with the violins, and then joining the cellos. The viola often seems to act as a harmonic pivot, sitting unobtrusively in the centre of things but influencing the group's entire colour.

The first movement sets up a wealth of thematic invention and contrasts of light and shade. The opening motif, and the subsequent lyrical theme, triplets and pizzicato gestures, create the basic toolkit that Schubert uses to build a substantial sonata form structure.

The *Adagio* second movement is exquisite. Pianist Arthur Rubinstein wanted it at his funeral. Cellist Alfredo Piatti requested it for a death-bed-side performance to ease him out of the world. Countless performers and music lovers have turned to it for inspiration or consolation. So how did Schubert do it? In part, it is the old trick of keeping it simple. The solo violin holds the main interest, in an ethereal, dotted-rhythm theme; the harmony of the inner parts floats timelessly as a hazy background; and the lower cello keeps things moving with a steady, honest pizzicato. With a violent unison trill, suddenly everything changes: the middle section has a more openly passionate feel, with greater complexity of harmony and texture. The shift from E major to distant F minor is dramatic enough. Add to it

sweeping lyricism and extreme dynamic range, and the result is as shocking as a thunderstorm on an otherwise clear day, before the relief of a return to major-key serenity and a decorated, filigree version of the opening section.

As if to confound all those who liked to read a presentiment of death into the slow movement, the *Scherzo* is cheerfulness itself, stomping along in a country dance. The *Andante sostenuto* of the Trio section admittedly seems quite tragic, returning to shadows of long sustained notes, and adding a sorrowful downward scale pattern – but the irrepressible *Scherzo* comes thundering out of the dark corners and bursts into a reprise.

The *Finale* perhaps drew from the experience of both Haydn and Beethoven in adapting 'folk music' colours. The rustic quality of the first theme is countered by an entirely Viennese second theme, lyrical and graceful. There is a third sort of theme too, more a reminiscence of the first movement than a proper entity in itself. A racing, rhythmic coda brings to a close Schubert's last, longest, and arguably greatest chamber work.

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## CHAMBER OF MUSICAL CURIOSITIES



### Journey into the Chamber of Musical Curiosities

Hosted by Artistic Director Paul Kildea, the Chamber of Musical Curiosities is a podcast exploring the world of music in and around Musica Viva Australia. During the episodes, guests reflect upon creativity, their careers, and their passion for chamber music.

#### Episode 10: Kim Williams

In this episode, Kim discusses the various careers he's had throughout his remarkable life. They explore the importance of Australian musicians, composers and learning the history of Australian music culture and musical traditions. Paul and Kim also have a heartfelt reflection on their mutual friend Richard Gill and his advocacy for music education in Australia.

Listen on Spotify, Apple Podcasts or our website to come with us inside the Chamber of Musical Curiosities and explore a collection of musical marvels.

 [musicaviva.com.au/podcast](http://musicaviva.com.au/podcast)





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*The mainstage concerts of our 2022 Season are brought to life thanks to the generosity of our Concert Champions around the country.*

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*The Amadeus Society is a group of passionate music lovers and advocates in Sydney and Melbourne who have joined together to support the extraordinary artistic initiatives of Musica Viva Australia.*

Marc Besen AC & Eva Besen AO, Dr Di Bresciani OAM, Julian Burnside AO QC (President) & Kate Durham, Peter Griffin AM & Terry Swann, Penelope Hughes, Dr Alastair Jackson AM, Andrew Johnston, Prof. John Rickard

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*The Masterclasses Giving Circle is a group of generous donors whose collective support will enable the artistic development of the next generation of Australian chamber musicians.*

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## COMMISSIONS

*Musica Viva Australia acknowledges and celebrates those individuals and collectives who have generously committed to commissioning new music in 2022/23 to be enjoyed by us all.*

In loving memory of Jennifer Bates; Julian Burnside AO QC & Kate Durham; The Barry Jones Birthday Commission; Michael & Frédérique Katz, in honour of Cecily Katz; Graham Lovelock & Steve Singer; DR & KM Magarey; Vicki Olsson; Tribe family in honour of Doug Tribe's 75th birthday

*Musica Viva Australia also thanks the Silo Collective, the Ken Tribe Fund for Australian Composition, and the Hildegard Project for their support in bringing new Australian works to life.*

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*We thank all our audience members who donated the value of their cancelled tickets towards the Artist Fund.*

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