

ORAVA QUARTET & DANIEL DE BORAH

Thursday 3 March, 7pm – Queensland Conservatorium, Griffith University



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.

PROGRAM

TRAD NORDIC (Faroe Islands/Fanø, Denmark) Ye Honest Bridal Couple / Sønderho Bridal Trilogy – Part I (arr. Danish String Quartet)			
Erwin SCHULHOFF (1894-1942) String Quartet No. 1 (1924) I Presto con fuoco II Allegretto con moto e con maliconia grotesca III Allegretto giocoso alla Slovacca IV Andante molto sostenuto			18 min
Wojciech KILAR (1932-2013) Orawa (1988) Robert SCHUMANN (1810-1856)			8 min
Piano Quintet in E-flat major, op 44 (1842) 30 min I Allegro brillant II In modo d'una marcia. Un poco largamente III Scherzo: Molto vivace IV Allegro ma non troppo			30 min
Daniel Kowalik David Dalseno Thomas Chawner Karol Kowalik	violin violin viola cello	Meet the Artists after the concert.	

Daniel de Borah piano

With special thanks to the Producers' Circle and the Amadeus Society for their support of the 2022 Concert Season, and to our Concert Champions Ian and Cass George.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Orava Quartet

The Orava Quartet has been hailed by Limelight magazine as 'the most exciting young quartet on the block' and predicted by The Australian to become 'one of Australia's proudest cultural exports'. Earning a reputation and devoted following for their thrilling performances, the Quartet – brothers Daniel and Karol Kowalik (violin and cello), violinist David Dalseno and violist Thomas Chawner – bring their unique sound and breathtaking intensity to the classics and lesser-known works of the string quartet canon.

The Quartet was selected by Deutsche Grammophon for its historic, first Australian recording release in 2018. Orava Quartet has performed in North America – including Canada in 2019 for the Festival International Hautes-Laurentides and Music and Beyond Festival (Ottawa) – and Asia, the UAE and New Zealand, working closely with the world-renowned Takács Quartet in the USA and winning top prizes at the 2013 Asia-Pacific Chamber Music Competition. Brisbane-based, Orava Quartet perform across the country, including in Sydney Opera House's Utzon Music Series, Melbourne Recital Centre, Australian Festival of Chamber Music, for New Zealand Festival, VIVID Sydney with Sufjan Stevens, the BBC Proms and Melbourne Festivals and Queensland Music Festival.

In 2022, the Quartet proudly continue in their eighth year as Camerata's Artistin-Residence, and resident quartet for Bangalow Music Festival, with performances at Queensland Performing Arts Centre, Empire Theatres Toowoomba, Canberra International Music Festival, for Musica Viva Australia, Melbourne Recital Centre, UKARIA Cultural Centre (Adelaide), Blackheath Chamber Music and Bangalow Music Festivals (NSW), and Riverside Theatres (Sydney) with pianist Simon Tedeschi. The Oravas' highly anticipated second album is due for release in late 2022, along with the premiere of a new string guartet by Elena Kats-Chernin AO.





Daniel de Borah piano

Daniel de Borah is recognised as one of Australia's foremost musicians, consistently praised for the grace, finesse and imaginative intelligence of his performances. His busy performance schedule finds him equally at home as concerto soloist, recitalist and chamber musician.

Since his prize-winning appearances at the 2004 Sydney International Piano Competition, Daniel has given recitals on four continents and toured extensively throughout the United Kingdom and Australia. As a concerto soloist he has appeared with the English Chamber Orchestra, London Mozart Players, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Australian Chamber Orchestra and the Sydney, Melbourne, Queensland, Adelaide and Auckland Symphony Orchestras.

An avid chamber musician, Daniel has enjoyed fruitful collaborations with many leading soloists including Vadim Gluzman, Andrew Haveron, Dale Barltrop, Kristian Winther, Baiba Skride, Li-Wei Qin, Nicolas Altstaedt, Umberto Clerici, Roderick Williams, Steve Davislim and Andrew Goodwin. His festival appearances have included the Musica Viva Festival, Adelaide Festival, Huntington Estate Music Festival and the Australian Festival of Chamber Music. Daniel is a founding member of Ensemble Q, ensemble-in-residence at the Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University since 2017.

During his studies Daniel won numerous awards including 3rd Prizes at the 2004 Sydney International Piano Competition, the 2001 Tbilisi International Piano Competition and the 2000 Arthur Rubinstein in Memoriam Competition in Poland. In 2005 he was selected for representation by the Young Classical Artists Trust, London. Daniel is also a past winner of the Australian National Piano Award and the Royal Overseas League Piano Award in London.

Born in Melbourne in 1981, Daniel studied at the Liszt Academy of Music in Budapest, the St Petersburg State Conservatory and the Royal Academy of Music, London. His teachers have included Zsuzsa Esztó, Mira Jevtic, Nina Seryogina, Tatyana Sarkissova and Alexander Satz. Daniel lives in Brisbane where he serves as Head of Chamber Music at the Queensland Conservatorium, Griffith University.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

The Danish String Quartet writes:

Folk music is the music of all the small places. It is the local music, but as such it is also the music of everywhere and everyone. Like rivers, the melodies and dances have flowed slowly from region to region: whenever a fiddler stumbled on a melody, he would play it and make it his own before passing it on. You don't own a folk tune; you simply borrow it for a while.

We have borrowed and arranged a selection of tunes that are all very close to our hearts. We perform them as a string guartet, one of the most powerful musical vehicles we know of. The string guartet is a pure construct: four simple instruments made of wood. But in all its simplicity, the string guartet is capable of expressing a myriad of colours, nuances and emotions - just like folk music. Our idea is to marry these two simple but powerful things, the folk music and the string guartet. Normally the string guartet has been reserved for the classical masters. Now we want to see what happens when we let the Nordic folk music flow through the wooden instruments of the string quartet.

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Does it work? We hope so. And remember: we simply borrowed these tunes. They have already been returned.

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Like many composers of his generation, **Erwin Schulhoff**'s life was deeply scarred by war. After studying piano, theory and composition in Prague from a very early age (he was first recommended to begin studies at the age of seven by the great Antonín Dvořák), he was conscripted into the Austrian Army at the age of 20. The young composer saw action in Hungary and in Russia, and after suffering shrapnel wounds in his hands, was retrieved from an Italian prisoner of war camp in 1918.

In 1919, disenchanted by the establishment, Schulhoff moved to Dresden and immersed himself in an eclectic mix of compositional styles, inspired by the greatest progressive thinkers of the time. He was attracted by the intense atonality of Schoenberg and the Second Viennese School, and would later be introduced to the Berlin Dada movement – an artistic community preoccupied with subversion, parody and irreverent 'anti-art'. Schulhoff's eccentric works include The Bass Nightingale, a solo sonata for contrabassoon imitating birdsong, and In Futurum for solo piano, which anticipates the work of John Cage and consists only of highly specific and nonsensical rests. No notes, just two minutes of complete silence.

Not long after returning to Prague, Schulhoff became increasingly inspired by the work of his countryman Leoš Janáček, and his first Quartet (1924) represented a renewed populist approach that combined rich folk melodies with a darker underlying tension. The piece is concise yet vibrant – straight out of the blocks in the *Presto con fuoco* first movement, a driving pulse of brash energy hints at spiky dissonance while creating brilliant melodies for the whole ensemble.

The direction for 'grotesque melancholy' in the title of the second movement (*Allegretto con moto e con malinconia grotesca*) indicates a touch of sarcasm, perhaps represented best by the melodramatic mock-operatic viola interludes and the accompanying sound of the windswept Bohemian Forest. The third movement is to be played *alla Slovacca*, and Schulhoff achieves a brilliant effect in manipulating the earthy Bohemian central theme. The fourth movement, *Andante molto sostenuto*, steers away from the intense energy of the first three movements but reveals an eerie darkness. After a passionate interchange of thematic material, the flame of the piece is gradually consumed by darkness around it and vanishes into nothingness.

ROB HANSEN © 2016

Wojciech Kilar's Orawa is a piece that my brother Daniel and I grew up listening to as children, and which ultimately became our namesake. Orawa refers to a region near the Polish-Slovak border marked by rugged, mountainous terrain, and this piece is the final work in Kilar's so-called 'Tatra Mountain Works'. It is inspired by Polish highland folklore and portrays the dramatic landscape, as well as the river that runs through it. In his own words about the work. Kilar had 'dreamed of creating a piece inspired by a highlander band. It is pretty much a piece for a magnified folk band and one of the rare examples where I've been happy with my work.

© KAROL KOWALIK

The early 1840s were productive and exciting years for **Schumann**. In 1840, following an acrimonious legal battle with his teacher, and unwilling future fatherin-law, Friedrich Wieck, Schumann had married his beloved Clara. Inspired and encouraged by her, he turned his attention from the solo piano music that had dominated his output to compose songs, orchestral works and, particularly in 1842, chamber music; the three String Quartets Op. 41, the Piano Quartet Op. 47, the first version of the Fantasiestücke Op. 88 and the Piano Quintet Op. 44, which was written during September and October.

Schumann's was the first Piano Quintet that can truly be called great, and it did much to establish his name as a composer. Clara, the Quintet's dedicatee, was delighted. However, owing to her ill-health at the time of the work's private premiere on 6 December, Schumann's friend Mendelssohn stepped in to play the demanding piano part at sight, although Clara participated in the first public performance on 8 January 1843. Extraordinarily, the Quintet gained the approbation of Berlioz, who himself wrote no chamber music and was critical of Mendelssohn.

Liszt, who unexpectedly visited the Schumanns in Leipzig, remarked condescendingly, 'No, no, my dear Schumann, this is not the real thing: it is only Kapellmeister music'. This opinion and some disparaging remarks about Mendelssohn greatly offended Schumann, yet Liszt's obligue reference to the influence of Bach was not wholly wide of the mark. Robert and Clara had together enjoyed playing and analysing his Well-Tempered Clavier. 'Our fugal studies continue,' she noted in her diary. 'Every time we play one it becomes more interesting for me. Such great art with such a natural flow.'

The Piano Quintet has affinities with the seventh prelude and fugue from Book 1, with which it shares its key and, possibly, also the distinctive pair of upwardleaping intervals with which it opens. But where Bach achieves a yearning mood, Schumann's approach is much bolder and extroverted, exploring a wider range of emotional ground overall.

The first movement weaves two prominent themes, the striding pair of rising intervals and a more lyrical second subject, into a tightly argued yet expansive Sonataallegro in which the piano contributes to the rich Romantic instrumental textures of the four strings with ebullient interplay. There is scarcely a bar in which the piano is not heard, yet its part is completely integrated into the whole.

The second movement has a somewhat Schubertian melancholy while foreshadowing the unstable mood of Mahler's funereal marches. Its halting opening theme, *poco largamente*, is twice interrupted, first by a more lyrical passage, then by an *agitato* section. Despite these contrasts, the entire movement is unified by Schumann's ingenious thematic development.

A dashing Scherzo unleashes much excitement with energetically running scales, again twice interrupted by contrasting passages. The first Trio is lyrical in character, the second has a muscular folk character resembling Beethoven or Brahms in bucolic mood. Mendelssohn had suggested that the second Trio should be 'something livelier' than Schumann had originally composed.

Perhaps following the example of Mendelssohn, whose String Quartet in E-flat major Op. 13 had played the same trick, the Finale opens away from the home key of the work, returning to it at the end when the main theme from the opening movement is recalled. Schumann caps this sonata rondo, in which elements from the preceding movements are brilliantly developed, with a double fugue. Unsurprisingly, many more are inclined to agree with Clara, than with Liszt, that this is 'magnificent – a work filled with energy and freshness'.

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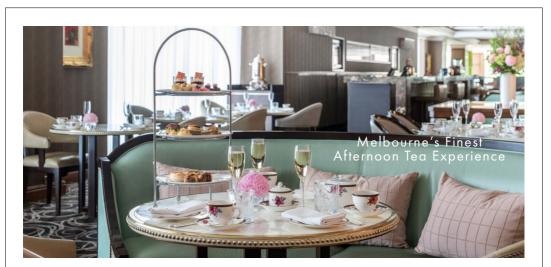
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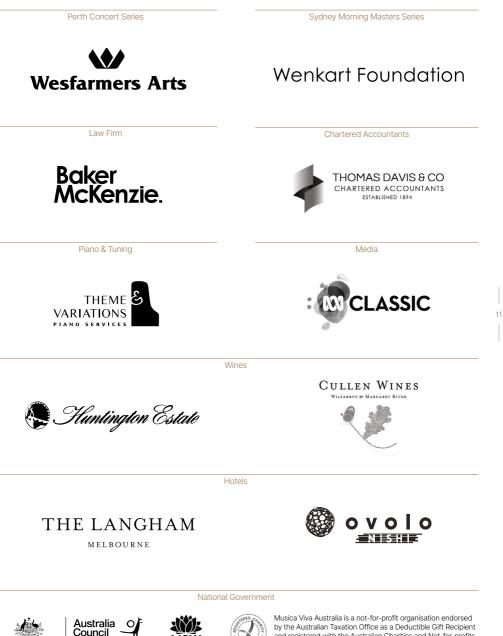
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