



Musica Viva
Australia

ORAVA QUARTET & DANIEL DE BORAH

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



Wesfarmers Arts

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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.

PROGRAM

TRAD NORDIC (Faroe Islands/Fanø, Denmark)

Ye Honest Bridal Couple / Sønderho Bridal Trilogy – Part I 5 min
(arr. Danish String Quartet)

Erwin SCHULHOFF (1894-1942)

String Quartet No. 1 (1924) 18 min

I Presto con fuoco

II Allegretto con moto e con maliconia grotesca

III Allegretto giocoso alla Slovacca

IV Andante molto sostenuto

Wojciech KILAR (1932-2013)

Orawa (1988) 8 min

Robert SCHUMANN (1810-1856)

Piano Quintet in E-flat major, op 44 (1842) 30 min

I Allegro brillante

II In modo d'una marcia. Un poco largamente

III Scherzo: Molto vivace

IV Allegro ma non troppo

Daniel Kowalik *violin*

David Dalseno *violin*

Thomas Chawner *viola*

Karol Kowalik *cello*

Daniel de Borah *piano*

Meet the Artists
after the concert.

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 Artist-in-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 quartet 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 quartet, one of the most powerful musical vehicles we know of. The string quartet is a pure construct: four simple instruments made of wood. But in all its simplicity, the string quartet 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 quartet. Normally the string quartet 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.

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 father-in-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 oblique 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 upward-leaping 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 Sonata-allegro 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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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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Toller, Anonymous (2)

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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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