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Sartory String Quartet & Shuan Hern Lee





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Program

Monday, 8 November 2021, 7.30pm
Perth Concert Hall

Shuan Hern Lee *piano*

Sartory String Quartet

Paul Wright *violin*

Pascale Whiting *violin*

Katherine Potter *viola*

Sophie Curtis *cello*

Andrew Sinclair *double bass*

Frédéric CHOPIN (1810-1849)

Ballade No. 4 in F minor, Op. 52 (1843)

11 min

Joseph HAYDN (1732-1809)

String Quartet in C major, Op. 20 No. 2 (1772)

25 min

- I *Moderato*
- II *Capriccio. Adagio — Cantabile*
- III *Minuet. Allegretto*
- IV *Fuga a 4 soggetti. Allegro*

Frédéric CHOPIN (1810-1849)

Piano Concerto No. 2 in F minor, Op. 21 (1829, arr 2015 Kenner/Dombek)

32 min

- I *Maestoso*
- II *Larghetto*
- III *Allegro vivace*

With special thanks to our Ensemble Patrons Stephen and Michele Johns and Anonymous for their support of this concert. And to our Concert Champions: Prichard Panizza Family.

About the Music

Chopin is a classic figure of romance: a French Pole exiled from a martyred country and a man whose piquantly obscure love life attracted the creators of sugar-coated fiction; a revolutionary yet a stickler for convention; and a realist who, to quote his own words, was a dreamer in 'strange spaces'. Chopin despised disorder and felt that 'the best things are those in which the first thoughts of inspiration are not spoiled by later reflection.'

Chopin's four Ballades are products of his maturity and have understandably been called 'the finest and most original of all his creations'. He borrowed the term 'ballade' from the language of poetry; few compositions show such a romantic yet supremely disciplined imagination and it is significant that Chopin created a novel genre for a no less novel form of expression.

Together with the Barcarolle, the Polonaise-Fantaisie, and the Second and Third Sonatas, the Fourth Ballade represents the summit of Chopin's art. The tentative start was once beautifully described by the critic Joan Chissell as bringing the same sense of wonder that a blind person, if granted the gift of sight, might feel on discovering the world's beauty for the first time. The principal, highly Slavonic theme returns twice bejewelled; the second subject's appearance and the return of the opening never disrupt the music's self-generating momentum. An aerial cadenza and a canonic treatment of the first subject bear eloquent witness to Chopin's increasing veneration for Bach, and the build-up and the pianissimo

chords announce a coda of the most fiery intricacy.

© ADAPTED FROM AN ANNOTATION
BY BRYCE MORRISON, 2004

In 1761, **Haydn** entered the service of the Esterhazy family, an ancient, noble, Magyar line that had made its fortune by joining the Catholic emperors of Austria against the Turks. He lived at their country seats in Eisenstadt and Esterhaza, where, he told an early biographer, 'My prince was satisfied with all my work. I could experiment and take risks. There was no-one nearby to serve as a model, to challenge me or to make me doubt myself, so I had to be original.' One of the finest fruits of these years of originality and invention was the modern string quartet.

The quartet, as Haydn found it, was a kind of piece in which there was nothing to differentiate between writing for single string players or for orchestral string groups. Some had optional wind parts. There was generally one leading voice among the strings, almost always the first violin, and others were little more than accompaniment.

Over a period of years Haydn changed all this. His basic revision was the equalisation of the importance of the four instruments. This opened the way for contrapuntal writing and led to both refinements and complications of texture, which made orchestral performance unlikely if not impossible. These developments reached their early climax in the set of six great quartets he wrote in

1772, now known as his op 20, although they were also published during his lifetime with various other opus numbers. The title page of an edition of 1779 was decorated with an engraving of the sun, and the set's nickname, 'Sun' Quartets, has persisted to the present day.

The second of the set is a fascinating work, rich, profound, witty, varied, full of original ideas and turns of phrase that would have been unimaginable in the music of only a few years earlier, even Haydn's. The 20th-century listener can hardly guess what this music meant to 18th century ears, how it sounded then, in an age that demanded new music. This quartet is full of cleverly calculated, carefully placed surprises – which we no longer hear as the composer intended us to, but which his contemporaries delighted in. Sudden harmonic shifts, phrases of uneven lengths, violent changes of dynamic levels, rhythmic tricks and the new instrumental style combined to make this a masterpiece of 'modern music'. It is not far-fetched to say that the players' independent parts may have made these quartets as difficult for the musicians of the 1770s as Elliott Carter's first two quartets were for the musicians of the 1950s.

The new ideas begin to show themselves at the very start of the *Moderato* first movement, where the leading voice is given to the cello, playing above the violin. The viola and the second violin also take the lead in places, and the texture is frequently not tune-and-accompaniment, but three- and four-part counterpoint. The slow movement, *Adagio*, for contrast, makes grand oratorical statements in

unisons and octaves, and more intimate ones too. The freely developed form led Haydn to call this a Capriccio, in its original version.

The music runs without pause into the Minuet, *Allegretto*, where the novelties are chiefly rhythmic, as Haydn teases the phrases out of metric regularity and breaks them up into odd lengths. As though to make up for having reduced the first violinist's preeminence in the earlier movements, Haydn here sends him up to extreme heights, where so few players of the time could manage the instrument that such passages were rare even in concertos. The last movement, as in three other quartets of this set, is a Fugue, *Allegro*: a complex one with four subjects, but the music looks forward to the fugal finales of Mozart and Beethoven, not back to the Baroque – for in those days, composers almost never looked backward.

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Many would agree that Frédéric **Chopin** possessed a unique musical voice, given the ease with which his compositions can be recognised. Yet despite the stylistic constancy of certain attributes of his music, like melody, a marked evolution can be traced in other areas. Chopin's early compositions were often in *bravura* style, and it was in performance of such works that he won great acclaim on stages in Warsaw, Vienna and Paris. However he grew disillusioned with the 'atmosphere' of the concert hall in his early twenties, and ultimately withdrew entirely from public performance.

While most of his early *stile brillante* compositions have not held their initial appeal, the two piano concertos – which both date from this period, written in his 20th year – retain a treasured place in the repertory. Accordingly, they are pivotal works, on the one hand rich in the virtuosic pianism of the composer's early style, yet simultaneously diffused with those innate musical gifts which are held in high esteem.

Despite being written first, issues relating to its publication resulted in the Concerto in F minor receiving both a later opus number and the designation as his 'second'. It won critical acclaim at its premiere in Warsaw on 17 March 1830, the *Powszechny dziennik krajowy* noting Chopin's 'lovely and pleasing' melodies, and the concerto's 'well-proportioned harmonic foundation'. Yet in the latter part of the 19th century the work endured the disdain of scholars, who asserted problematic weaknesses in orchestration and structure, also claiming a lack of organic unity. More recently, assessment of compositions by Chopin's contemporaries – Hummel, Kalkbrenner and Moscheles – shows that perceived idiosyncrasies are in fact typical for the genre at that time. The opening movement features the expected four orchestral tuttis, which here are short and potent, and which serve to frame three lengthy solo sections. In these, the pianist

expands on the concerto's thematic material, before embarking on episodes of complex passagework that traverse a kaleidoscopic array of keys.

It can seem hard to fathom how the exquisite *Larghetto* was penned by one so young. Written in a simple ternary form, the outer sections feature the melodic style and intricate ornamentation characteristic of Chopin's many nocturnes, while the central section compels in its dramatic contrast, the pianist's recitative-like interjections underscored by *tremolando* strings. The final movement is also in ternary form (albeit with an added lengthy coda), and its triple metre evokes the mazurka, one of Poland's national dances. The unusual sound of violinists using the wood of their bows against the strings marks the commencement of the central section, which is rich in thematic content, each of the four melodic ideas ingeniously linked through triplet rhythmic patterns. After a return to the minor tonality of the opening, a horn solo heralds the coda, which signals the pianist to undertake dazzling passages of ever-greater difficulty. After a final cascading flourish, this remarkable early work – so prescient of the composer's mature voice – is brought by the orchestra to a powerful close.

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Meet the Artists



Shuan Hern Lee

19-year-old West Australian pianist, Shuan Hern Lee started piano lessons at 2 and half with his dad, Yoon Sen Lee. At the age of 14, Shuan Hern was accepted as tertiary music student at the University of Western Australia. Shuan Hern is also a student of International Piano Academy In contri Col Maestro of Imola, Italy and is currently studying with Yoon Sen Lee and Ingrid Fliter.

Shuan Hern obtained the diploma of the Associate of the Trinity College of London at the age of 9 and Diploma of the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music and Licentiate of Music of Australia with Distinction in Piano Performance at the age of 10 (AMEB). At 14, he obtained the Fellowship of Music of Australia diploma, which is the highest honour and also the youngest candidate ever to achieve this diploma in piano performance of the Australian Music Examinations Board.

Shuan Hern has won many top prizes at piano competitions including 1st prize at Chopin International Piano Competition in Hartford Connecticut, USA; 1st prize at Astana Piano Passion, Kazakhstan; 1st prize at Sberbank Debut International Piano Competition, Ukraine; 1st prize at Young Pianist of the North International Piano Competition in UK; 1st prize at San Marino International Piano Competition; and 1st prize at the Cliburn Junior International Piano Competition in Dallas.

Shuan Hern has performed in many countries globally as soloist and also with Kazakhstan Philharmonic Orchestra, the National Symphonic Orchestra of Ukraine, the State Symphony Orchestra "Novaya Rossiya" of Moscow, West Australian Symphony Orchestra, Minnesota Symphony Orchestra, National Philharmonic Orchestra of Russia, Jakarta Symphony Orchestra, Dallas Symphony Orchestra, Fremantle Symphony Orchestra, Perth Symphony Orchestra and the Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra of Perth.



Paul Wright

Adelaide-born Paul Wright began violin studies with Lyndall Hendrickson at the age of 8, and three years later was awarded a place at the Yehudi Menuhin School in England. He went on to study at the Guildhall School in London, after which he was accepted as a student at the Juilliard School in New York, where he studied under Ivan Galamian. He has performed with many orchestras and ensembles in Australia and America as a director, soloist or concertmaster, including the Australian String Quartet, the Australian Chamber Orchestra, Ensemble of the Classic Era, Australian Brandenburg Orchestra and the West Australian Symphony Orchestra. Paul spent 2009-2010 as resident teacher and chamber music coach at the Australian National Academy of Music in Melbourne. Upon his return to Perth in 2011, Paul was appointed Winthrop Professor at The University of Western Australia where he held the position of Head of Strings until retiring mid-2015 to focus on a variety of freelance pursuits. In 2015 Paul was appointed Senior Music Fellow of St George's College where he mentors the Early Music Ensemble, String Quartet and Chamber Orchestra of St George's College.



Pascale Whiting

Pascale Whiting began her violin studies at the age of seven, playing and touring nationally and internationally from a young age with the Western Australian Youth Orchestra, Australian Youth Orchestra and various small ensembles. She graduated from the University of Western Australia with a Bachelor of Music (Performance) degree in 2007. Pascale regularly performs with various Symphony and Chamber orchestras and currently holds the position of Principal Second Violin with both the Perth Symphony and Perth Chamber Orchestras. She is in demand as a performer and recording artist on both baroque and modern violin, across a wide range of musical genres with local and visiting international artists. As a music educator, Pascale has performed and toured throughout metropolitan and regional WA and interstate with the Musica Viva In Schools over a ten year period, in addition to being engaged as a tutor for the WA Young Artists Chamber Music Program and teaching violin at a number of Perth schools and privately. Pascale is a founding member of Sartory String Quartet since its inception in 2003 with performances in Japan, and throughout Australia at a number of chamber music festivals and concert series.



Katherine Potter

Katherine Potter (formerly Corecig) is a freelance violist and emerging composer with an interesting musical background, having completed Bachelors of Music in both jazz performance (WA Academy of Performing Arts) and classical performance (University of Western Australia, with First-Class Honours, studying under Tzvi Friedl). Katherine has been a member of the Sartory String Quartet since 2003, performing nationally and overseas, and was a 2006 Australian Chamber Orchestra Emerging Artist. Katherine has performed as a casual violist with the WA Symphony Orchestra since 2007 and from time to time plays as Principal Violist with the Perth Symphony Orchestra. Katherine has composed concert, film and dance music which has been performed in Australia, the US and Canada, and has a predilection for writing new soundtracks for 1920s silent films. Katherine has been a recipient of two DCA Development Grants and an Australia Council Artstart grant.



Sophie Curtis

Sophie Curtis is in high demand in Western Australia as soloist, chamber musician, orchestral section leader, recording artist and educator. She enjoys a varied freelance career which includes regular performances as Principal Cellist of the Perth Symphony and Perth Chamber Orchestras. A passionate chamber musician, Sophie performs regularly with the Sartory String Quartet and directs the annual WA Young Artists Chamber Music Program – a program she founded in 2011. Sophie completed her Bachelor of Music with Honours at the University of Western Australia and after several short periods of study overseas she completed her Master of Music degree in Baroque Cello at UWA. Highlights in Sophie's career have included appearing as soloist in the Elgar Cello Concerto with both the Perth Symphony Orchestra and the Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra, performing the Lalo Cello Concerto with the Western Australian Youth Orchestra, touring Europe with the Western Australian Youth Orchestra, studying with her piano trio at the Yale Summer School of Music and performing to hundreds of Australian schools as part of the Musica Viva In Schools Program (between 2004 and 2015).



Andrew Sinclair

Andrew started playing the double bass at ten years of age in Brisbane. In 1989 he began music studies at the University of Queensland and was soon playing as Principal Bass with the Camerata of St Johns' Chamber Orchestra. After completing a Bachelor of Music degree with honours in performance, Andrew became sought after by both the Queensland Philharmonic and Queensland Symphony Orchestras. While filling contracts in both orchestras, Andrew also founded and managed The Toombul Music Academy which flourished to a successful school employing 13 teachers tutoring over 250 students.

In 1996 Andrew moved to Vienna to study under Josef Niederhammer at the Vienna University for Music and Performing Arts. After his first year of study Andrew was awarded a contract position with the Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra, where he remained until 2000. He was then accepted as a full-time member of the Vienna Symphony Orchestra where he stayed until 2007.

Andrew is very active in teaching and has given masterclasses in Australia and America. His former students perform in professional orchestras in Europe and Australia. He teaches double bass at the West Australian Academy of Performing Arts and continues to give masterclasses at the Queensland Conservatorium of Music and the Australian National Academy of Music. He has been invited numerous times to tutor at the AYO National Music Camp.

Andrew regularly appears in chamber music festivals including the Perth International Arts Festival, Soft Soft Loud Festival in Fremantle, the Music on the Terrace series at the Perth Government House and the Australian Festival of Chamber Music in Townsville. He has been invited to perform with many Australian orchestras and ensembles including Pinchgut Opera, the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra, the Australian Chamber Orchestra and the Australian World Orchestra. In 2015 he appeared as soloist with WASO. Andrew plays on a Gagliano double bass generously loaned by Janet Holmes à Court AC.



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