

HELEN AYRES **violin**
TIM NANKERVIS **cello**
ANNA GOLDSWORTHY **piano**

SERAPHIM TRIO



SCHUBERT THE WANDERER

Born in Vienna in 1797, Schubert only ever gave one public recital, and much of his music remained unpublished until after his death. However, contrary to popular myth, he was not entirely unknown in his lifetime, with word of his artistry spreading through Vienna, thanks to a group of devoted friends who met regularly for 'Schubertiades,' or Schubert evenings.

At the same time, Schubert was one of the greatest poets of loneliness, and his epic song cycle Winterreise is one of its greatest monuments ('A stranger I arrived, a stranger I depart'). This is the flipside of the social Schubert: the Romantic artist adrift in a wintry landscape. Schubert's work for chamber music exists between these poles of conviviality and inwardness. In his later works (as in Beethoven) there is a deepening of this inward exploration, mirroring the transition from the social values of Classicism to the intense subjectivities of Romanticism.

The B flat Trio was not published until eight years after Schubert's death, when Robert Schumann gave it an ecstatic review:

A glance at Schubert's trio and all miserable human condition vanishes and the world shines in a new splendour. The recently published trio [B flat] seems to be an older work than the famous trio in E flat major... In a word, the trio in E flat major is more spirited, masculine and dramatic; this one is more passive, lyric and feminine. Let the work, which he bequeathed to us, be a precious legacy.

As the composer of more than 600 lieder, Schubert was master, above all, of song. His song lyrics can be read as a Rosetta stone of his musical meanings and speak of his enduring obsessions: love, death, nature, hope, despair. In these trios, the melodies are laid out spaciouly, in glorious spun-out lines. Perhaps this is why he sometimes forgoes development, or simply reprises his material in another key: by shining another light on it, he finds it differently beautiful.

The pianist Alfred Brendel has said that 'in his larger forms, Schubert is a wanderer. He likes to move at the edge of the precipice, and does so with the assurance of a sleepwalker.' The critic Neville Cardus described Schubert as 'the world's first vagrant composer': 'we can think of him as one who strayed when very young into Mozart's groomed garden and picked a bloom or two, then went along the slopes of the height tossed up by Beethoven's earthquake, and near the summit found wildflowers in plenty.'

In these two late trios, which date from the final year of his life, Schubert wanders to the extremes of human experience. There are still conversations within these textures, but they recall the vacillations of a single consciousness, poised on the brink of death, and at the same time able to see – vividly – the inverse of death.

'Whenever I tried to sing of love, it turned to pain,' he wrote in 1822. 'And again, when I tried to sing of pain, it turned to love.' It is the keen relief of these polarities that lends these trios their extraordinary dimension. Schubert brings us to the abyss, where he sings and dances anyway. Despite their grandeur of scale, both of these trios are also hymns to transience.

PROGRAM

PIANO TRIO NO. 1 IN B FLAT MAJOR D 898

- I. Allegro Moderato
- II. Andante un poco mosso
- III. Scherzo
- IV. Rondo Allegro Vivace – Presto

PIANO TRIO NO. 2 IN E FLAT, OP. 100, D 929

- I. Allegro
 - II. Andante con moto
 - III. Scherzando, Allegro Moderato
 - IV. Allegro Moderato
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ABOUT SERAPHIM TRIO

Over the last two decades, Helen Ayres, Anna Goldsworthy and Tim Nankervis have remained steadfastly committed to chamber music – from building the contemporary repertoire, to developing new audiences and teaching the next generation of performers.

Winners of the Piano Trio Prize and the Audience Choice Award at the Australian National Chamber Music Competition in 2001 (now the Asia-Pacific Chamber Music Competition), Seraphim Trio has regularly performed at the Melbourne International Arts Festival, the Port Fairy Spring Music Festival, the Adelaide Festival of Arts, the Peninsular Summer Music Festival and in 2013, Opera Australia's Ring Festival in Melbourne.

Alongside its acclaimed subscription series Seraphim Trio is frequently broadcast on ABC Classic FM and on the MBS network, and maintains a robust commissioning program.

Seraphim frequently collaborates with Australia's leading musicians: most recently with Diana Doherty, Paul Dean, Lisa Harper-Brown and David Elton. The group has studied in Germany with Hatto Beyerle, and in Australia with William Hennessy, Eleonora Sivan, Mark Mogilevski, Ronald Farren-Price and Lois Simpson. Seraphim's latest CD The Beethoven Trios has just been released on ABC Classics label.

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You can help Seraphim Trio perform and promote chamber music throughout Australia by giving to our Angels Program. All donations will be gratefully received. Angels (donations of \$250 to \$1,000) and Archangels (donations of \$1,000 or more) will be specially acknowledged in our individual concert programs. Thank you for sharing with us the joy of chamber music and the excitement of new collaborations.

Archangels

Dr Peter and Cathy Rogers
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Angels

Margaret Farren-Price
Frank and Judith Robertson
Reuben Goldsworthy

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