

MELBA QUARTET

MELBA QUARTET PLAYS SCHUBERT AND DVOŘÁK

Sunday 2 October 11am & 2pm, Salon

Presented by Melbourne Recital Centre and Melba Quartet

ARTISTS

Melba Quartet & Lucinda Collins

William Hennessy, violin

Elinor Lea, violin

Keith Crellin, viola

Janis Laurs, cello

Lucinda Collins, piano

PROGRAM

FRANZ SCHUBERT (1797-1828)

Quartet in E Flat, D.87

Allegro moderato

Scherzo: *prestissimo*

Adagio

Allegro

ANTONIN DVOŘÁK (1841-1904)

Piano Quintet in A, Op.81, B.155

Allegro ma non tanto

Dumka: *Andante con moto*

Scherzo (Furiant) *molto vivace*

Finale: Allegro

ABOUT THE MUSIC

Unlike Mozart (1756-1791) and Mendelssohn (1809-1847), young Schubert was not generally perceived as a prodigy. However at the age of 16 Schubert composed the first piece of this program. The E-flat Quartet, is one of the many masterpieces written by the composer well before his twentieth birthday. Dying at the young age of thirty-one, it is not difficult to conclude that had Schubert lived as long as the mighty Beethoven (57 years) Schubert may indeed have been held in even higher popular esteem than Beethoven himself!

The atmosphere in this quartet is consistently congenial and tender. It is ideal fireside music for family and friends. Was Schubert perhaps the most private of all composers? Was his music the most affectionate and homely of all?

The first movement is moderately paced and is conversational in manner. This is followed by a brief, lively, playful scherzo. The depth of feeling in the third movement belies its seeming utter simplicity and the finale sparkles with high spirits and a disarming festive charm.

Dvořák's Piano Quintet is one of his most frequently performed works. It received its premiere performance in Prague in January 1988 - four months after the work's completion. The work opens with a broad flowing A major cello theme with the other major (busier but still songful) theme introduced by the viola a couple of minutes later in C-sharp minor. Whilst the first movement is of somewhat symphonic proportions the other three movements are folk-like in nature. The Dumka movement is a characteristic alternate juxtapositioning of the plaintive and the dance-like. The Furiant is of almost outrageous high spirits and the Finale, a polka which mid-stream, momentarily abandons the happy earthiness of Bohemia for a brief fugato contrapuntal invention, a perfect nexus between Dvorak's ideal folksy naivety and his sophistication as one of western music's highly regarded romantic composers.

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ABOUT THE ARTISTS

The Melba Quartet was the Australian String Quartet in its foundation years (1985-1996) with second violinist Elinor Lea replacing the original ASQ second violinist Douglas Weiland in 1990.

During these twelve formative years the Adelaide-based ASQ built a fine reputation on five continents and twenty countries and enjoyed strong public support right across Australia. ASQ regularly appeared in the major Musica Viva subscription series across the country, and toured extensively throughout regional Australia. The quartet commissioned and performed many new works. They recorded for ABC Classics, Marco Polo, Tall Poppies and the German label CPO and broadcast for major radio networks in Australia, UK, USA, New Zealand, Hong Kong, West Germany, France, Canada and Brazil.

Some highlights of ASQ life in those years include: hundreds of school concerts, Wigmore Hall concerts in London, the 1988 China tour, major North American tours, an Australian national tour of all of the six Bartok quartets in 1995 in recognition of the 50th year of Bartok's passing, the presentation of the complete Op.20 set (six quartets) of Haydn coupled with six significant new Australian quartets at the 1994 Adelaide Festival, the association with Sir Michael Tippett in Perth and Brisbane with his Second and Fourth Quartets in 1990, the presentation of all the late quartets of Beethoven at the 1996 Adelaide Festival, strong bi-partisan support from the South Australian Government, and the unflinching support of the late John Bannon who was both Premier and Minister for the Arts in South Australia.

Lucinda Collins is Head of Keyboard at the Elder Conservatorium of Music at the University of Adelaide. She has built an outstanding reputation as soloist and chamber music player over many years. Lucinda Collins was the most frequent guest artist with the Melba Quartet in its ASQ days.

A note on environmental friendliness:

In an effort to commit to greener performances, programs are printed to share one between two people. If you would like to download additional copies of these program notes, please visit melbournerecital.com.au/programs

Melbourne Recital Centre acknowledges the people of the Kulin nation
on whose land this concert is being presented.



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