

SOUNDSCAPES ONE

Soundscapes One is being performed at:

- The Regent Theatre in Dunedin on Friday 10 May, 7.30pm
- Picton Little Theatre in Picton on Friday 17 May, 7.30pm

Leonie Homes (1962-) NZ

Fragments II (2016)

The original Fragment, also composed for String Quartet, was a kind of fantasia on a small, repeating pattern. This work, Fragment II, continues the idea of a response to a very small idea. The 'fragment' in this case is a rocking three-note passage, introduced by the cello. Opening softly and slowly, using the ascending intervals of a minor 6th then augmented 5th, the searching quality of the three notes prompts an introspective and whimsical exploration. The tension grows as the music speeds up into a twirling semiquaver interlude and the occasional use of ricochet bowing adds moments of subtle humour. The use of wide intervals and augmented harmonies create an atmosphere of beauty and poignancy.

Joseph Haydn (1732-1809)

***String Quartet in E flat major "Apponyi",
Op. 71, No. 3 (1793)***

I. Vivace

II. Andante con moto

III. Minuet and Trio

IV. Finale. Vivace

Haydn is affectionately known as the "Father of the String Quartet". He wrote an astounding sixty-seven quartets - shining a strong light on the power and potential of the combination of this type of ensemble. He had received recognition and success for his music, during his first trip to London in 1791. In an inspired state, Haydn returned to Vienna and created a brand new set of string quartets in preparation for his second visit to London. Initially, string quartets were seen more as an intimate chamber music experience for smaller audiences in chambers or private venues. In a groundbreaking move, Haydn changed this - writing the opus 71 set specifically for public performance.

Dedicated to the Hungarian Count, Apponyi, Op. 71 No. 3 stands as a testament to the composer's enduring legacy, showcasing his unparalleled mastery of form, melody, and expression. In the first movement, he employs the use of a coup de

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Haydn string quartet cont. from previous page...

théâtre, with a loud and abrupt chord to command the attention of the audience and announce the start of the performance. What ensues are a series of witty exchanges that have a three note “stutter” which recurs throughout the movement in many guises. The movement features tuttis of symphonic proportion, extreme dynamic contrast, and playful changes to phrase lengths. This keeps us on the edge of our seats with wonder for where the music will take us.

The Anadate con moto is - in its essence - a set of theme and variations. The first violin shines here, much like a soprano gracing the stage with an orchestra accompanying and commenting. The theme itself already has a multitude of characters, from innocence and grace to concern and anxiety. How Haydn develops this is tantalising with moments of darkness to almost bird-like iterations in the higher registers of the quartet.

The dancing lines of the Minuet and Trio are full of cheek! Although the movement is graceful - it is tinged with wit and suspense, with unexpected harmonic shifts that are constantly changing. The trio is momentarily ominous with the use of unisons and octaves. Haydn throws this away as though to say “just kidding”, and sends the first violin humorously up into the stratosphere. The Finale. Vivace takes us into a rambunctious quick-waltz. Sometimes there appears to be a nod to Bach, with moments that resemble the contours of the last movement of Brandenburg Concerto No. 3. This Finale is full of brilliance, and contrapuntal interplay between all four voices of the quartet, sending us off to a vibrant close that ends the entire work as it began - with flourishing chords.

Interval

Claude Debussy (1862-1918)

String Quartet in G minor, Op. 10
(1893)

I. Animé et très décidé

II. Assez vif et bien rythmé

III. Andantino, doucement expressif

IV. Très modéré – En animant peu à peu – Très mouvementé et avec passion

Written in 1893, Debussy's Quartet in G minor, Op. 10 is an important milestone on the road to his famous Prélude à l'après-midi d'un Faun (1894) which not only conclusively defined Debussy's mature style but also, as Paul Griffiths states,

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Debussy string quartet cont. from previous page...

provided the originating seed of the twentieth century's musical avant garde. In the Quartet, however, Debussy's "Debussyism" is not yet fully integrated. Touches of the influence of others – Massenet, Grieg, Wagner and even Javanese gamelan – are apparent in its corners. Cast in the traditional four movements, Debussy's Quartet has as its most distinctive feature its overarching preoccupation with timbre and sonority. The work as a whole offers a compendium of string-playing techniques. Another ingenious feature is that the quartet is less dominated by melodic or harmonic considerations than by a rhythmic flexibility which carries the potential for seemingly endless variety. Yet it remains unmistakably a work dominated by the sensuality and longueurs of French late nineteenth century Romanticism, a strong feature of this slow third movement (*Andantino doucement expressif*). This movement is muted and expressive; it features considerable soloistic playing, particularly from the viola and first violin.



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