

## **String Quartet in C Op 76 No 3 'Emperor'**

Haydn (1732-1809)

Allegro

Poco adagio, Cantabile

Menuet: Allegro

Finale: Presto

The six String Quartets, Op. 76 by Josef Haydn were composed in 1797 or 1798 and dedicated to the Hungarian Count Joseph Georg von Erdődy. They form the last complete set of string quartets that Haydn composed. At the time of the commission, Haydn was employed at the court of Prince Nicolaus Esterházy II. The Op. 76 quartets are among Haydn's most ambitious chamber works, deviating more than their predecessors from standard sonata form and each emphasising their thematic continuity through the seamless and near-continual exchange of motifs between instruments.

In 1796, the year following Haydn's final return from London, the city of Vienna was under threat of invasion from Napoleon. Following a state commission, Haydn, a strong nationalist, contributed a beautiful, heartfelt national song to the cause. "Gott erhalte Franz den Kaiser" ("God Protect Emperor Franz") was instantly adopted as the Austrian national anthem. So universal was the appeal of Haydn's melody that it was later to be used as the "Brotherhood" anthem of Freemasonry; as the German national anthem "Deutschland, Deutschland über Alles"; and even as the Protestant hymns "Praise the Lord! Ye Heavens, Adore Him" and "Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken."

The third quartet in the set boasts the nickname 'Emperor', because in the second movement is a set of variations on this patriotic song. The melody also finds its way into the first movement. Its five-note theme derives from the German title of the song: G (Gott), E (erhalte), F (Franz), D (den), C (Kaiser).

[Sources: Wikipedia & St Lawrence String Quartet]

## **Elegy (Toccatina)      Ross James Carey (1969- )**

The composer writes: "Ruby Hunter was one of Australia's most beloved singer-songwriters. With her partner Archie Roach, she powerfully articulated through song the contemporary experiences of Australia's indigenous peoples. I heard Ruby and Archie perform as part of the 'Black Arm Band' at the 2009 Melbourne International Festival of the Arts and was struck by her great charisma as a performer, as well as the powerful message articulated by the band. Upon hearing of Ruby's death a few months later and reading the inspiring and remarkable story of her life, I composed this work dedicated to her memory.

Ross James Carey was born in Lower Hutt in 1969 and studied at Victoria University of Wellington, graduating in 1992. Ross gained a Masters Degree in composition from Elisabeth University of Music

in Hiroshima in 1994. Currently Ross is completing a PhD in composition from the University of Melbourne while teaching at Lim Kok Wing University of Creative Technology, Cyberjaya, Malaysia. Ross' works have been performed throughout New Zealand as well as overseas in concerts and festivals.

- Interval -

### **String Quartet No 11 in F minor, Op 122**

Shostakovich (1906-1975)

Introduction - Andantino

Scherzo - Allegretto

Recitative - Adagio

Etude - Allegro

Humoresque - Allegro

Elegy - Adagio

Finale - Moderato

This quartet was completed in 1966, and is dedicated to the memory of Vasily Shirinsky, the second violinist of the Beethoven quartet, with whom Shostakovich had had a long and close association.

It is unusual in that it consists of seven short movements, all played without a pause. The movements appear at first to be seven free fantasies, but they are thematically unified, based on two elements in the Introduction.

The work begins with a wandering, whimsical solo in the first violin, and later, repeated notes in an anapest rhythm in the cello. (Anapest is a poetic device involving three syllables, where the first two are short and unstressed, and the third is long and stressed. This rhythm can be found in many of Shostakovich's string quartets.)

The Scherzo is not as jolly as the title may suggest, and instead of building to a climax, this movement seems to run out of steam and terminates with the viola playing a long low C. The lower three instruments crash into this with a dissonant chord in the Recitative. The first violin answers with brutal, mechanistic chords overhead.

The Etude is like a technically challenging study, with rapidly spinning semiquavers in the first violin and cello. Against this are slower versions of the anapest motif from the beginning. In the Humoresque, the second violin has an incessant ostinato consisting of only two notes, while the other instruments play material which recalls earlier motifs.

The sixth movement, Elogy, is the longest and most developed. It is the emotional heart of the quartet. In it, Shostakovich seems to address his departed friend, Shirinsky, directly. Weighty dotted rhythms in the lower strings establish a funereal atmosphere in C-sharp minor.

The unaccompanied second violin leads into the Finale, in which the tonality sinks down half a step to C. Elements of themes heard earlier in the quartet are recalled. This is a movement of retrospection. It ends with the first violin holding a prolonged high C, as the lower voices play hushed fragments of the initial cello theme.

[Sources: Brentano Quartet & The Music Salon Blogspot]

### **String Quartet No 12 in F Op 96 'American'**

Dvořák (1841-1904)

Allegro ma non troppo

Lento

Molto vivace

Vivace ma non troppo

Czech composer Antonin Dvořák wrote his twelfth string quartet in 1893 during a summer holiday from his position as director (1892–1895) of the National Conservatory in New York City. He composed the quartet shortly after the New World Symphony, before that work had been performed. Dvořák sketched the quartet in three days and completed it in thirteen more days, finishing the score with the comment "Thank God! I am content. It was fast." The American Quartet proved a turning point in Dvořák's chamber music output: for decades he had worked unsuccessfully to find a balance between his overflowing melodic invention and a clear structure. In the American Quartet it finally came together.

Dvořák recorded "When I wrote this quartet in the Czech community of Spillville in 1893, I wanted to write something for once that was very melodious and straightforward, and dear Papa Haydn kept appearing before my eyes, and that is why it all turned out so simply. And it's good that it did."

For his symphony Dvořák gave the subtitle himself: "From the New World". To the quartet he gave no subtitle himself, but there is the comment "The second composition written in America."

[Source: Wikipedia]

## **Aroha String Quartet**

Haihong Liu - violin

Ursula Evans - violin

Zhongxian Jin - viola

Robert Ibell - cello

Acclaimed as demonstrating "accomplished brilliance, soulfulness and sublime intensity in perfect balance and tonal unity" (The Dominion Post), the Aroha String Quartet is firmly established as one of New Zealand's finest chamber music ensembles. Founded in 2004, this versatile Wellington-based quartet is known for its passionate musicality, impressive technique, and multicultural innovation.

Haihong Liu and Zhongxian Jin are original members of the Aroha Quartet. Robert Ibell joined the group in 2009 and Ursula Evans in 2017. Due to an injury, Ursula is unable to perform in this concert. NZSO First Violinist Anne Loeser will play second violin.

The Aroha Quartet performs regularly around NZ in centres from the Deep South to the Far North. In 2014 they performed five concerts as part of Chamber Music New Zealand's Kaleidoscope series. Overseas trips have seen them participate in the prestigious International Summer Academy in Austria in 2010, give concerts and masterclasses in China in 2010 and 2013, and perform at the Huntington Music Festival in Australia in 2011.