

Exploration and Collaboration at the heart of the Australian String Quartet's National Season 2017

2017 is shaping up to be a year rich with new endeavours for the Australian String Quartet (ASQ), comprising Dale Barltrop – first violin, Francesca Hiew – second violin, Stephen King – viola and Sharon Draper – cello. Kicking off in February, the Quartet's performance calendar will feature unique artistic programs tailored specifically for audiences around the country, as the ASQ embraces a spirit of exploration and collaboration.

In April, the ASQ welcomes renowned Dutch cellist Pieter Wispelwey and Australian pianist Caroline Almonte for performance collaborations at its flagship regional festivals in the Southern Grampians, Victoria and Western Australia's Margaret River. A feast for the senses, ASQ festivals have brought together the finest food and wine and music for over ten years. Set in intimate and picturesque surroundings, from barrel cellars to woolsheds, "the ASQ's intimate festivals are in high demand", said Angelina Zucco – Chief Executive of the Australian String Quartet.

From its home base at the University of Adelaide, Elder Conservatorium of Music, the ASQ will undertake three National Season touring programs in 2017. Performing in Adelaide, Brisbane, Canberra, Melbourne, Perth and Sydney, the ASQ's National Season 2017 features masterpieces of the string quartet literature including Schubert, Dvořák, Bartók and Beethoven, set alongside a compelling selection of more recent works.

For its first national tour, *Migration*, the ASQ is joined by leading Australian guitarist, Slava Grigoryan. Regarded as a 'wizard' of the guitar, Slava Grigoryan has forged a global reputation as a classical guitar virtuoso. He joins the ASQ in May 2017 to perform works by Ralph Towner and Iain Grandage in a program that dissolves the boundaries of jazz and classical style. The poignant world of late Schubert forms the emotional apex of this concert with his final string quartet in G major.

In August 2017, the ASQ's second touring program, *Homeward*, features the award-winning String Quartet no 2 by Australian composer Paul Stanhope. This work explores the plight of the Jewish migrants to Australia around World War II and offers a dramatic contrast to Dvořák's ebullient homecoming quartet. Together with Benjamin Britten's String Quartet no 1, the three works compose a rich tapestry drawn from themes of exile and return, and inspirations from the old world and the new.

The ASQ travels across musical time in November 2017 with *Beginnings*, a program that encompasses baroque eloquence, classical grandeur and intense romanticism at the dawn of the 20th century. Featuring works by Italian master – Alessandro Scarlatti and the undisputed giant of the 20th century string quartet – Béla Bartók; the season culminates with Beethoven's first *Razumovsky* quartet. Composed soon after the revolutionary *Eroica* Symphony, this work is rich with passion and grandeur of scale – offering a compelling conclusion to the ASQ's National Season 2017.

Among other ASQ artistic highlights, 2017 sees: a year-long association with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra; the world premiere of a new cello quintet by Australian composer, Gordon Kerry; recording collaborations with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra through ABC Classics and a release with Slava Grigoryan; international performances with the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra; regional touring; and the continuation of the ASQ's new *Close Quarters* series across Australia.

"As the Australian String Quartet, our purpose is to create meaningful and intimate experiences that connect people with string quartet music. We have a diverse and ambitious program in store for 2017 and we can't wait to share it with audiences across Australia", said Dale Barltrop – first violin.

Subscriptions for the National Season 2017 are now open. For further information about the [Australian String Quartet's National Season 2017](http://www.asq.com.au) and its generous [supporting partners](#) visit the website at [asq.com.au](http://www.asq.com.au) or phone 1800 040 444 for details. **ENDS**

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TOUR DATES & DETAILS

Program 1 (May 2017)

MIGRATION

Ralph Towner Guitar Quintet *Migration*

Iain Grandage Guitar Quintet *Black Dogs*

Schubert String Quartet in G major D887

With guest artist Slava Grigoryan, guitar

- **Perth**, Tue 23 May 7pm, Government House Ballroom
- **Canberra**, Sun 28 May 2pm, Gandel Hall, National Gallery of Australia
- **Brisbane**, Mon 29 May 7pm, Conservatorium Theatre
- **Adelaide**, Tue 30 May 7pm, Adelaide Town Hall
- **Sydney**, Wed 31 May 7pm, City Recital Hall
- **Melbourne**, Mon 5 June 7pm, Melbourne Recital Centre

Program 2 (August 2017)

HOMEWARD

Britten String Quartet no 1 in D major op 25

Paul Stanhope String Quartet no 2

Dvořák String Quartet no 13 in G major op 106

- **Perth**, Wed 2 August 7pm Government House Ballroom
- **Canberra**, Sun 6 August, 2pm Gandel Hall, National Gallery of Australia
- **Melbourne**, Tue 8 August 7pm, Melbourne Recital Centre
- **Brisbane**, Sat 12 August 7pm, Conservatorium Theatre
- **Sydney**, Mon 14 August 7pm, City Recital Hall
- **Adelaide**, Tue 15 August 7pm, Adelaide Town Hall

Program 3 (November 2017)

BEGINNINGS

Scarlatti Sonata a Quattro no 4 in D minor

Bartók String Quartet no 1

Beethoven String Quartet in F major op 59 no 1

- **Sydney**, Tue 14 November 7pm, City Recital Hall
- **Adelaide**, Wed 15 November 7pm, Adelaide Town Hall
- **Perth**, Fri 17 November 7pm, Government House Ballroom
- **Melbourne**, Mon 20 November 7pm, Melbourne Recital Centre
- **Canberra**, Sun 26 November 2pm, Gandel Hall, National Gallery of Australia
- **Brisbane**, Mon 27 November 7pm, Conservatorium Theatre

BACKGROUND – Australian String Quartet Biography



Pictured L-R: Stephen King, Sharon Draper, Francesca Hiew, Dale Barltrop (Photo: Jacqui Way)

For over 30 years, the Australian String Quartet (ASQ) has created unforgettable string quartet performances for national and international audiences. Dedicated to musical excellence with a distinctly Australian character, our purpose is to create chemistry and amplify intimacy through experiences that connect people with string quartet music.

From our home base at the University of Adelaide, Elder Conservatorium of Music, we reach out across Australia and the world to engage people with an outstanding program of performances, workshops, commissions and education projects. Our distinct sound is enhanced by a matched set of 18th century Guadagnini instruments, handcrafted by Giovanni Battista Guadagnini between c.1743 and 1784 in Turin and Piacenza, Italy. These precious instruments are on loan for our exclusive use through the generosity of Ulrike Klein and UKARIA.

Our 2017 program is rich with new endeavours, including: our inaugural morning series at UKARIA Cultural Centre; a year-long association with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra; the world premiere of a new cello quintet by Australian composer, Gordon Kerry; the launch of our ASQ digital platform; and recording collaborations with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra through ABC Classics and a release with Slava Grigoryan.

Among other highlights, 2017 welcomes performance collaborations with renowned Dutch cellist Pieter Wispelwey and Australian pianist Caroline Almonte for our flagship regional festivals in the Southern Grampians, Victoria and Western Australia's Margaret River; international engagements with the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra; the first stage of a cultural exchange project with the Adelaide Festival Centre in China; and the continuation of our new *Close Quarters* series which will be delivered in tandem with our National Season and regional touring programs.

Dale Barltrop plays a 1784 Guadagnini Violin, Turin
Francesca Hiew plays a 1748-49 Guadagnini Violin, Piacenza
Stephen King plays a 1783 Guadagnini Viola, Turin
Sharon Draper plays a c.1743 Guadagnini Violoncello, Piacenza, 'Ngeringa'