

MEDIA RELEASE  
OCTOBER 2015

### ***Transcend* – a compelling conclusion to the ASQ's 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Year**

The Australian String Quartet's 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year culminates with its third and final national season tour for 2015 from 29 October – 7 November. Presented by the Macquarie Group, the Australian String Quartet's *Transcend* tour will see performances in Sydney, Canberra, Adelaide, Perth, Melbourne and Brisbane.

In an epic conclusion to its season, the Australian String Quartet brings to life Schubert's masterpiece for string quartet, *Death and the Maiden*. Considered one of the benchmark works of the string quartet repertoire, this passionate and compelling work is both dark and powerful. The evening's program opens with the third string quartet by Juan Crisóstomo de Arriaga. Regarded as the 'Spanish Mozart', Arriaga's quartet is full of elegance and warmth.

The Australian String Quartet welcomes award-winning Australian soprano, Allison Bell, as guest artist for the *Transcend* tour. Born in Tasmania and currently residing in Europe, Bell is fast gaining an international reputation as one of the leading and most exciting performers of 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century music.

Described by The Times, as having a 'stratospheric' voice, Bell has performed in far-flung venues from the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam to Australia's own Museum of Old and New Art for Dark Mofo. The soprano joins the Quartet for the Australian premiere performance of Brett Dean's second string quartet, *And once I played Ophelia*, which is scored for string quartet and soprano.

Co-commissioned by the Australian String Quartet, the Britten Sinfonia and the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival the work received its world premiere in Norwich UK in May 2014. Bell, whose technical prowess and vocal agility perfectly suits the work, was involved in the premiere performances of the work with the Britten Sinfonia in Norwich and at London's Wigmore Hall.

The Australian String Quartet has relished a long working history with Dean, who is one of the most internationally performed composers of his generation. Dean's *And once I played Ophelia*, comprises a suite of five short movements based on the Shakespearean character Ophelia, from Hamlet.

*'Dean makes exhaustive use of string technique, at times percussive and metallic, at others with the full, dense textures... As Dean writes, Shakespeare's "ministering angel" casts a beguiling spell over us. If this was his aim with this taut, refined work, he has succeeded.'* – Guardian, May 2014

The Australian String Quartet welcomes guest artist Sophie Rowell as first violinist for its *Transcend* tour. Rowell, a former Quartet member, is well-loved by Australian audiences and appears courtesy of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, where she is currently Associate Concertmaster.

Newly appointed second violinist, Francesca Hiew, joins Australian String Quartet violist Stephen King and cellist Sharon Draper for the *Transcend* tour ahead of the official debut of the Quartet's new line-up. Featuring first violinist, Dale Barltrop, together with Hiew, King and Draper, the new Australian String Quartet line-up will present its inaugural tour commencing in February 2016.

Quartet-in-Residence at The University of Adelaide, the Australian String Quartet was established in 1985 and has had a major impact on the musical life of Australia, commissioning, premiering and performing many works by leading Australian composers.

For further information on the Australian String Quartet and the *Transcend* tour visit the website at [asq.com.au](http://asq.com.au) or phone 1800 040 444 for details.

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## PROGRAM AND TOUR DATES

### PROGRAM

**Juan Crisostomo de Arriaga**, String Quartet no 3 in E flat major

**Brett Dean**, *And once I played Ophelia*\* (Australian Premiere performances)

**Schubert**, String Quartet no 14 in D minor D810, *Death and the Maiden*

With guest soprano [Allison Bell](#) and violinists [Sophie Rowell](#) and [Francesca Hiew](#)

*\*Co-commissioned by the Australian String Quartet, Britten Sinfonia and the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival*

### TOUR DATES & TICKET PRICES

#### **Sydney**

Thursday 29 October, 7pm, City Recital Hall

Standard \$76, Concession \$57, Under 30 \$30

To book: City Recital Hall (02) 8256 2222, [cityrecitalhall.com](http://cityrecitalhall.com)

#### **Canberra**

Sunday 1 November, 2pm, Gandel Hall, National Gallery of Australia

Standard \$65, Concession \$60, NGA Members \$55, Under 30 \$30

To book: Call 02 6240 6701 or [nga.gov.au](http://nga.gov.au)

#### **Adelaide**

Monday 2 November, 7pm, Adelaide Town Hall

Standard \$70, Concession \$50, Under 30 \$30

To book: Bass 131 246, [bass.net.au](http://bass.net.au)

#### **Perth**

Tuesday 3 November, 7pm Government House Ballroom

Standard \$76, Concession \$57, Under 30 \$30

To book: Ticketek 1300 795 012, [ticketek.com.au](http://ticketek.com.au)

#### **Melbourne**

Friday 6 November, 7pm, Melbourne Recital Centre

Standard \$76, Concession \$57, Under 30 \$30

To book: Melbourne Recital Centre 03 9699 3333, [melbournerecital.com.au](http://melbournerecital.com.au)

#### **Brisbane**

Saturday 7 November, 7pm, Conservatorium Theatre, South Bank

Standard \$70, Concession \$50, Under 30 \$30

To book: QTIX 136 246, [qtix.com.au](http://qtix.com.au)

\$15 Student Rush tickets available at all venues one hour prior to the concert.

## BACKGROUND

### Australian String Quartet Biography

With a rich history spanning over 30 years, the Australian String Quartet (ASQ) has a strong national profile as an Australian chamber music group of excellence, performing at the highest international level. From its home base at the University of Adelaide, Elder Conservatorium of Music, the ASQ delivers a vibrant annual artistic program encompassing performances, workshops, commissions and education projects across Australia and abroad.

One of Australia's finest music exports, the ASQ has appeared at international music festivals and toured extensively throughout the United Kingdom, Europe, New Zealand and Asia in recent years.

The Quartet frequently performs with leading guest artists and in recent years has appeared with internationally acclaimed artists including pianists Angela Hewitt and Piers Lane, mezzo-soprano Anne Sofie von Otter, clarinetist Michael Collins, violist Brett Dean and cellist Pieter Wispelwey.

The Quartet's performance calendar comprises its National Season featuring three unique concert programs presented in Adelaide, Brisbane, Canberra, Melbourne, Perth and Sydney; its own flagship festivals in the Southern Grampians and Margaret River; regional touring and an international tour in Italy in May.

The members of the ASQ are privileged to perform on a matched set of Guadagnini instruments. Hand crafted by Giovanni Battista Guadagnini between c.1743-1784 in Turin and Piacenza, Italy, these exquisite Italian instruments were brought together through the vision of Ulrike Klein. For this year, the viola and cello are on loan to the Australian String Quartet for their exclusive use through the generosity of Ulrike Klein and Ngeringa Arts.

The ASQ has recently appointed Dale Barltrop as first violin and Francesca Hiew as second violin. The new quartet will make their full debut in February 2016 in their first national concert season. In 2015, violist Stephen King and cellist Sharon Draper have been joined by invited guest violinists to present the Quartet's continuing busy season of performances.

### Allison Bell, soprano

*No matter how stratospheric the pitch or angular the leap, Allison Bell displays dizzying power...*  
The Times

Award winning young soprano Allison Bell is fast gaining a reputation as one of the leading and most exciting performers of 20th and 21st century music. Born in Tasmania, she studied Music and History at the University of Sydney. With the London Philharmonic Orchestra under Vladimir Jurowski she has performed the role of Sierva Maria in the world premiere of Peter Eotvos's opera *Love and Other Demons* at Glyndebourne, the UK premieres of Schnittke's *Three Scenes*, *Three Madrigals*, and *Der Gelbe Klang*, Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* at the Wigmore Hall and under Michal Dworzynski she performed Gorecki's Third Symphony. Recent performances include *Le Feu*, *La Princesse* and *Le Rossignol* in Ravel's *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges* at the Bolshoi and her Concertgebouw debut featuring Schoenberg and Dean, *Pierrot Lunaire* at Moscow's Mossovet Theatre and MONA's Synaesthesia Festival. Also Grisey's *Quatre chants pour franchir le seuil* in Berlin with Jurowski and the world premiere of John Tavener's *Flood of Beauty* at the Barbican, London.

[www.allisonbellsoprano.com](http://www.allisonbellsoprano.com)