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ASQ attuned to mood shift

CONCERT
Australian String Quartet
Government House Ballroom
REVIEW NEVILLE COHN



For those with adventurous musical tastes, Joe Chindamo's *Tempesta* might well have been the highlight of the evening. Playing on a superb 18th-century set of Guadagnini instruments, the Australian String Quartet ushered us into the composer's sound and mood world.

I particularly admired the players' skill in generating and maintaining mood whether forlorn, joyful or aggressive. The work has a most engaging immediacy. Pizzicato, measures calling for virtuosic speed, a sad waltz and unusual rhythms are only some of the features that make for fascinating listening.

I'd like to listen to it again, especially the first movement with its delightfully upbeat quality. To indulge such a desire, the ASQ's entire program can be heard on ABC Classic FM on Sunday, August 7, at 5pm. If you weren't at the concert, tune in; it's too good to miss.

As a curtain-raiser, we listened to the quartet playing Webern's *Five Movements* opus 5. The sonic equivalent of fierce knife slashes, measures that call flashes of light to mind and moments of introspection — and even quaint folksiness — the work, as ever, made for engrossing listening.

In Haydn's *Quartet in C* from opus 20, we listened to a range of tone so substantial and vivid as to seem almost tangible. With the musicians (other than the cellist) standing as they played, it was a first-rate reading.

Much of Mendelssohn's *Quartet in F minor* is profoundly melancholy; it was written to honour the memory of Mendelssohn's sister Fanny. The audience listened in rapt silence as measure after finely considered measure reached the ear, the pathos of the *Adagio* conveyed to the nth degree.