



Australian  
String  
Quartet

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## MEDIA RELEASE

14 September 2018

### The Australian String Quartet releases its National Program 2019

Three blockbuster tours including two world premieres by Australians **Kate Moore** and **Nigel Westlake** are among the many highlights the Australian String Quartet (ASQ) has released in its 2019 National Program.

The program's centrepiece, the **ASQ National Season**, sees masterful performances of classic repertoire juxtaposed with fresh discoveries that speak to our Australian identity. Built around monumental works by **Beethoven, Brahms, Ives, Sibelius** and **Debussy**, the three tours draw aesthetic connections between these past masters and contemporary composers.

Australian artists **Kate Moore** and **Nigel Westlake** complete the ASQ's National Season programs with brand new commissions for the Quartet. Moore, now living in Amsterdam, creates sound installations and sculptures as well as works for orchestra, ensembles and soloists. She has composed for some of Europe's brightest ensembles and musicians. Westlake has composed for radio, theatre, circus, TV and film. Throughout his forty-year career, the composer has won multiple awards and conducted symphony orchestras all across Australia and abroad.

*"Our National Season is the core of our Australian activities and the heart of what we present. Each program is a small balanced cosmos in which our audiences can experience breath-taking string quartet music."*

**Stephen King – viola**

*"The ASQ is intent on delivering a musical experience that will broaden horizons while connecting audiences ever more intimately to our music and our lives as musicians. I am particularly proud of the fact that we are bringing two new Australian works to life next year, amidst an array of other fascinating works from the repertoire."* **Dale Barltrop – violin**

The ASQ's popular **Close Quarters** events, which sees its members Dale Barltrop, Francesca Hiew, Sharon Grigoryan and Stephen King perform in intimate, unique spaces around the country, continues in 2019. In 2018, the group performed in a museum, on a skateboard ramp and in tiny live music bars. Close Quarters concerts are announced on the Quartet's website and social media shortly before each happening and sell out quickly. By shaking up the ingredients of venue, format and repertoire, these up-close and personal experiences bring the ASQ to new audiences in unexpected contexts.

Contributing to its core programming, the ASQ takes the musical experience deeper through its regional festivals in Western Australia's Margaret River region and Dunkeld in Victoria's Southern Grampians. In these splendid locations, the Quartet brings together its circle of musical friends including guests **Konstantin Shamray** (piano) and **Li-Wei Qin** (cello) to explore chamber music in all its rich variety, presenting a miscellany of musical delights with the Quartet's distinctive sensibility always at the heart.

In 2019, the ASQ is excited to be extending its festival program to New Zealand for the very first time, spending three days in the breath-taking region around Queenstown and Arrowtown on the country's South Island.

Back on home soil, later in 2019 the ASQ teams up with Australian music icon **Katie Noonan** to record and perform ten brand-new Australian works based on the evocative poetry of Queenslander Oodgeroo Noonuccal, with dates and more details to be released later.

With their aptitude for engaging with audiences in all sorts of ways, the members of ASQ take to the road again to bring music to Australians beyond the capital cities. The Quartet's education programs present intensive arrays of activities – workshops and masterclasses, collaborative concerts and recitals – that provide a great opportunity for whole communities to delve into the world of chamber music.

From its headquarters at the University of Adelaide's Elder Conservatorium of Music, the ASQ cultivates culture with a broad range of activities including performances as part of the **Elder Hall Lunchtime Concert Series**, its **Mornings at UKARIA** series in the Adelaide Hills, and continuing its popular school-holiday workshop *ASQ Day at Elder*.

*"We are so thrilled with the year we've planned for 2019. It's going to be big, bold, beautiful... and very busy!"* **Francesca Hiew** – violin

With more engagements to be announced in the coming months, 2019 looks set to be bumper year for the Australian String Quartet.

### **BIOGRAPHY – AUSTRALIAN STRING QUARTET**

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, the Quartet's purpose is to create chemistry and amplify intimacy through experiences that connect people with string quartet music.

From its home base at the University of Adelaide, Elder Conservatorium of Music, the ASQ reaches out across Australia and the world to engage people with an outstanding program of performances, workshops, commissions and education projects. The Quartet's distinct sound is enhanced by a matched set of 18<sup>th</sup> century Guaragnini instruments, handcrafted by Giovanni Battista Guaragnini between c.1743 and 1784 in Turin and Piacenza, Italy. These precious instruments are on loan for the ASQ's exclusive use through the generosity of UKARIA.

*Dale Barltrop plays a 1784 Guaragnini Violin, Turin*

*Francesca Hiew plays a 1748-49 Guaragnini Violin, Piacenza*

*Stephen King plays a 1783 Guaragnini Viola, Turin*

*Sharon Grigoryan plays a c.1743 Guaragnini Violoncello, Piacenza, 'Ngeringa' (currently on Parental Leave)*



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