



Australian  
String  
Quartet

Quartet-in-Residence  
The University of Adelaide  
SA 5005 Australia

T +61 8 8313 3748  
E [asq@asq.com.au](mailto:asq@asq.com.au)  
W [asq.com.au](http://asq.com.au)

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

31 August 2018

### ***Schubert Ledger Shostakovich:* The Australian String Quartet set to deliver an electrifying Australian tour**

The Australian String Quartet (ASQ) concludes its 2018 Australian touring calendar with a bold program of celebrated works by Schubert and Shostakovich, complemented by the world premiere of a work by Australian composer James Ledger, specially commissioned by the ASQ.

When it comes to writing for chamber ensembles, Western Australian composer James Ledger goes against the current. His new work *The Distortion Mirror* sees microphones added to the ASQ's Guaragnini instruments; their sounds synthesized and looped back in real-time reversed, inversed, and skewed in time and pitch. Inspired by side-show alley mirrors of fetes, circuses and carnivals which reflect the world in a vast array of intriguing deceptions, this visceral work is bound to intrigue and delight.

*"As an Australian ensemble, performing work that is created on our shores is always special. We are thrilled to be premiering this brand-new contemporary work by James, an artist and composer we've long admired."* Francesca Hiew – violin

*"As a composer, the electronics add a wonderful new element; they allow you to do things that you can't do in the acoustic realm. It's very gratifying when you get your piece out in the world for the first time. To hear it come to life, and to see musicians come together and play something you've written is very fulfilling."* James Ledger – composer

For some, the number 13 is unlucky, but for Schubert and his String Quartet no 13, *Rosamunde*, it is not so. This was his only string quartet that he allowed to be performed live, and the only one published in his lifetime. *Rosamunde's* special virtues are those of order, craftsmanship and eloquent sentimentality, combined with a dramatic searching. It was these qualities that identified Schubert to the music-loving public of nineteenth century Vienna as the natural successor to Beethoven.

The work of Shostakovich counters Schubert's form with fierce contrasts of emotion and character. Written on the Dilizhan composer's retreat in Armenia, 1964, his String Quartet no 10 begins serenely, reflecting the astounding beauty of the natural world around him, before wild outbursts unsettle the deceptive calm, giving way to the inner turmoil bubbling beneath Shostakovich, the shackled genius.

*"The pairing of Schubert and Shostakovich is a very enticing one for us. The two composers, whilst worlds apart, both knew tremendous suffering. Each reflect their pain in very unique and personal ways, but ultimately, both works deliver some of the most poignant music ever written for string quartet"*. Dale Barltrop – violin

The Australian String Quartet is excited to be touring this program with guest cellist Blair Harris, who will be standing in for ASQ cellist Sharon Grigoryan, currently on maternity leave.

For further information about the ASQ's National Season 2018 and its generous supporting partners visit the website at [asq.com.au](http://asq.com.au) or phone **1800 040 444**.

**For further information contact Samuel Jozeps, Marketing and Communications Manager on 0429 645 436 or [sjozeps@asq.com.au](mailto:sjozeps@asq.com.au).**

## **TOUR DATES & DETAILS**

### **SCHUBERT LEDGER SHOSTAKOVICH**

**Schubert** String Quartet no 13 in A minor *Rosamunde*

**James Ledger** String Quartet no 2 *The Distortion Mirror* (World Premiere)

**Shostakovich** String Quartet no 10 in A-flat major op 118

- **Perth** Wed 26 September, 7pm, Government House Ballroom
- **Brisbane** Mon 1 October, 7pm, Conservatorium Theatre, South Bank
- **Melbourne** Tue 2 October, 7pm, Melbourne Recital Centre
- **Sydney** Wed 3 October, 7pm, City Recital Hall
- **Canberra** Sun 7 October, 2pm, James O Fairfax Theatre, National Gallery of Australia
- **Adelaide** Tue 9 October, 7pm, Adelaide Town Hall

## **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 Guadagnini instruments, handcrafted by Giovanni Battista Guadagnini 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 Guadagnini Violin, Turin*

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

*Stephen King plays a 1783 Guadagnini Viola, Turin*

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

**BLAIR HARRIS** is a highly regarded solo cellist and chamber musician, known particularly for his strikingly individual interpretations and innovative collaborative projects. Blair is a member of Ensemble Offspring, and performs regularly as a duo with acclaimed pianist Caroline Almonte. Prior to this he enjoyed many years performing with Syzygy Ensemble. Over his career, Blair has worked with numerous chamber music ensembles including Streeton Trio, Seraphim Trio, Inventa Ensemble and the Melbourne Chamber Orchestra. As a soloist he has performed with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and Orchestra Victoria on numerous occasions. Blair is currently guest principal cello of the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra.

*Blair Harris plays a c.1743 Guadagnini Violoncello, Piacenza, 'Ngeringa', on loan to the ASQ through the generosity of UKARIA.*

### **Official Partners**



### **National Season Partners**



### **Other Partners**

