



Australian  
String  
Quartet

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## MEDIA RELEASE

20 December 2018

### The Australian String Quartet's stellar year in 2018

String Quartets were invented in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century to satisfy a growing thirst for music. The form's founder Joseph Haydn intended to make music accessible to as many people as possible and in 2018, through the efforts of the Australian String Quartet (ASQ), his legacy lives on.

This year has seen ASQ members Dale Barltrop, Francesca Hiew, Sharon Grigoryan and Stephen King, along with a swag of guest artists and collaborators, deliver rousing performances in 36 cities, towns and regions from Naracoorte (SA), Noosa (QLD), Cowaramup (WA) and Tupra Station (NSW) to the country's capital cities, and further afield; from Rome, Bologna to Beijing, the Quartet performed no less than 91 concerts and lead more than 45 masterclasses.



ASQ after a recital at UKARIA – April 2018. Photo: Sam Jozeps

From Australian critics, the ASQ garnered high commendations. This line-up, now three years together, is creating a solid reputation for its interpretation, character of sound and ensemble unity.

*"This ensemble is playing better than ever..."*

Clive O'Connell, *The Age*, 18 Feb 2018

*"I have been following the ... Australian String Quartet for about 14 years in their various guises and the more I see their present line-up of violinists Dale Barltrop and Francesca Hiew, violist Stephen King and cellist Sharon Grigoryan the more impressed I become."*

Steve Moffatt, *The Daily Telegraph*, 14 February 2018

*"... ASQ is a polished product — from the quality of its musicianship to the matched sound of its 18th century Guaragnini instruments, everything fits the bill."*

David Cusworth, *The West Australian*, 30 Sep 2018

Overseas, the Quartet offered listeners something few other quartets of the world could. In 2018 the ASQ took the works of contemporary Australian composers Joe Chindamo, Carl Vine, Peter Sculthorpe and Stephen Whittington to China and Italy, fascinating local audiences with a distinctly Australian chamber music sound.

*“Performing the works of current Australian authors has allowed us to listen to quartets with a clever and decisively original compositional structure due to their high level of creativity and the frequent descriptive and ironic use that these authors have entrusted to the technical skills of the musicians and their instruments.... Their surprising musical creativity should make us reflect on how our Italy (the inventor of music) is today the country that instead least promotes and supports its contemporary musicians.”*

Elisa Di Salvatore, Huffington Post, Italy, 22 November 2018



ASQ performs at City Recital Hall, Sydney – March 2018. Photo: Sam Jozeps

Back home ASQ continued to make friends and collaborators in 2018, delivering performances with fellow quartets, the Tinalley and Goldner String Quartets, the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, theatre maker Andy Packer and a special two-week season, performing the work of Bryce Dessner with Sydney Dance Company.

For an ensemble made up of just four musicians, the ASQ’s operations schedule redlines and Dale, Francesca, Sharon and Stephen look forward to continuing their efforts with another bumper year in 2019, with two brand new Australian commissions by Kate Moore and Nigel Westlake as part of their National Season concert tours, regional festivals in Dunkeld and Margaret River, a new festival in New Zealand, a major recording and touring project with Katie Noonan, a six-show interactive multi-sensory season for the Adelaide Fringe, the continuation of the Quartet’s Close Quarters gigs and a myriad of other festivals and education programs.

With so much on the go, and the quartet’s reputation as an ensemble of excellence on the grow, Joseph Haydn’s vision for accessible music is a legacy well-and-truly being delivered by the ASQ.

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

## 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 Bartrop 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'*

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