



The Australian String Quartet reveals its 2024 Artistic Program



The Australian String Quartet. Photo by Jacqui Way

The Australian String Quartet (ASQ) has revealed an expansive 2024 program featuring national and international performances, world-class festival appearances and enthralling new collaborations. The ASQ’s program showcases a quartet united by the vision to inspire people to live a more musical life.

Including two national tours—**Vanguard** and **Aurora**—alongside bespoke festival experiences and artistic collaborations with the likes of **UKARIA**, **Opera Australia** and **Sydney Chamber Opera**, and the **Sydney Symphony Orchestra**, next year will showcase the Quartet’s remarkable musicianship, virtuosity, and versatility.

On the international stage, the ensemble will continue to champion Australian music with performances in the **String Quartet Biennale Amsterdam**, the world’s largest celebration of the string quartet artform held in Amsterdam, Netherlands, in late January/early February. The quartet will also take their collaboration with **Sydney Dance Company**, **Impermanence**, to the Kennedy Centre in Washington D.C. next April for its US Premiere, following on from its successful European tour this year.

ASQ violinist Dale Barltrop is thrilled to be able to share a year of incredible music with audiences that demonstrates the power and art of the string quartet.

“The four of us have delighted in choosing some extraordinary music that we are deeply passionate about,” Dale said. “We feel exceptionally fortunate to pursue this art form in the footsteps of the fine musicians before us. Our mission to touch the hearts and minds of people across this vast country

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has given flight to the ASQ, ever since its formation in 1985. That mission remains as strong as ever.”

The ASQ’s flagship national touring activity opens with **Vanguard**—featuring groundbreaking works from Beethoven and Korngold—throughout June and July. Beethoven’s profoundly personal and philosophical Op.127 quartet, and Erich Wolfgang Korngold’s highly romantic and original String Quartet No.2 sit alongside a new commission by Australian composer Harry Sdraulig, whose String Quartet No.2¹ will receive its National Premiere performances.

Aurora will round out the ensemble’s national touring in October and November with a program boasting Joseph Haydn’s renowned String Quartet in D Major, Op.76 No.5. In a nod to the great Nordic composers of the 19th and 20th centuries this concert will feature Finnish composer Olli Mustonen’s String Quartet No.1, described by the composer as a “journey from darkness to light”, and Edvard Grieg’s String Quartet No.1—one of the most celebrated Scandinavian works in the genre.

Next year expands the Quartet’s own bespoke festival offerings with the launch of its inaugural **Barossa Weekend of Music** in South Australia, centred around the Barossa Valley’s very own Luxury Lodge—The Louise. This August festival promises premium culinary experiences and the finest music from the ensemble and their special guests Mark Simeon Ferguson, Kyrie Anderson, Bonnie Grynchuk and Ciara Ferguson. In April, they will present their much-loved **Dunkeld Festival of Music** in Victoria’s Southern Grampians, which celebrates twenty years in 2024. Acclaimed baroque and classical specialist, and Artistic Director of Pinchgut Opera—**Erin Helyard**—joins the ASQ as the guest artist for this occasion. The 2024 Dunkeld Festival of Music program will feature works for string quartet, piano, harpsichord and organ.

The ASQ will also feature as part of **Perth Festival** in early March, forming the core of the ensemble for **Ngapa William Cooper** by Dr Lou Bennett AM, Nigel Westlake and Lior which received its critically acclaimed, sold-out World Premiere outings at the 2023 Adelaide Festival. This program also includes a performance of Bryce Dessner’s *Aheym* by the ASQ and two works by Yawuru man, Stephen Pigram.

Continuing to expand its international influence, the ASQ begins the year with performances in the **String Quartet Biennale Amsterdam**. These include the World Premiere of **Nyilamum**, a First Nations-led collaboration with Yorta Yorta Dja Dja Wurrung, Dr Lou Bennett AM, composer Paul Stanhope and the ASQ. Also featured in their Biennale programming are Australian composers Nigel Westlake (String Quartet No.3, *Sacred Sky*²), Peter Sculthorpe (String Quartet No.11, *Jabiru Dreaming*³), Jack Symonds (String Quartet No.2⁴) and Moya Henderson (*Kudikynah Cave*⁵) alongside works by Beethoven, Mozart, Haydn and Britten.

In September the ensemble reunites with composer and Artistic Director of **Sydney Chamber Opera**, Jack Symonds, for **Opera Australia, Sydney Chamber Opera** and **Carriageworks’** presentation of **Gilgamesh** in association with the Australian String Quartet and **Ensemble Offspring**. This cutting-edge new opera based on mankind’s earliest surviving written poem will be directed by the visionary Kip Williams (Sydney Theatre Company’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray*) and staged at Carriageworks.

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In June, the Quartet will share the stage with the **Sydney Symphony Orchestra** in the Sydney Opera House Concert Hall, performing the mesmerising *Absolute Jest*—a work that takes small fragments of Beethoven’s music and develops them into something new, and newly inspiring—by Pulitzer Prize and Grammy Award-winning American composer John Adams.

An already sold-out concert with the ASQ and Australian pianist Andrea Lam, presented by **UKARIA** in their Adelaide Hills venue, will take place in March. In May the ensemble will perform in the **She Speaks** program alongside Japanese shamisen virtuoso Noriko Tadano, showcasing the music of women composers in a concert titled **Unearth**. *She Speaks* is presented by the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra in partnership with the Elder Conservatorium of Music.

The ASQ will continue their longstanding relationship with the **University of Adelaide’s Elder Conservatorium of Music**, performing in the **Elder Hall Concert Series**. They will also play a role in helping celebrate the University of Adelaide’s 150th birthday.

“We are delighted to be a part of The University of Adelaide’s 150th celebrations in 2024. Our role as Quartet-in-Residence at the Elder Conservatorium of Music will include the opening of our rehearsal room to the community as part of a major public installation, **ASQ’s Open House**, which will take place over a period of two weeks in the second half of the year”, said Angelina Zucco, Chief Executive Officer.

Alongside their live concert activity, the ensemble will also release two new recordings of Australian music and release more live filmed performances on the Australian Broadcasting Corporation’s ABC iview platform.

Tickets for the ASQ’s 2024 season are on sale from Tuesday 21 November 2023. For more information and bookings, please visit asq.com.au

Bookings and enquiries can be made online or by phoning the Australian String Quartet on 1800 040 444 during business hours. You may also email asq@asq.com.au at any time.

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¹Commissioned by John Griffiths for his wife Beth
²Commissioned by the ASQ with generous support from Carl Wood and Don & Veronica Aldridge
³Commissioned by Musica Viva Australia
⁴Commissioned by the Australian String Quartet for the London Season of ANAM Quartetthaus through the Australian String Quartet Richard Divall Australian Music Fund
⁵Commissioned by the Tasmanian Conservatorium of Music with funds provided by the Australia Council Music Board



ABOUT THE AUSTRALIAN STRING QUARTET



From left to right: Christopher Cartlidge, Dale Bartrop, Michael Dahlenburg and Francesca Hiew. Photo by Jacqui Way

"...ravishing musical unity."

—THE AGE

"This quartet is at the top of their game—in full-bloom, you might say."

—CANNBERRA CITYNEWS

"...a quartet that can not only converse intelligently but sing like a lyrebird as well."

—LIMELIGHT

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Since 1985, the Australian String Quartet (ASQ) has created unforgettable string quartet performances for audiences around the world. The ASQ is Dale Bartrop (violin), Francesca Hiew (violin), Christopher Cartlidge (viola) and Michael Dahlenburg (cello).

Dedicated to musical excellence of the highest standard, we aim to create chemistry and amplify intimacy through experiences that connect people with music.

From our home base at the University of Adelaide's Elder Conservatorium of Music, where we are Quartet-in-Residence, we reach out across the globe to engage people with an outstanding program of performances, workshops, commissions, digital content, recording and education projects.

Our distinct sound is enhanced by a matched set of 18th 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 our exclusive use through the generosity of UKARIA.

- Dale Bartrop plays a 1784 Guaragnini Violin, Turin
- Francesca Hiew plays a 1748-49 Guaragnini Violin, Piacenza
- Chris Cartlidge plays a 1783 Guaragnini Viola, Turin
- Michael Dahlenburg plays a c.1743 Guaragnini Violoncello, Piacenza 'Ngeringa'

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