

PROGRAMME

the firm

presents

new chamber music

for

quartet, trio & duo

featuring players of

the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra.

with guest

Gabriella Smart, piano

— PROGRAMME —

1. quentin s. d. grant

torn flight
for violin and piano

2. raymond chapman smith

string trio

3. david kotlowy

piano quartet

4. john polglase

trio no. 3
for violin, 'cello and piano

Tonight's concert will run without an interval

quentin s. d. grant
***torn flight* for violin and piano**

The theme of movement being the basis of the process of life, and of consciousness, is one which I've explored in a number of pieces. All four sections of Torn Flight emphasise movement without reflection or pause, the frantic, violent movement of living that strives to distance itself from stillness, silence, darkness, annihilation. The piano has several notes prepared with rubber wedges to help provide a percussive edge to its rumbling, driving rhythms.

Quentin S. D. Grant

raymond chapman smith
string trio

Largo - Moderato
Adagio
Vivace, ma non troppo
Largo - Allegro molto

String Trio No.2 was composed late last year, partly in response to my first acquaintance with Hanns Eisler's remarkable, early chamber music and, to some degree, as an abreaction (a release of mental tension after an unpleasant experience) to my witnessing a performance of Brian Ferneyhough's recent, thirty minute utterance in this medium.

The six movements of my String Trio are played without a break and comprise four, very compact relatives of familiar, catalogued forms and a muted, relatively long, Largo which precedes the first and last movements. The work is around ten minutes in duration.

As to its content and/or meaning, I will take refuge in Kierkegaard's aphorism that "Music expresses the immediate in its immediacy".

Raymond Chapman Smith

david kotlowy
piano quartet

This Piano Quartet has many references to Honkyoku shakuhachi music. This is peculiar because the shakuhachi is an end-blown flute association with Japanese Zen Buddhism. The Honkyoku pieces originated the 12th century, and are notable for their austerity – shibui – and for the direct connection between the performer's breath and sound production. Playing the Honkyoku pieces is a spiritual exercise, a religious discipline. In this we are reminded once again of music's function - to quiet the mind, thus opening it to divine influences - common also to both classical Indian and Renaissance English music. A quiet mind is untroubled, open to experience; "Nirvana," – divine influence – "is right here, before our eyes." (Hakuin, 1685 - 1768)

The bow sets a string in motion and sound is heard. The bow's position along the string filters the sound, its velocity determines duration as well as amplitude. Individual notes are transient; even the long pitches are never constant for any length of time. Phrases, like those in Honkyoku, are rhythmically free cells that are separated from one another by clear rests. As the isolated pitch assumes a central role, the manner in which the tone is produced also becomes more significant. There is both pitch and timbral movement between phrases and within them. Although notes may be called by the same name, each has a different weight, a different space. We hear patterns and relationships on a surface of silence. The piano strings vibrate freely to produce a haze of resonance.

Both the macro and micro structures of the Quartet follow the three-part Jo-ha-kyu division of Japanese music: 'opening'-'scattering'-'rushing toward the end'. Performers play within their own references; there is no conscious interaction. Listening offers an experience of perception, contemplation and enjoyment. Each sound comes forth, "the perfect presentation of the whole." (Wu-men, 1183 - 1260) With deeper listening, we open ourselves, and the sounds are without boundaries.

David Kotlowy

john polglase
trio no. 3 for violin, cello and piano

My piano trio was composed in early 1998 after over a year of writing for larger ensembles and orchestra. I have always enjoyed working most with chamber music, particularly with trios and this work is a deliberate change from my usual habit of rather dense textures to a much lighter, transparent sound while keeping with my preference for writing music which is tonal, thematic and developmental.

The work is in five movements, not unlike in character to a Partita or dance suite, and takes a little over twenty minutes to perform. The first movement - *Allegretto semplice, giocoso* and last movement - *tempo di gigue* share the same musical ideas, changing them from a prelude to a gigue/finale. The second movement - *Allegro comodo, con grazia* and the fourth movement - *Allegro con brio* are fast (sometimes furious) dance like pieces which are placed around the central slow movement - *Adagio, poco mesto*. The five movements are also related tonally by key, although no key signatures are used. The work cycles from A in the first movement, via mediant related keys (C, E flat, F sharp) and back to A for the finale. The slow central movement also employs this key relationship in miniature for its own internal form. This is sometimes referred to as an 'arch form' and was employed extensively by the great Hungarian composer Bela Bartok - who has no other influence on this work but who was a source of inspiration while I was a piano student.

Aside from these and other technical points this, my third trio (but first piano trio), is a work whose direct expression appeals to the many interwoven facets of human intellect and emotions.

This work was commissioned by Jürg Dähler, leader of the Swiss ensemble *Die Kammermusiker Zürich* with the assistance of the Australia Council, the Commonwealth Government of Australia's arts funding advisory board. Tonight's performance is its Australian premiere.

John Polglase

— Players of the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra —

Margaret Blades violin - 1, 2, 3, 4
Juris Ezergailis viola - 2, 3
Sarah Denbigh 'cello - 2, 3, 4

— with guest —

Gabriella Smart piano - 1, 3, 4

The Players of the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra

An orchestra's place in its community extends much further than the concerts it presents: it is an integral part of the fabric of a town's whole cultural life. Adelaide's orchestra enjoys a much closer interaction with its community than many other orchestras do. The interaction ranges from the highly-visible participation in large-scale community celebrations to activities such as the those of The Firm, where public profile is not so much the issue.

Over a period of years, Adelaide's active and wonderfully self-motivated community of composers have drawn on the members of the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra to help in the realisation of their works, building, un-selfconsciously, a long-term collaboration that has become a fantastic little tradition.

The benefits are mutual: as well as airing the works of local composers, the musicians also develop their skills as chamber musicians and interpreters of contemporary music. What's more, they enjoy the music-making, and the discovery of new music.

James Koehne, Artistic Administrator
Adelaide Symphony Orchestra

Gabriella Smart is a freelance pianist living and working in Adelaide where she continues to study with Eleonora Sivan, former pedagogue at the Leningrad Conservatoire. Her recordings are frequently broadcast on ABC Classic FM, the national Fine Music Broadcasting Network and she is a dedicated performer of new Australian music, premiering and commissioning new works throughout Australia. Her new music ensemble *soundstream* has toured nationally. An Arts Tasmania grant allowed her a period of study in Paris with Pascal Rogé and Claude Helffer where she gave several recitals and performed Australian works for the piano. She currently performs in a piano duo with Anna Goldsworthy and a CD containing works by Chopin and Milhaud has recently been recorded. Gabriella won a national Sounds Australian Award for her performance of John Polglase's *Quiet This Metal* during the 1998 International Barossa Music Festival. In early 2001 she will be touring Canada with a series of solo recitals of contemporary music.

Margaret Blades is currently Associate ConcertMaster with the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra. She has appeared as soloist with the Melbourne, Tasmanian and Adelaide orchestras as well as the Adelaide Chamber Orchestra and Australian Chamber Orchestra and acted as Concert Master with the Australian Youth Orchestra. She has twice been a finalist in the ABC Young Performers Awards, appeared in concerts organised by Musica Viva and been part of numerous broadcast with ABC Classic FM. Margaret's favorite things include Niel Diamond, Sushi and ABBA.

Juris Ezergailis has had a long and fruitful association with new music. Audiences now have the opportunity to hear him with a new voice. He was recently able to acquire an instrument by the highly sought after contemporary Japanese-American designer and builder, Hiroshi Iizuka. It has a distinctive and unusual shape, made in the *viola d'amore* style with sloping shoulders and a distended base, giving it a rich and open baritone sound whilst allowing easy access over the full length of the fingerboard - an 'ergonomic' instrument.

Sarah Denbigh completed her Bachelor of Music in 1987 after studying with Georg Pendersen and Janis Laurs. During this time she performed and toured with the University of Adelaide 'Cello Ensemble and the State Opera Orchestra. She became a member of the Australian Youth Orchestra in 1998 and performed as Principal 'Cello with the Australian Dance Theatre. 1990 saw her win a permanent position with the Adelaide

Symphony Orchestra and from 1991 she was a regular performer in the Adelaide Chamber Orchestra, rising to become the Principal 'Cello. She is currently trying to work out how to successfully be a mother of a new baby and a five year old, do some regular practice and get enough sleep all at the same time.

**— Please join the players and the composers —
after the concert for drinks and
convivial, entertaining banter.**

**— We wish to express our gratitude to the following —
organisations for their support:**

Arts SA, the State Government of South Australia's Arts funding advisory body for their ongoing commitment to new music performance in this state.

Don Balaz and Radio 5UV for recording tonight's concert.

The Adelaide Symphony Orchestra.

Pilgrim Church.

King William Rd Wine Cellars
for the after concert drinks.



Tonights concert is presented by:

— The Firm —

Four composers based in Adelaide who organise an annual series of concerts with funds from Arts SA. All concert administration, composition and promotion is undertaken by The Firm.

Please visit our site on the internet to find out more about us or comment on tonight's concert.

email - firm_music@yahoo.com

on the web - <http://www.adelaide.net.au/~jasako/firm/index.htm>