

THE FIRM  
2021

CONCERT 1

The Firm's annual concert seasons  
are conceived, programmed, curated and directed by  
composers Quentin Grant and Raymond Chapman Smith.

The Firm was founded in 1996.

This is our 130th concert.

"If it is art, it is not for all, and if it is for all, it is not art."

**Arnold Schönberg**

Elder Hall provides wheelchair access via the side (eastern) doors.

Toilets can be accessed in the foyer.

Parking: can be accessed in the University car park to the east of  
Bonython hall.

AUG 23rd 2021

## The Firm

presents

**Helen Ayres**

**Belinda Gehlert**

**Martin Alexander**

**Sharon Grigoryan**

**Luke Altman**

*Irenabyss*

**Ayanna Witter-Johnson**

*Mento Mood*

**Hannah Kendall**

*Glances/I Don't Belong Here*

**Raymond Chapman Smith**

*Stelae for String Quartet*

**Webern**

*Langsamer Satz*

**Schoenberg**

*Intermezzo*

**Phillip Glass**

*Quartet Satz*

**Belinda Gehlert**

*Penumbra*

*Tonight's program brings together four performers with a rich combined history of performing chamber, solo and orchestral music. Cellist Sharon Grigoryan is well known in her former role with the Australian String Quartet and now as a soloist and in duo partnership with her husband, guitarist Slava Grigoryan. Belinda Gehlert played for many years with the Zephyr String Quartet and is well known as a chamber musician, soloist, and composer. Helen Ayres and Martin Alexander first met in 2019, when Martin toured with Helen's Seraphim Trio as guest violist. From that tour sprang a genuine friendship and musical collaboration that extends beyond orchestral and chamber music performance.*

*Helen, Belinda, Sharon and Martin are delighted to bring together some exciting World premiere performances of works by Adelaide favourites, Belinda Gehlert, Luke Altman and Raymond Chapman Smith alongside two Australian premieres of UK based composers Ayanna Witter-Johnson and Hannah Kendall.*

**Luke Altman**

*Irenabyss (2021)*

*(Firm Commission)*



Peter Dombrovskivs: *Morning Mist, Rock Island Bend*

**Ayanna Witter-Johnson (U.K.)**

*Mento Mood*

Composer notes:

In 2018 I was commissioned by the Ligeti Quartet to compose my first official string quartet which I titled 'Mento Mood'. As a cellist, I believe that a string quartet is like a close knit family, a touching conversation and an opportunity to explore a deeper connection between kindred souls. So in the spirit of community, I was reminded of the music that my paternal great-grandfather Jo made in the hills of Jamaica. He was a mento box player in a mento band. Mento is a style of Jamaican folk music that predates and greatly influenced ska and reggae music. It typically features acoustic instruments, such as acoustic guitar, banjo, hand drums, and the rhumba box (mentobox) which is a large mbira in the shape of a box that can be sat on while played. Inspired by his legacy, I wanted to create a piece of music that would evoke that sense of togetherness between the players. Like a soothing balm for the soul in what feels to me to be troubling times for the African diaspora community in the UK & US at present, where many of my family members now live.

**Hannah Kendall (U.K.)**

*Glances/I Don't Belong Here*

Composer notes:

*Glances/I Don't Belong Here* is inspired by the British-Guyanese artist Ingrid Pollard's *Pastoral Interludes*, a series of photographs in which her Black British subjects are posed in the Lake District, the epitome of rural Britain: exploring the notion of alienation and 'otherness' in such spaces. In a similar way, this collection of seven miniatures are musical snapshots of my most cherished non-urban settings, and the experiences that can accompany each visit to them.





Raymond Chapman Smith

*Stelae for String Quartet*

*In Memoriam W.G. Sebald*

*PSALM*

No one moulds us again out of earth and clay,  
no one conjures our dust.  
No one.

Praised be your name, no one.  
For your sake  
we shall flower.  
Towards  
you.

A nothing  
we were, are, shall  
remain, flowering:  
the nothing-, the  
No one's rose.

With  
our pistil soul-bright,  
with our stamen heaven-ravaged,  
our corolla red  
with the crimson word which we sang  
over, O over the thorn

*Paul Celan, 1963*

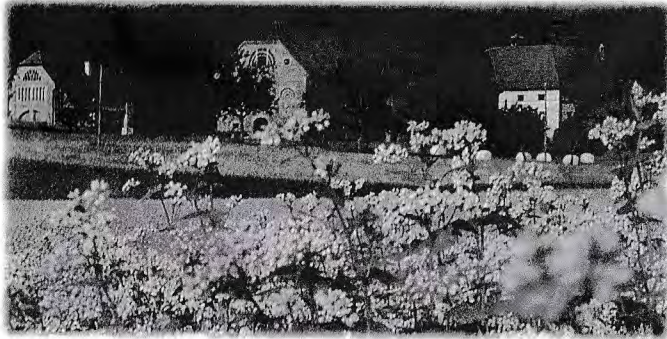


*W.G. Sebald*

**Anton Webern**

*Langsamer Satz*

The *Langsamer Satz* (Slow Movement) dates from 1905 and was said to have been inspired by a hiking holiday in the mountains outside of Vienna that Webern took with his soon to be fiancée and later wife. He intended to write an entire quartet but put it aside after completing this one movement.



**Arnold Schönberg** *Intermezzo*

This is the Intermezzo from Schönberg's Third String Quartet.



*Arnie (cello) with friends*

**Phillip Glass**

*Quartet Satz*

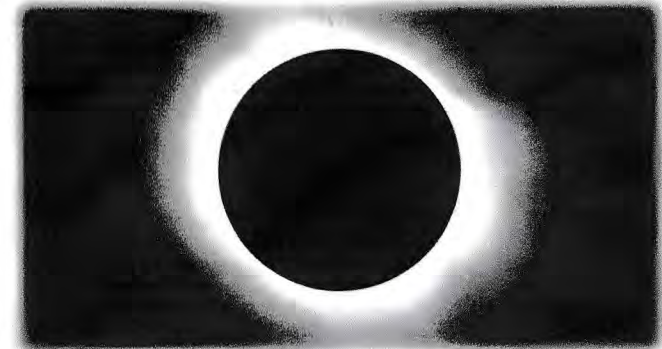
Philip Glass's *Quartet Satz* was commissioned as part of the Kronos Performing Arts Association's **Fifty for the Future: The Kronos Learning Repertoire**, which is made possible by a group of adventurous partners, including Carnegie Hall and many others.



*Phillip Glass*

**Belinda Gehlert** *Penumbra*  
*(Firm Commission)*

Penumbra, (from Latin paene, "almost"; umbra, "shadow"), in astronomy, the outer part of a conical shadow, cast by a celestial body, where the light from the Sun is partially blocked—as compared to the umbra (q.v.), the shadow's darkest, central part, where the light is totally excluded.



Patrons with a drinks-ticket are invited to join us after the concert for carefully served complimentary wines and a packet of hermetically sealed nibbles.

Please join our email list to be informed of all Firm events and concerts: send an email with 'subscribe' to:

[info@firmmusic.com.au](mailto:info@firmmusic.com.au)

**Next concert:**

**Karina Bailey and Yundi Yuan  
September 13<sup>th</sup>**

*Provided there are no Covid, um, complications!*

[www.firmmusic.com.au](http://www.firmmusic.com.au)

[www.facebook.com/FirmNewMusic](https://www.facebook.com/FirmNewMusic)

**the firm**

and

**Chamber Music Adelaide**

acknowledge the support of:

Ray Thomas

Arts SA

Adelaide Symphony Orchestra

State Opera of SA

Jeanette Sandford – Morgan

ABC Classic FM

5MBS

Radio Adelaide

Elder Hall

Martin Victory

All the Firm musicians

The Australia Council



