

## MEDIA KIT

### QUARTET AND COUNTRY

#### AUSTRALIAN STRING QUARTET, WILLIAM BARTON, LOU BENNETT, STEPHEN PIGRIM, ROMA WINMAR

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#### QUARTET AND COUNTRY

One of Australia's finest classical music ensembles collaborate with some Australia's best Indigenous performers. The Australian String Quartet bring a unique offering for the festival, performing a mini-cycle of the early Op. 18 String Quartets of Beethoven. For four years, the quartet have been working on *Quartet and Country* - a program of commissions from indigenous musicians that seeks to find common ground between Western Art Music and the Songlines of this country. To have the Quartet play the music of our country is a powerful gesture of togetherness. Elders of song Lou Bennett and Noongar woman Roma Winmar join the ASQ, with Australia's finest didgeridoo player, William Barton, and Broome music legend Stephen Pigram.

#### 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 flavour, the ASQ'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 ASQ's distinct sound is enhanced by a matched set of 18th century Guadagnini instruments, handcrafted by Giovanni Battista Guadagnini between c.1743 and 1784 in Turin and Piacenza, Italy. These precious instruments are on loan to the ASQ for their exclusive use through the generosity of UKARIA.

Six masterworks by Beethoven, Dutilleux, Dvorak, Janacek and Mozart, as well as two world premieres of new Australian music and a tour with acclaimed pianist Konstantin Shamray make up the ASQ's three major National Tours in 2020. Looking beyond, the Quartet's ground-breaking Close Quarters series continues with more compelling partnerships. It's regional festivals travel again to Dunkeld and Margaret River, and for the very first time, to the shire of Dungog in New South Wales. The ASQ is thrilled to join creative forces with Sydney Dance Company for a brand new work, and in the 250th year since the great composer's birth, Beethoven is celebrated with a series of special events across the country.

At home in South Australia, the ASQ continues its work as Quartet-in-Residence at the University of Adelaide's Elder Conservatorium of Music with projects including the annual ASQ Day at Elder, and performances as part of the Elder Hall Lunchtime Concert series, and Mornings at UKARIA will continue to bring the sounds of the string quartet to the beautiful landscape of the Adelaide Hills.

*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 Violincello, Piacenza 'Ngeringa'*

#### **DR LOU BENNETT AM**

Yorta Yorta Dja Dja Wurrung, Dr Lou Bennett AM is a former member of the internationally acclaimed trio Tiddas, and during her ten years with the band, Lou wrote a number of the group's signature songs. Lou's versatile work within the Arts industry over the past thirty years includes various roles as Performer, Songwriter, Musical and Artistic Director, Composer, Actor, Soundscape Designer and Academic. Lou was a member of the Black Arm Band and was an instrumental force in the company's transformative journey from being a one-off 'special project', into becoming an Indigenous performing Arts company.

Lou completed her PhD in October 2015 and her dissertation discusses the importance and relevance of Indigenous language retrieval, reclamation and regeneration through the medium of the Arts to enhance community health and wellbeing. In 2017, Lou was accepted as the McKenzie Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the University of Melbourne and was inducted onto the Victorian Women's Honour Roll in 2017. In 2019, Lou accepted the appointment as a member (AM) of the Order of Australia for her significant service to the performing arts, particularly to music, and the Indigenous community.

#### **WILLIAM BARTON**

Born in Mount Isa in Queensland, Australia, composer, multi-instrumentalist and vocalist William Barton has been playing the didgeridoo for over 25 years. He has forged an international profile in the classical musical world as a performer and composer, performing with the Philharmonic Orchestras of London and Berlin. William's unique talent has been featured at the 2008 Beijing Olympics, the 2018 opening ceremonies of the Commonwealth Games and the Invictus Games in Australia, and recently at Westminster Abbey for Her Majesty, The Queen of England for Commonwealth Day 2019.

William holds honorary doctorate degrees from the Universities of Griffith & Sydney and has released five albums on the ABC Classics label. His awards include Winner of Best Original Score for a Mainstage Production at the 2018 Sydney Theatre Awards and Winner of Best Classical Album with ARIA for Birdsong At Dusk in 2012. With his prodigious musicality and the quiet conviction of his Kalkadunga heritage, he has vastly expanded the horizons of the didgeridoo — and the culture and landscape that it represents.

*"He's one of the great virtuosos. It's a sound I had heard before, but never with that sort of technique. The possibilities are extraordinary. This is a great man. He radiates. You watch him and think, this is impressive."* - **Sir Simon Rattle, Artistic Director Berliner Philharmoniker**

*"Having had the privilege of working with all of Australia's elite musicians over such a long period of time, I have no hesitation in saying that William Barton is the only one who I consider to be a genuine musical genius"* - **Martin Buzacott, Presenter, ABC Classic FM**

#### **STEPHEN PIGRAM**

Stephen Pigram is an Australian musician and songwriter. He has been a member of Kuckles, Scrap

Metal and The Pigram Brothers. He worked with Alex Lloyd and Alan Pigram on the soundtrack of *Mad Bastards*, a film he coproduced with Brendan Fletcher, David Jowsey and Alan Pigram. He released a solo album, *Wanderer* in 2013.

Pigram was a member of Kuckles with Jimmy Chi. The band co created Chi's musicals *Bran Nue Dae* and *Corrugation Road*.

Along with his brothers Alan and Phillip, Pigram was a founding member of Scrap Metal. Together they toured nationally and released 4 albums before breaking up in 1995. Alan, Steven and Phillip then joined up with their brothers David, Colin, Gavin and Peter to form The Pigram Brothers. They were nominated for an ARIA Music Award in 2012 for Best World Music Album and have released four albums.

In 2006, along with Alan, he was inducted into the Western Australian Music Hall of Fame. He worked on the 2011 film *Mad Bastard*, coproducing with Brendan Fletcher, David Jowsey and Stephen Pigram. With Alex Lloyd and Stephen Pigram he created the music for the film and on the soundtrack album. He received many award nominations for the film. Two AACTA Award nominations, AFI Members' Choice Award and Best Film. An APRA Music Award nomination for Feature Film Score of the Year. An Inside Film Awards win for Inside Film Awards. An ARIA Music Award for Best Original Soundtrack, Cast or Show Album (with Lloyd and Alan Pigram).

#### ASQ

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