

## **Melbourne Digital Concert Hall**

Friday 23 October 2020 – 7.00pm (AEDT)

live-streamed

from Cell Block Theatre, National Art School

Sydney, Australia

## **Australian Romantic & Classical Orchestra**

Georgia Browne | Flute

Matthew Greco | Violin

Julia Russoniello | Violin

Karina Schmitz | Viola

Daniel Yeadon | Violoncello

Kirsty McCahon | Double Bass

Simon Martyn-Ellis | Theorbo

Special thanks to the Co-Directors of the Melbourne Digital Concert Hall, Chris Howlett and Adele Schonhardt, for their dedication and creative spirit in creating the Melbourne Digital Concert Hall to support the Australian arts industry during the COVID-19 crisis. Their mission is to provide a means for Australian artists to continue their profession and to connect communities around the country through live music.

# AUSTRALIAN ROMANTIC & CLASSICAL & ORCHESTRA

RICHARD GILL AO | FOUNDING ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

## Australian Romantic & Classical Orchestra

Inspire – Educate – Enlighten

The Australian Romantic & Classical Orchestra specialises in historically informed performance of late 18th- to early 20th-century orchestral and chamber music repertoire and is at the forefront of the historically informed performance scene, staying abreast with the latest research and developments around the world by collaborating with key guest musicians and musicologists. Under the co-artistic direction of Rachael Beesley and Nicole van Bruggen, the orchestra has been highly praised as “rich, impassioned, and faultlessly realised ... a thrilling example of HIP with all the right strings attached” (The Age, 2018).



Founded under the artistic direction of renowned musician and educator, the late Richard Gill AO, the orchestra's twin goals of performance and education are delivered through live concerts in Australia's capital cities and in metropolitan and regional centres, collaborations with guest ensembles, radio broadcasts, innovative education programs and pre-concert presentations, and specialist online resources. Bringing together leading Australian and international exponents, the Australian Romantic & Classical Orchestra brings historical insights and new perspectives to masterpieces from the Classical and Romantic periods.

In tandem with the main concert season, the Australian Romantic & Classical Orchestra presents two cornerstone education programs – *Voyage of Musical Discovery* and *Young Mannheim Symphonists*. For more information on the Australian Romantic & Classical Orchestra's educational activities, please visit [arco.org.au/education](http://arco.org.au/education).

## PROGRAM NOTES

**Carl Friedrich Abel** (1723–1787)

Flute Quartet in A major Op.12 No.2

*Un poco Allegro – Adagio ma non troppo – Tempo di Menuetto*

Having been raised in the Bach household in Leipzig and later securing a post in the prestigious Dresden court orchestra, Carl Friedrich Abel arrived in London with all the right credentials at exactly the right time. Handel's death that same year (1759) signalled a change of the guard. Abel, best known for his dazzling improvisations on the viola da gamba, was quickly championed as a performer, composer and teacher of the wealthy elite. Through these connections he was able to move into hosting his own concerts, establishing one of London's first subscription series in partnership with his childhood friend Johann Christian Bach. Both composers were sure to showcase their own compositions at these weekly gatherings and this Flute Quartet in A major from a set of six string quartets may well have featured on a programme. The sheet music, published in 1774, was most definitely aimed at the burgeoning market for domestic music making. An interchangeable violin/ flute part was a good way to sell more copies of your work especially to the many gentlemen of distinction who had taken up the ultra-fashionable flute.

**Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart** (1756–1791)

Flute Quartet in D major K.285

*Allegro – Adagio – Rondeau*

Just as today's musicians form an interconnected global community, our 18th century counterparts also travelled widely, promoting their work and forming important associations. The steady flow of performers visiting London enabled Abel to meet a very young Mozart who was on a tour of Europe with his father. Whilst in London, Mozart was also introduced to the celebrated Mannheim flautist Johann Baptiste Wendling who years later, arranged a lucrative commission for the composer. Ferdinand De Jean, a wealthy Dutch amateur flautist was willing to pay Mozart handsomely to write three short concertos and two quartets. While the Quartet in D major exudes joy and fizzes with creative energy it was not a happy exercise for Mozart. Whether it was the idea of writing for an amateur or the distractions he encountered at the Mannheim court, he never completed the commission and wrote some now infamous remarks about the flute in letters to his father.

## **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart**

String Quartet in C major K.157

*Allegro – Andante – Presto*

Between 1769 and 1773, Mozart made three journeys to Italy with his father, Leopold. The first trip lasted about 15 months, and was intended to advertise the young prodigy in the hope of gaining future employment. In that respect the trips were a success, with the two later journeys being undertaken so that Wolfgang could work on operas that had been commissioned for Milan's Teatro Regio Ducale.

This piece is one of the six Milanese Quartets (K.155-160) that Mozart wrote during this third trip to Italy, and clearly shows that it was opera – in this instance *Lucio Silla* – that was occupying his mind. Listen to the violins in the first movement and you will hear them playing parallel thirds and sixths, intervals common in vocal duets.

But far from an afterthought, or a piece tossed off while procrastinating from the task at hand, this quartet has moments of true innovation and excitement. Apart from the cleverness of the thirds and sixths, the opening movement possesses astonishing depth and pathos for a sixteen year-old, even one so gifted. And the third and final movement is a fascinating sonata-rondo hybrid – a rondo with features of sonata form – one of the earliest works to feature what would become a trademark technique of the Classical era. It ends with a brief but thrilling coda, featuring a crescendo – again, not an often-used technique at that time – that will bring you to your feet.

## **Carl Friedrich Abel**

Flute Concerto in G major No.5

*Allegro – Adagio – Presto*

Abel's set of six concertos for flute were probably composed before he arrived in England. They were never published during his lifetime but were mentioned in the Breitkopf catalogues of 1761 and 1763. His time working in the Dresden court orchestra, placed Abel in the company of some of Europe's leading instrumentalists, notably the flautists Buffardin and Quantz. The concerto in G major is written sympathetically for the 18th century flute - Abel was also known to play the flute, horn, cello and harpsichord - yet it provides more technical challenges and musical interest than many of the concertos written around this time. The concerto in G major sits squarely on the musical fence between a more complex, contrapuntal Baroque sound world and the emerging, melody-driven galant or early Classical style.

**The Australian Romantic & Classical Orchestra invites you to subscribe to their newsletter to stay up to date with the orchestra's touring programs and education projects.**

**[CLICK HERE TO SUBSCRIBE](#)**

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Australian Romantic & Classical Orchestra is supported through the COVID-19 pandemic by the City of Sydney's Cultural Resilience Fund.



Australian Romantic & Classical Orchestra's 2020 Concert Season is supported by the NSW Government through Create NSW.

