

Programmes | 2025/2026

Johannes Marmen | violin
Laia Valentin Braun | violin
Bryony Gibson-Cornish | viola
Sinéad O'Halloran | violoncello

Programme I: Classics

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) String Quartet in C major, K 465 *Dissonance*
Wilhelm Stenhammar (1871-1927) String Quartet No. 6 in D minor

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) String Quartet in F major Op. 135

This season's most classic programme, but with a twist. Swedish romantic composer Stenhammar may still be unknown to many, yet his 6th and final string quartet is undoubtedly a work of great integrity and striking natural beauty.

Programme II: Catharsis

Henry Purcell (1659-1695) Fantasias Nos. 6 & 7
Hannah Kendall (* 1984) *How ruin nested inside each thimble throat / & made it sing**
Béla Bartók (1881-1945) String Quartet No. 1 in A minor Op. 7, Sz 40

Henry Purcell (1659-1695) Fantasia No. 8
Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) String Quartet in F major No. 16 Op. 135

* Commissioned 2022 for the Marmen Quartet by the Australian National Academy of Music.
The piece includes auxiliary instruments like music boxes and harmonicas and is of highly atmospheric, unsettling and challenging music that commands a spell on the listener. Through a continuous narrative (with the option of forgoing applause between pieces), we journey from the dark intensity of Kendall via the spellbinding twilight zones of Purcell and Bartók to the prevailing light of Beethoven.

Programme III: Synthesis

Joseph Haydn (1732-1809) String Quartet in F major Op. 50 No. 5 Hob III:48 *The Dream*
Béla Bartók (1881-1945) String Quartet No. 2 Op. 17, Sz 67

Henry Purcell (1659-1695) Chacony in G minor
Claude Debussy (1862-1918) String Quartet in G minor Op. 10

In a colourful juxtaposition of musical languages, we present an art form that's incredibly diverse, yet ultimately unified in spirit across the centuries.

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Programme IV: Postcards

Henry Purcell (1659-1695)	Chacony in G minor (England)
Gareth Farr (*1968)	<i>Te Tai-O-Rehua</i> (New Zealand)
Wilhelm Stenhammar (1871-1927)	String Quartet No. 6 in D minor (Sweden)

Frank Martin (1890-1974)	String Quartet (Switzerland)
Garth Knox (*1956)	<i>Secret Letters*</i> (Ireland)

*Written for the Marmen Quartet in 2023

The Marmen Quartet is situated in London but it's members come from four different places in the world; Sweden, Switzerland, Ireland and New Zealand. In this programme, we present one piece from each country in a set of musical "postcards".

Garth Knox, violist of the Arditti Quartet and composer, took a "meta" approach to the relationship between music and letters by instructing the four members of the Marmen Quartet to each write him a secret letter, responding to a number of questions. These letters were destroyed after reading, their contents only surviving, disguised, as part of the composition.

With pianist Can Çakmur

Programme V: The Orient Express

César Franck (1822-1890)	Piano Quintet in F minor Op. 14 (Paris)
Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)	String Quartet in F major No. 16 Op. 135 (Vienna)

Béla Bartók (1881-1945)	String Quartet No. 3 in C sharp minor (Budapest)
Ulvi Cemal Erkin (1906-1972)	Piano Quintet (Istanbul)

Continuing the theme of geography and travel, here is an adventurous programme in collaboration with award winning Turkish pianist Can Çakmur. We follow the original route of the Orient Express, which extended from Paris in the west, to Istanbul in the east, when it began operation in 1883. Two of the stops along the way were Vienna and Budapest, where the definitions between west and east start to blur.

Collaborations

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)	Clarinet Quintet in B minor Op. 115
Franz Schubert (1797-1828)	String Quintet in C major D. 956
Ernest Chausson (1855-1899)	Concerto for violin, piano and string quartet in D major Op. 21