

BEETHOVEN OPUS 18

- six early string quartets

PART 2



String Quartet in A Major, Op.18 no.5

I Allegro

II Menuetto

III Andante cantabile

IV Allegro

String Quartet in C minor, Op.18 no.4

I Allegro ma non tanto

II Andante scherzoso quasi Allegretto

III Menuetto: Allegro

IV Allegretto

interval

String Quartet in B Flat Major, Op.18 no.6

I Allegro ma non tanto

II Andante scherzoso quasi Allegretto

III Menuetto: Allegro

IV Allegretto

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

The chance to tour all six of Beethoven's Opus 18 string quartets is an exciting and unusual programming opportunity. Composed between 1798-1800, Beethoven's first foray into string quartets is undoubtedly inspired by Haydn and Mozart's mastering of this form. What's fascinating about the Opus 18 quartets is discovering in them Beethoven's idiosyncratic musical ideas and the emotional depth and range that would characterise his quartets for decades to come. Beethoven's conveying of human expression on a vast and rich spectrum is deeply compelling. It seems the string quartet is the perfect vehicle for Beethoven's vision of a fellowship of humanity, which he unfolds in the most intimate of dialogues.

Affinity Quartet

Seonhye Song, violin

Nicholas Waters, violin

Isabella Bignasca, guest viola

Mee Na Lojewski, cello

Melbourne-based Affinity Quartet earns its place as one of the most outstanding and awarded string quartets of its generation. At the 2023 Melbourne International String Quartet Competition Affinity was awarded the top three prizes - the Monash University Grand Prize, the Robert Salzer String Quartet First Prize, and the Audience Prize – becoming the first Australian ensemble to win the competition in its 32-year history. This milestone followed Second Prize awards at the Bad Tölz International String Quartet Competition (Germany) and the Mozart International String Quartet Competition (Austria). At the latter, Affinity Quartet was also awarded the Special Prize for Best Interpretation of a Contemporary Work for their performance of Brett Dean's String Quartet no.3 'Hidden Agendas'. In 2022 Affinity Quartet became the first Australian string quartet to reach the Finals of London's Wigmore Hall International String Quartet Competition, winning Third Prize.

Committed to accessibility and renewal in the string quartet form, Affinity celebrates its 10 year anniversary in 2025. Their public programs have become synonymous with excellence in Australian chamber music, earning praise for 'captivating playing' (Süddeutsche Zeitung), 'flawless ensemble' (Limelight Magazine), 'highly committed' (The Age), and 'first class string playing' (Classic Melbourne). Affinity Quartet performs and commissions new Australian works for string quartet. Première performances include works by Australian composers Brett Dean, Darrin Archer, Matt Laing, Tom Misson, Lee Bradshaw, and Sally Beamish (UK). Affinity's 2024/25 Season includes premières by Alice Chance (AU), Heloise Werner (France), Alexandra Vrebalov (Serbia), Nicole Lizee (Canada) and Fode Lassana Diabate (Mali). Since 2023 Affinity Quartet has received professional mentorship from Günter Pichler (Alban Berg Quartet) during annual training residencies at The International Institute of Chamber Music, Madrid, which include live-streamed concerts in Spain.

Support Affinity Quartet

Founded in 2015, Affinity Quartet is proud of the enduring relationships we have built in the Australian community as we continue to make this art form accessible and inspiring to the next generations. In recognition of our work on behalf of Australian chamber music both here and overseas, AQ Inc. is now acknowledged as an Australian charitable organisation and can receive direct tax-deductible donations. Affinity's full-time, internationally active program promotes the string quartet as a living, collaborative medium. We endeavour to create intimate, unique concert experiences for Australian audiences, to nurture the next generation of musicians through inaugural mentorship programs, and to enrich diverse cultural connections through touring. Your support plays a big part in helping us do this. Every donation over \$5 is tax-deductible.

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