

THE ACACIA BLOOMS GRACEFULLY IN YASS

In the fourth concert of its 2017 series, the Yass Music Club was delighted to present the ACACIA QUARTET in the Yass Memorial Hall on Sunday, 13th August.

It was the RAG Holmes Tribute Concert, which recognised the foundation of the Music Club sixty four years ago in 1953 and it was an exciting occasion which honoured RAG and celebrated it with glorious music beautifully played by the group, which comprised Lisa Stewart and Myee Clohessy with their violins, Stefan Duwe on viola and Anna Martin-Scrase with her cello.

The program was a well balanced one and it began with six short pieces from the leading modern Australian composer, Elena Kats-Chernin's 'From Anna Magdalena's Notebook' (after JS Bach), with a range and variety of selections which gave ample scope for the quartet to involve the audience in the beauty and complexity of Kats-Chernin's music.

The second piece was from the classical era with Joseph Haydn's String Quartet No. 77/1 and again the group revelled in the brilliance of Haydn's 'late', and ever fresh and wonderfully innovative, music and the dialogue among the players was quite stunning and one felt privileged to be able to hear such playing.

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Franz Schubert's poignantly beautiful String Quartet No. 13 Opus 29 D804 'Rosamunde' occupied the second half of the program and we were again entranced by the sight of a superb group in concert together to give us a rare musical experience of some of the most beautiful music for the string quartet from the pantheon of the genre.

Again we marvelled at the unerring dialogue of the musicians as they responded to each other in this quartet, which began with such longing and foreboding as well as such sadness and hope and evolved, through a display of skill from all the players, through a whole gamut of moods leaving the glorious tranquillity of the second 'Rosamunde' movement forever in our musical experience. From this movement we were led through pathos and soberness to the delightfully cheerful last movement, as a rustic folk dance, with Schubert cutting through the gloom to leave us on an optimistic note.

The Quartet played 'Harbour light' by Nick Wales as an encore with its wonderful sense of pace and drama. Wales originally wrote it for string ensemble but, at after nagging from the Acacia Quartet, adapted it here for four voices. Their instincts were good and the lush and complex string textures were still there when the music most needed it with the individual gestures shining out and it was a fitting finale for a most memorable performance from the very gifted Acacia Quartet.

Brian Millett