

In Your Neighbourhood

VIVA VIOLA!

6.30pm, Tuesday 8 October
All Saints Church, Howick

Beethoven *Duet with Two Obligato Eyeglasses*

I. Allegro

Dohnányi *Serenade*

I. Marcia: Allegro

II. Romanza: Adagio non troppo

III. Scherzo: Vivace

IV. Tema con variazioni: Andante con moto

V. Finale: Rondo

Bowen *Fantasia for Four Violas*

Featuring Julie Park, Associate Principal Viola

Violin Minglun Liu

Viola Robert Ashworth

Viola Christine Bowie

Viola Benjamin Harrison

Cello Martin Roberts

Programme Notes

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) *Duet with Two Obligato Eyeglasses*

Beethoven's 'Eyeglass Duo' is a charming and light-hearted piece written around 1796, likely for a private performance among friends. The work is so-named because it was humorously dedicated to Beethoven's close friend and fellow musician, cellist- Baron Nikolaus Zmeskall, who wore glasses. Beethoven was a viola player himself, so it is highly likely that he intended them to play the duet together.

This piece is one of only a handful of chamber works for viola and cello and features delightful interplay between the two instruments. Although not as well-known as Beethoven's later works, it provides a delightful glimpse into his early compositional style, characterised by both humour and elegance.

Ernst von Dohnányi (1877-1960) *Serenade*

Hungarian composer Ernst von Dohnányi's Serenade in C Major for string trio reflects early Romantic influences while hinting at his future individual style. Composed in 1902, the piece is structured in five short movements and showcases Dohnányi's remarkable grasp of counterpoint, melody, and form.

This work is a testament to Dohnányi's deep understanding of chamber music, and its charm and complexity make it a standout piece in the early 20th-century chamber repertoire.

York Bowen (1884-1961) *Fantasia for Four Violas*

Written in 1907, Bowen's Fantasia for Four Violas is a unique and richly textured work that showcases the full expressive range of the viola. Bowen, often referred to as the 'English Rachmaninoff' for his lush harmonies and romantic style, dedicated this piece to Lionel Tertis, one of the most celebrated violists of the 20th century.

The Fantasia is structured as a single, continuous movement, exploring intricate counterpoint and rich harmonies to create a tapestry of sound both intimate and expansive.

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