

YOUR DIGITAL PROGRAM / TEXT ONLY VERSION

# Goldner String Quartet: The 2020s

**16 March 2024**

**Adelaide Town Hall**

**Duration:** 1hr, no interval

**Note:** Latecomers will be admitted at a suitable break in the performance.

---

## Credits

**Dene Olding**, violin

**Dimity Hall**, violin

**Irina Morozova**, viola

**Julian Smiles**, cello

## Program

**Harry Sdraulig**

Quartet No.1 (2020)

**Christine Pan**

*Chronicles of the Ego* (2020)

**Pēteris Vasks**

String Quartet No.6 (2020)\*

*\*Australian Premiere*

## INTERVAL

**30 Australian Composers  
(below)**

*The Goldner Variations* (2020+)

Beethoven's Theme Ode to Joy

Joe Chindamo

Audrey Ormella

Maria Grenfell

Clare Strong

John Peterson

Paul Dean

Robert Davidson

Andrew Schultz

Mark Isaacs

Matthew Hindson

Olivia Diamant

Andrew Ford

Hayden Gardiner

Adriel Sukumar

Ross Edwards

Harry Sdraulig

Nigel Westlake

Liza Lim

Iain Grandage

Paul Stanhope

Jakub Jankowski

Brett Dean

Tim Jayatilaka

Elena Kats-Chernin

Elizabeth Younan

Paul Grabowsky

Nicole Murphy

Holly Harrison

Natalie Williams

Carl Vine

---

## Introduction

*The Goldner String Quartet play three concerts at Adelaide Festival as part of their 30th and final season.*

### PROGRAM 1: THE 2000S

When we appeared at the Adelaide Festival in 2000, it seemed logical to perform a retrospective look at great quartets from the 20th Century. Hence, our epic project to play 10 concerts - each devoted to a decade of that amazing century.

We would like to bring this project up to date with quartet music from the first three decades of this century. This time, the emphasis is on offerings from important Australian composers. As 2024 will be our 30th and final season as the Goldner String Quartet, we have chosen some of our favourites, including many that were written for us. In this opening concert, you will hear the uplifting sounds of our friends Nigel Westlake, Ross Edwards, Elena Kats-Chernin and Carl Vine.

### PROGRAM 2: THE 2010S

As we move into the second decade of this century, we see music often used as a medium for conveying important messages about nature, indigenous affairs and the emergence of more young women composers. In addition to Australian composers Peter Sculthorpe, Ella Macens, Paul

Stanhope and Matthew Hindson, we honour our Kiwi cousins and present a wonderful work from 'across the ditch' by Gareth Farr which perfectly follows this Nature theme.

### PROGRAM 3: THE 2020S

Of course, this decade is far from over, but we already have a number of significant works to add to the repertoire including those by rising Australian stars Harry Sdraulig and Christine Pan which begin the concert. We follow this with a special treat, performing the Australian Premiere of the latest quartet from the great Latvian composer, Pēteris Vasks. A composer with great emotional depth and humanity whose music is also closely connected to his natural environment, Vasks' most recent quartet is written from the heart in a passionate and meditative style incorporating choral sounds and folk elements.

In 2020, to celebrate our 25th anniversary as a quartet, the Australian Festival of Chamber Music commissioned 25 wonderful Australian composers of our choice to each write a short variation on Beethoven's theme *Ode to Joy*. For this 30th Season, we have selected five new additions, as a result of a competition for composition students at the Sydney Conservatorium, giving us a view into the future. We can think of no better way to showcase the depth and variety of Australia's musical life than to perform these Goldner Variations to celebrate our 30th and final season.

---

## Program Notes

### HARRY SDRAULIG

#### Quartet No.1 (2020)

For a young composer such as myself, there is a peculiar weight of history and baggage that comes with titling a new composition 'string quartet' – more so than with any other genre of chamber music. To do so is to invite your contribution to the medium to be judged structurally and creatively alongside all of the great string quartet cycles of composers past and present. I undoubtedly approached the task of writing my first (of hopefully many) with a seriousness that reflects the extent of this challenge.

Though conceived in three movements, all are closely connected to one another – they share similar points of departure and return but take differing journeys through the primary material from which all of the music is sourced: a 'distorted' sonority on C. Begun in June 2020, most progress towards completion of the work was made over the autumn of 2021.

The first movement is in a single flowing tempo, beginning with a whispery *con sordino* outline of the sonority which weaves and oscillates against a syncopated yet lyrical viola melody. A more energetic 'double tempo' feel emerges for the

movement's climax before the music recedes back into the mysterious atmosphere of the beginning.

The second movement, a brief and lively scherzo, makes for a more jovial (though at times acerbic) interlude. Its structural simplicity belies the considerable technical challenges it presents for the players, with plentiful use of tight syncopations and hemiola patterns in both the melodic and accompanying material. Like the first movement it finishes surreptitiously, paving the way for the weightiest movement of the three: the finale.

The final movement reworks the sonority on C into progressively more translucent harmonies. It is the expressive heart of the work, assimilating the relatively introspective journey of the first two movements into a more outward display of feeling. There are, nevertheless, considerable moments of stasis and reflection, and the work's ending is as quiet and introspective as its beginning.

*This work was jointly commissioned by Port Fairy Spring Music Festival and ABC Classic for the Goldner String Quartet as part of the ABC Fresh Start Fund.*

– Harry Sdraulig

## CHRISTINE PAN

### ***Chronicles of the Ego (2020)***

*Chronicles of the Ego* explores how the mental construct of the 'self' perceives and interacts with the external world. A strong ego can help achieve our goals but when we experience insecurity, self-doubt or anger, the ego can project a false sense of truth. The main motif materialises slowly; imitating how the ego can accidentally create a tunnel vision of reality. Imagining the monologue in your head as a radio broadcast, something that you can either believe or not, will free you from negativity and allow you to see the many different truths and ways of thinking that exist in the world.

– Christine Pan

## PĒTERIS VASKS

### **String Quartet No.6 (2020)\***

*\*Australian Premiere*

In his music, Pēteris Vasks tells about the basic things – the battle between the darkness and the light, the reflections of nature in the art of sound, echoes of bird songs beloved by the composer, moments of catharsis, the fate of our nation and all humankind with a stamp of the past, the chaos of the present and hope of the future.

Commissioned to mark the 250th birthday anniversary of Ludwig van Beethoven, Vasks' Quartet No.6 is like an autobiographical look back at the life experiences by the great Viennese composer; its four movements speak of farewells, looking back, leaving and new encounters – including with Beethoven's own unworldly music. Vasks' final movement quotes sections of Beethoven's *Heilige Dankgesang* (the slow movement of his Quartet Op.132) which offers thanks to the deity for recovery after a long illness.

The creative spirit of Vasks speaks in a language of surmised lightness, ecstatic light, resigned peace, nervous excitement and blatant tragedy. A major source of inspiration for Vasks is nature – especially the voices of birds, the forest, starry skies and the sea – together with the musical tradition of his native Latvia.

## 30 AUSTRALIAN COMPOSERS

### ***The Goldner Variations (2020+)***

Beethoven's Theme Ode to Joy

In 2020, to celebrate the Goldner String Quartet's 25th anniversary, the Australian Festival of Chamber Music (where we have been Quartet in Residence for many years) commissioned 25 wonderful Australian composers of our choice, to each write a short variation on Beethoven's theme Ode to Joy, from his Symphony No.9. For this 30th Season, we have selected five new additions, as the result of a competition for composition students at the Sydney Conservatorium, giving us a view into the future.

The 30 variations represent a wonderful snapshot of Australian composition and we are thrilled with the variety and clever re-imaginings of Beethoven's theme. We can think of no better way to showcase the depth and breadth of Australia's musical life than to perform these Goldner Variations to celebrate our 30th and final season.

– Goldner String Quartet

## About Goldner String Quartet

Celebrating its 30th Concert Season in 2024, the Goldner String Quartet has long-standing recognition as not only Australia's pre-eminent string quartet, but as an ensemble of international significance.

The Quartet is named after Richard Goldner, founder of Musica Viva Australia. Launched in 1995 and still retaining all founding members, the musicians are well known to Australian and international audiences through their performances and recordings and for their concurrent membership of the Australia Ensemble at UNSW. All members have occupied principal positions in organisations such as the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and Australian Chamber Orchestra. They have toured extensively in Australia and internationally.

Special projects have included a major 20th-Century retrospective, and the complete Beethoven String Quartet Cycle. The Quartet's appearances in the 2011 City of London Festival drew capacity audiences and unanimous praise from UK critics, and were broadcast on the BBC. Other Goldner projects have included a DVD

documentary entitled *The Quartets*, recorded live with renowned Australian composer Peter Sculthorpe in 2012 (released by ABC Classics), and an international project in celebration of Sydney's Sister Cities.

The Goldner's live recordings of the complete Beethoven String Quartet cycle released on ABC Classics, won the 2009 Limelight Award for Best Classical Recording. The Quartet has numerous well-reviewed recordings for prestigious UK label Hyperion, the complete quartets of Szymanowski and Stravinsky on Naxos, and the complete quartets of Carl Vine on ABC Classics.

Strongly committed to encouraging the next generation of string quartets, the Goldners have mentored young ensembles through programs of the Australian Youth Orchestra, Musica Viva Australia, the Australian National Academy of Music, the Sydney Conservatorium, and AFCM Townsville.

New works have been regularly commissioned for the Goldners from many of Australia's leading composers.

---

## Biographies

### DENE OLDING

#### Violin

Dene Olding is recognised as one of Australia's most outstanding violinists. He is currently first violinist for the Goldner String Quartet and the Australia Ensemble (resident at the University of New South Wales) and Concertmaster Emeritus of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra.

As a soloist he has worked with all of the Australian Symphony and Chamber Orchestras in a range of repertoire. He has performed over forty concertos and worked with some of the world's leading conductors including Edo de Waart, Stanislaw Skrowaczewski, Jukka-Pekka Saraste, Stuart Challender, Sir Charles Mackerras, Jorge Mester, Gunther Herbig, Werner Andreas Albert, David Porcelijn and Vladimir Ashkenazy. He gave the Australian premiere performance of Lutoslawski's Chain 2 with the composer conducting, Elliott Carter's Violin Concerto and the Violin Concerto

of Philip Glass. In addition, he has performed world premieres of violin concertos by Carl Vine, Ross Edwards, Bozidar Kos and the Double Concerto for violin and viola by Richard Mills, written for himself and his wife, Irina Morozova.

Dene has also held the position of Leader and Director of the Australian Chamber Orchestra and is often sought after to lead/direct concerts with many other orchestras. He has also been the Artistic Director of the Mostly Mozart Festival at the Sydney Opera House, Music in the Hunter and the Sydney Festival Chamber Music Program. He appears regularly at the Australian Festival of Chamber Music and at many festivals in Australasia and Europe. In 2010 he appeared at the Edinburgh Festival as soloist with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and conductor, Vladimir Ashkenazy.

Dene attended the Juilliard School In New York from the age of fourteen as a scholarship student of Ivan Galamian and Margaret Pardee.

He graduated in 1978 with the Master of Music Degree and was awarded the Morris Loeb Prize. Other studies included master classes with Nathan Milstein and further lessons with Herman Krebbers and Gyorgy Pauk. In 1985, he was awarded the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust Fellowship to further his musical studies and during that year, became a Laureate of the Queen Elisabeth of Belgium International Violin Competition.

Solo recordings include a sonata disc of Brahms, Beethoven and Mozart for ABC Classics with his father, Max Olding, the CD premiere of concertos by Frank Martin and Milhaud and concertos by Samuel Barber and Ross Edwards (Maninyas) – winner of the 1994 A.R.I.A. award for “Best Classical Recording” and the prestigious Cannes award. He has also recorded the Hindemith violin concerti with the Queensland Symphony Orchestra under Werner Andreas Albert for CPO. His numerous chamber music CD’s have also received acclaim. The recordings of the chamber music of Edward Elgar with the Goldner Quartet and pianist Piers Lane for the Hyperion label was selected as Gramophone magazine’s “Record of the Month” and spent time on the “Classical top 10” in the UK. Beethoven’s complete string quartets with the Goldner quartet for ABC Classics was chosen Classical album of the year by Limelight magazine and his recording of rare Rachmaninov violin works with pianist Vladimir Ashkenazy also received praise from The Strad magazine.

In 2011, he gave the premiere performance of the Carl Vine violin concerto with the Australian Youth Orchestra at the Sydney Opera House.

As a founding member of the Goldner String Quartet and the Australia Ensemble, he regularly tours to Europe, Asia and New Zealand. He has been awarded the Centenary Medal of Australia, a Member of the Order of Australia and has received numerous awards and accolades for his performances in all spheres of music-making. Dene is passionate about the future of classical music and sees his former role as Artistic Adviser and frequent jury member for the Michael Hill International Violin Competition as making an important contribution to that end. He manages to combine a passion for Aikido and sailing with his busy musical career and spending time with his wife, Irina and son, Nikolai.

## DIMITY HALL

### Violin

Dimity Hall is well known to national and international audiences as a member of both the Goldner String Quartet and the Australia Ensemble@UNSW with whom she has performed, toured and recorded extensively, to critical acclaim.

Dimity made her solo debut with the Sydney Symphony in 2002 performing Vaughan Williams’ *The Lark Ascending*, later recording the work for ABC Classics. Her recording remains one of the most frequently broadcast versions in Australia. She has also been soloist with the Australian Chamber Orchestra, Canberra Symphony Orchestra and Brisbane’s Camerata, amongst others.

After studying with Alice Waten in Sydney, Dimity undertook postgraduate studies with Herman Krebbers in Amsterdam on a Netherlands Government Scholarship, where she won the Concertgebouw’s coveted *Zilveren Vriendenkrans* Award for young soloists. She performed in recitals and as a casual member of the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra for concert tours and recordings.

Formerly Principal Second Violin of the Australian Chamber Orchestra, she has also appeared with them as guest Leader and with the Sydney Symphony as guest Principal. Dimity has performed as a member of the Australian World Orchestra and as guest Concertmaster for the Australian Opera, the Adelaide and Melbourne Symphony Orchestras.

Dimity was a juror for the 2003 Melbourne International Chamber Music Competition, and has coached young chamber musicians for Musica Viva, the Sydney Conservatorium, ANAM and the Australian Youth Orchestra. From 2008-2016 Dimity combined with semi-finalists in their chamber music performances as part of the Sydney International Piano Competition. In 2017 she, together with husband Julian Smiles, performed for James Crabb’s ‘Ukaria 24’ festival where they also worked alongside the AYO Momentum ensemble. In 2019, Dimity and Julian were resident artists for the Queensland Conservatorium’s Side by Side program: coaching individual string players, chamber music ensembles and leading a chamber orchestra of staff and students.

Regular festival appearances include the Australian Festival of Chamber Music, Huntington Estate

Music Festival, Musica Viva Festival, and Music in the Hunter, to name just a few. Recent solo performances include the Brahms Double Concerto (with Julian Smiles) and the Beethoven Triple Concerto (together with Julian and pianist Piers Lane) with orchestras in Canberra and Sydney.

Dimity plays a Nicolo Gagliano violin, kindly on long-term loan from the Olding family.

## **IRINA MOROZOVA**

### **Viola**

In a long and distinguished career, Irina Morozova, one of Australia's leading violists, has been principal viola of the Australian Chamber Orchestra, the Australian Opera and Ballet Orchestra and guest principal of the Sydney Symphony and Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestras. She is a foundation and current member of both the Australia Ensemble @UNSW and the Goldner String Quartet. With these two groups she has performed in nearly 30 countries around the world and has recorded extensively – particularly for the Hyperion Label in the UK and for Tall Poppies and ABC Classics in Australia.

After studies with Richard Goldner and Robert Pikler at the NSW State Conservatorium of Music, she undertook advanced studies and work in Europe and the USA before returning to Australia. She has regularly appeared as a soloist with major Australian and New Zealand orchestras. A member of distinguished chamber music juries, she presided on the juries of the Shostakovich International String Quartet Competition in St Petersburg, Russia, the Melbourne International Chamber Music Competition and was invited to perform and adjudicate at the Lionel Tertis International Viola Competition on the Isle of Man.

Irina often tutors chamber music for the Australian National Academy of Music and the Australian Youth Orchestra and was involved in the establishment of the Huntington Ensemble Challenge which encourages and provides tutoring for music students in country areas (initially around Mudgee) to play chamber music.

She is married to violinist Dene Olding, Concertmaster Emeritus of the Sydney Symphony and also a member of the Australia Ensemble and Goldner String Quartet. They have frequently performed as soloists together and premiered the double concerto written for them by Richard Mills. They live in Sydney with their son, Nikolai.

Irina plays a viola made for Richard Goldner by A.E. Smith of Sydney in 1947.

## **JULIAN SMILES**

### **Cello**

Julian Smiles has for over 30 years been a central figure in cello performance and teaching in Australia. On graduating from the Canberra School of Music at the age of nineteen he was appointed principal cellist with the Australian Chamber Orchestra and rapidly gained prominence as a chamber musician in performances for Musica Viva Australia, Kathryn Selby and Friends and at the Huntington Estate Music Festival.

In 1991 he was invited to join the Australia Ensemble@UNSW, and in 1995 formed the Goldner String Quartet with colleagues Dene Olding, Dimity Hall and Irina Morozova. With these two chamber groups he has performed to critical acclaim at major venues and festivals throughout the world, made over 30 CDs on leading labels, and premiered many works by Australian and international composers.

Julian's appearances at festivals over the years have included artistic collaborations with musicians such as Piers Lane, Tasmin Little, Edgar Meyer, Alexander Sitkovetsky, Amy Dickson and James Crabb. He has also been engaged as a collaborative artist in the chamber music round of the Sydney International Piano Competition of Australia on numerous occasions.

Julian is active as a soloist with numerous concerto appearances. During 2018 Julian's high standing as a performer was recognised by the Canberra Symphony Orchestra, as their inaugural "Artist in Focus". In this role he performed recitals and appeared as soloist with his wife Dimity Hall and pianist Piers Lane in performances of the Beethoven Triple Concerto. He has also premiered works for solo cello by eminent Australian composers such as Carl Vine and Mark Isaacs.

Julian has appeared frequently as guest principal cello with orchestras including the Sydney Symphony, Tasmanian Symphony, and Australian Opera and Ballet, and over the last few years has performed frequently as guest principal with the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra. He is also an ongoing member of the Australian World Orchestra.

Having studied with Nelson Cooke and renowned cellist and teacher Janos Starker, Julian has developed a school of cello playing based on

thorough and ongoing analysis of musical and technical issues that sees him sought after as a teacher and chamber music coach. He has held teaching positions at the Australian Institute of Music and Canberra School of Music, and is currently Senior Lecturer in Cello at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music.

An alumnus of the Australian Youth Orchestra, having toured Europe as their principal cellist on their Bicentennial Tour in 1988, Julian has remained committed to coaching young musicians in the orchestral and chamber music programs of that organisation. He has also worked with students of the Australian National Academy of Music and in 2019 he and Dimity curated a "Side by Side" project of mentoring and performances at the Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University.

He has also served as a juror for a number of major competitions, including the Melbourne International Chamber Music Competition in 2007 and the Gisborne International Music Competition in 2019.

When not performing or teaching Julian enjoys playing with his dogs and body surfing with his son Alex on beaches on the south coast of New South Wales.

Julian plays on an 1827 Lorenzo Ventapane cello.