



JACK LIEBECK

With AYO Momentum Ensemble

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS arr. Johnson *The Lark Ascending*

Frederick Septimus KELLY *Elegy for String Orchestra:
In Memoriam Rupert Brooke*

Richard MEALE *Cantilena Pacifica*

RAVEL arr. Barshai *String Quartet in F*

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ENSEMBLE

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A background of vibrant, multi-colored lines (red, blue, green, yellow, purple) that swirl and flow across a black field, resembling digital data or musical notes.

Welcome

Welcome to this special collaboration between AYO's Momentum Ensemble and the incredible concert violinist Jack Liebeck. Bearing witness to this meeting of exceptional talent, artistic sensibility and youthful optimism is particularly poignant on this day of Remembrance.

On one hand, we celebrate truth, hope and beauty as is found in the innocence of youth and the song of the skylark. On the other hand, we mourn with deep sorrow the loss of life, potential and sacrifice brought about through human violence and conflict.

This dichotomy of the human spirit is presented so touchingly in the choice of today's repertoire, curated by Jack Liebeck and performed in an environment where nature is both magnificent and scarred. Our art calls us to reflect on our capacity to be both destroyers and creators; an inherent tension as resonant today as when world events first inspired the composition of these pieces.

Kimballi Harding, CEO

Australian Youth Orchestra acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which Momentum Ensemble have rehearsed and performed during this program. We pay our respects to Elders, past and present, and recognise and respect their enduring connection to land, waters and culture.

Saturday 11 November
5.00pm AEDT

Spring Bay Mill, Triabunna
Tasmania

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS arr. Johnson *The Lark Ascending*

Richard MEALE *Cantilena Pacifica*

Frederick Septimus KELLY *Elegy for String Orchestra:
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RAVEL arr. Barshai *String Quartet in F*

Momentum Ensemble

Violin 1

Jack Liebeck *Director*
Miriam Niessl
Jessica Li
Donica Tran

Violin 2

Catherine Jang *Principal*
Theonie Wang
Ian Chiao
Emily Ampt

Viola

Sophie Nickel *Principal*
Ella Beard
Ella Pysden
Sarah Zhu

Cello

Hamish Jamieson *Principal*
Erna Lai
Daniel Chiou

Double Bass

Hamish Gullick *Principal*
Rio Kawaguchi

Harp

Paul Nicolaou

Percussion

Leah Columbine

Jack Liebeck



British/German violinist, director and festival director Jack Liebeck, possesses “flawless technical mastery” and a “beguiling silvery tone” (BBC Music Magazine). Jack has been named as the Royal Academy of Music’s first Émile Sauret Professor of Violin and as the new Artistic Director of the Australian Festival of Chamber Music from 2022. Jack’s playing embraces the worlds of elegant chamber-chic Mozart through to the impassioned mastery required to frame Brett Dean *The Lost Art of Letter Writing*. His fascination with all things scientific has included performing the world premiere of Dario Marianelli’s *Voyager Violin Concerto* and led to his most recent collaboration, *A Brief History of Time*, with Professor Brian Cox and Benjamin Northey. This new violin concerto was commissioned for Jack by Melbourne Symphony Orchestra from regular collaborator and composer Paul Dean, and is written in commemoration of Professor Stephen Hawking; *A Brief History of Time* received its world premiere in November 2019.

In the 25 years since his debut with the Hallé, Jack has worked with major international conductors and orchestras including Andrew Litton, Leonard Slatkin, Karl-Heinz Steffens, Sir Mark Elder, Sakari Oramo, Vasily Petrenko, Brett Dean (Royal Stockholm Philharmonic), Daniel Harding (Swedish Radio), Jukka Pekka Saraste (Oslo Philharmonic), David Robertson (St Louis Symphony), Jakub Hrůša and many orchestras across the world including Belgian National, Queensland Symphony, Moscow State Symphony, Orquesta Sinfónica de Galicia, Indianapolis Symphony and all of UK orchestras. Upcoming orchestral appearances include Philharmonia with Santtu-Matias Rouvali (Bruch Scottish Fantasy), BBC National Orchestra of Wales with Jac Van Steen (Arvo Pärt Fratres), Staatsorchester Rheinische Philharmonie (Strauss Violin Concerto op. 8), Uppsala with Rebecca Miller (Britten Violin Concerto) and Opera North with David Greed (Bach Double Concerto). Recital touring includes performances across Europe, USA and Australasia for festivals and venues such as Wigmore Hall, Sydney International Piano Competition, and Leeds International Piano Competition.

Jack has been the Artistic Director of the Australian Festival of Chamber Music (AFCM) since 2022. He is also the artistic director of his own festivals Oxford May Music, where programming is centred around themes of music, science and the arts and also Alpine Classic in Grindelwald, Switzerland. As the first Émile Sauret Professor of Violin at the Royal Academy of Music he works as an ambassador helping to recruit future talent both at home and internationally as well as nurturing the next generation of violinists in his class. Jack has a developing relationship with digital teaching app NomadPlay, a unique opportunity for individuals to play alongside renowned musicians and orchestras. He has written and curated pieces for Strad Magazine, guest edited Classical Music Magazine, and presented BBC Radio 3's Inside Music. Jack is also a member of the Salieca Piano Trio and directs his own ensemble of regular collaborators, 'Jack Liebeck and Friends'.



The Lark Ascending



The Lark Ascending is a poem by the English poet George Meredith reminiscing about the song of the skylark.

Ralph Vaughan Williams was inspired to write a Romance of the same name for violin and piano in 1914. The first performance of the work was in 1920 and the composer scored the work for violin and orchestra that was premiered in 1921. Vaughan Williams inscribed selected non-consecutive lines from the poem on the score. He included the opening and concluding lines:

“He rises and begins to round,
He drops the silver chain of sound,
Of many links without a break,
In chirrup, whistle, slur and shake....
For singing till his heaven fills,
'Tis love of earth that he instils,
And ever winging up and up,
Our valley is his golden cup
And he the wine which overflows
to lift us with him as he goes....
Till lost on his aërial rings in light,
and then the fancy sings.”

The work is a remarkable evocation of the English landscape.

Vaughan Williams dedicated the composition to the violinist Marie Hall who premiered the work. It was written between A London Symphony (No. 2) and the Pastoral Symphony (No. 3). The Lark Ascending is arguably Vaughan Williams most enduring and popular composition.

Cantilena Pacifica

Cantilena Pacifica, which is frequently performed today as a standalone work for violin and strings, originated as the final movement of Richard Meale's second string quartet. The quartet emerged out of a dilemma for the composer – that his devotion to hard-edged modernism had begun to overshadow honest artistic expression.

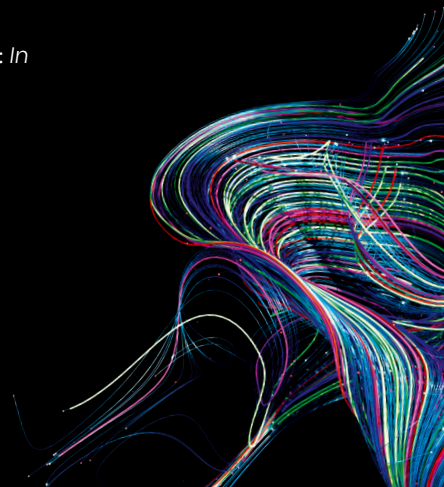
“The problem that I was encountering was brought to a head in 1979 ... Sadly, my best friend, Stephen Wilson, died after a sudden onset of cancer. It now became a matter of necessity to write a piece that would be a memorial to him. So it became clear that the work could not be based on any artifice; its existence had to lie in its emotional truth.”

Cantilena Pacifica became that memorial. It is an extended outpouring of elegiac melody that seems, at times, to meander aimlessly in its grief as the solo violin sings in heartbreak above the gentle undulations of the strings.

© ACO

Elegy for String Orchestra: *In Memoriam Rupert Brooke*

Frederick Septimus Kelly's *Elegy for String Orchestra: In Memoriam Rupert Brooke* was written during his war service. Following the outbreak of war in 1914, Kelly was commissioned into the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve for service with the Royal Naval Division with his friends - the poet Rupert Brooke, the critic and composer William Denis Browne, and others of what became known as the Latin Club.



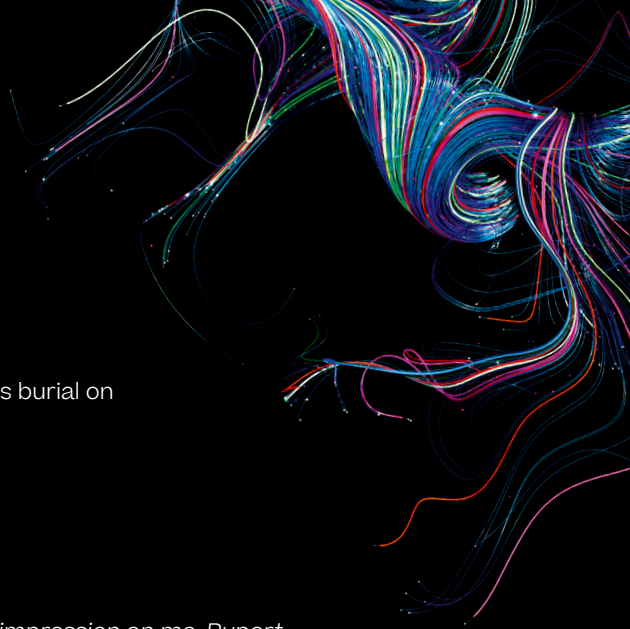
These excerpts from his diary track some key stages in the creation of *Elegy for String Orchestra: In Memoriam Rupert Brooke*.

The first excerpt describes Brooke's burial on the Greek Island of Skyros.

Friday 23 April 1915, Hood Battalion,
SS Grantully Castle, Skyros:

"The events of today made a deep impression on me. Rupert Brooke died on board the French hospital ship at 4.45pm and, in view of the ship's orders to sail at 5am the following morning, arrangements were at once made to bury him on the island he loved so well... It was about a mile from the shore to the grove over very difficult stony ground and the petty officers who bore the coffin were obliged to go very slowly. We reached the grove at 10.45pm where in the light of a clouded half-moon the burial service was read..."

It was a most moving experience. The small olive grove in the narrow valley and the scent of the wild sage gave a strong classical tone which was so in harmony with the poet we were burying that to some of us the Christian ceremony seemed out of keeping... The body lies looking down the valley towards the harbour and, from behind, an olive tree bends itself over the grave as though sheltering it from the sun and rain. No more fitting resting place for a poet could be found than this small grove, and it seems as though the gods had jealously snatched him away to enrich this scented island. For the whole day I was oppressed with the sense of loss, but when the officers and men had gone and when at last the five of us, his friends, had covered his grave with stones and took a last look in silence - then the sense of tragedy gave place to a sense of passionless beauty, engendered both by the poet and the place."



Inspired by the events of that night, Kelly began composing the Elegy at Gallipoli.

Friday 21 May 1915, Near headquarters at the White House:

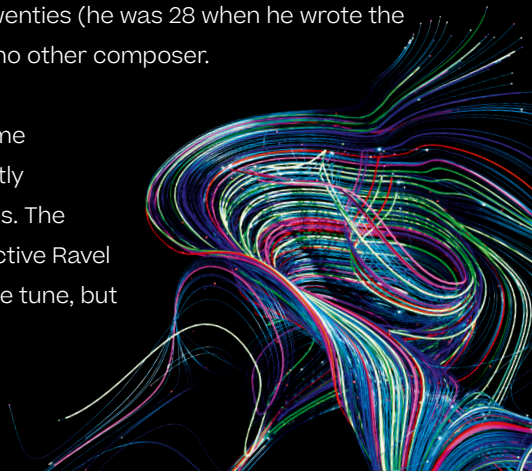
“...There is a very active body of snipers somewhere up by the firing line who have a line on the White House and the whole of the afternoon bullets have been whistling continuously over my dug-out. I have ever since the day of Rupert Brooke's death been composing an elegy for string orchestra, the ideas of which are coloured by the surroundings of his grave and circumstances of his death. Today I felt my way right through to the end of it, though of course, much of it has still to take on definite shape. The modal character of the music seems to be suggested by the Greek surroundings as well as Rupert's character, some passagework by the rustling of the olive tree which bends over his grave. It should work out to some nine minutes in performance.”

© Linda Kirkpatrick, ABC Classic

String Quartet in F

Maurice Ravel composed his only string quartet in 1902 and 1903, while he was a student at the Paris Conservatory. It follows a traditional four movement form, yet so distinct was Ravel's voice by his late twenties (he was 28 when he wrote the Quartet) that it could come from the pen of no other composer.

In its opening movement, Ravel wasted no time introducing his initial melodic material, a gently flowing violin melody played over rising scales. The movement's second theme features a distinctive Ravel orchestration: violin and viola both playing the tune, but separated by two octaves.



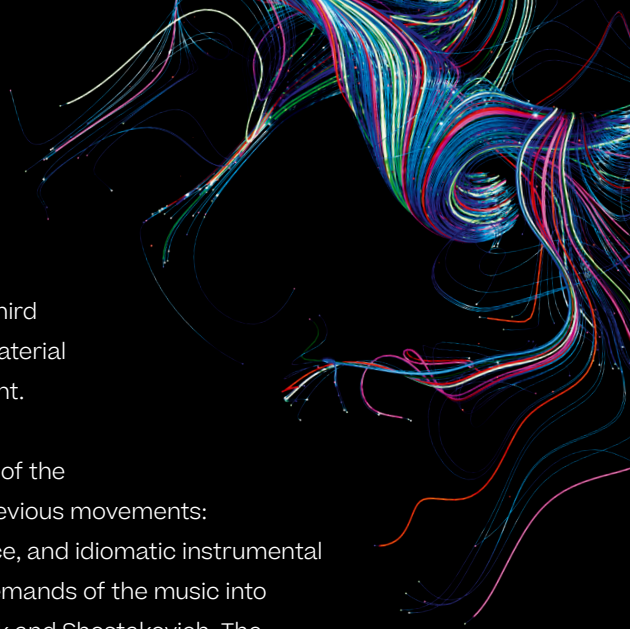
The second movement is a brisk scherzo that alternates pizzicato and bowed passages, as well as conflicting, 3-against-2 rhythmic patterns, while the slow third movement rhapsodizes melodic material first heard in the opening movement.

In the finale, Ravel combines many of the characteristics that defined the previous movements: rich sonorities, rhythmic dissonance, and idiomatic instrumental textures that push the technical demands of the music into the orbit of later quartets by Bartók and Shostakovich. The movement alternates meters in three and five, which helps generate an aura of energy and excitement.

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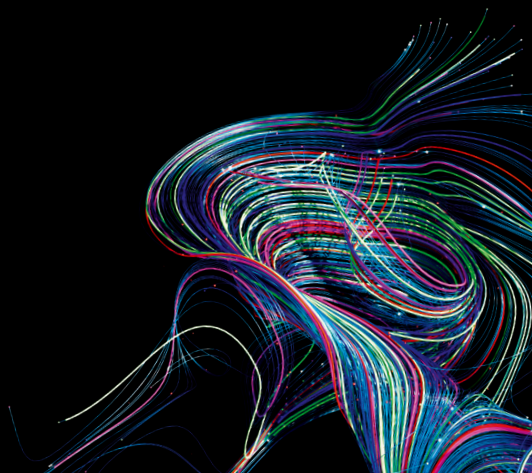
Rudolph Barshai

Rudolph Barshai (1928 –2010) was one of the great string players of the 20th century, overcoming political and artistic repression that characterised the height of the Soviet Union. Wanting to establish a professional full time Russian string quartet and experiencing a dearth of ‘good’ viola players, Barshai (a violinist at the time) took up the viola himself. He studied under the great violist Vadim Borisovsky and founded iconic Moscow Philharmonic Quartet (later known as the Borodin Quartet). Barshai continued his illustrious career as a chamber musician with the Tchaikovsky Quartet and was the founding member of the Moscow Chamber Orchestra. This last ensemble is responsible for some of the finest orchestral recordings of the 20th century, featuring giants such as Oistrakh, Richter and



Menuhin. Barshai is most closely associated with Shostakovich, premiering many of his works and performing under the maestro's baton. Despite Barshai's reputation as one of the great soviet musicians, once he moved overseas in the 1970's his country of birth disowned and struck his name from the pages of Soviet artistic history.

Barshai rebuilt his reputation as a conductor in America and eventually returned triumphantly to his motherland to conduct the Moscow Symphony Orchestra and the West German Radio Orchestra. This period produced some of the most recognised recordings of Shostakovich symphonies which are still studied today. During this later period of Barshai's career he turned his hand to arranging and reorchestration; transforming well-known quartets or transcribing keyboard works such as Bach's Art of Fugue for chamber orchestra. It is one of these transcriptions that we will hear performed today. More than a simple transcription, Barshai's intimate understanding of the quartet's virtuosic dialogues, transformed through his masterful manipulation of orchestral textures, results in a stunning revelation of Ravel's String Quartet in F major.



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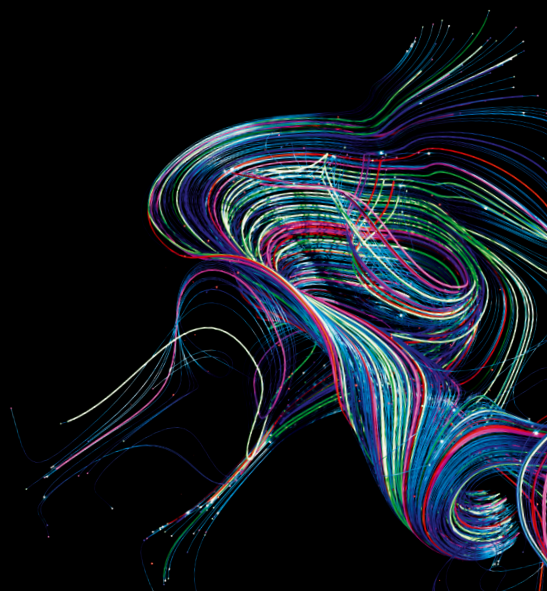
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