

Soirées Musicales Quintette



**'Rockton', Newtown Ipswich
4pm Sunday 6 March 2016**

Romantic partsongs in a gracious colonial drawing room

Program

Two partsongs

Der Tanz (The Dance), D 826
Gebet (Prayer), D 815

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

Spanisches Liederspiel (Spanish Song-Play), Op.74

Erste Begegnung (First encounter) – duet
Intermezzo – duet
Liebesgram (Gram of love) – duet
In der Nacht (At night) – duet
Es ist verraten (It has been revealed) – quartet
Melancholie (Melancholy) – soprano solo
Geständnis (Confession) – tenor solo
Botschaft (Message) – duet
Der Contrabandiste (The smuggler) – baritone solo
Ich bin geliebt (I am beloved) – quartet

Robert Schumann (1810-56)

Nocturne in F major, No.2 from Soirées Musicales Op.6

Clara Schumann (1819-1896)

Two duets from *Soirées Musicales*

La regata veneziana
I marinara

Gioacchino Rossini (1792-1868)

I Gondolieri from *Péchés de vieillesse*

Zigeunerlieder (Gypsy Songs) Op.103

He, Zigeuner, greife in die Saiten ein (Hey, gypsy, strike the strings!)
Hochgetürmte Rimaflut (Towering waters of the Rima)
Wißt ihr, wann mein Kindchen am allerschönsten ist? (Do you know when my darling is loveliest of all?)
Lieber Gott, du weißt, wie oft bereut ich hab (Dear God, you know how often I have rued)
Brauner Bursche führt zum Tanze sein blauäugig schönes Kind (The dark lad leads his blue-eyed girl to dance)
Röslein drei in der Reihe blühn so rot (Three little roses, all in a row bloom so red)
Kommt dir manchmal in den Sinn, mein süßes Lieb (Does it sometimes cross your mind, my sweet love)
Horch, der Wind klagt in den Zweigen traurig sacht (Hark, the wind moans softly in the branches, softly sad)
Weit und breit schaut Niemand mich an (Far and wide no one looks at me)
Mond verhüllt sein Angesicht (The moon veils its face)

Johannes Brahms (1833-97)

About the program

The nineteenth century saw a flourishing of domestic music-making, particularly in German-speaking states. All cultured families owned a piano, around which social entertainments focussed, either for sole delight of participants, or in the presence of small audiences. For this burgeoning market a huge amount of repertoire was composed for solo piano with or without voice(s). Countless musical settings appeared, either as a collection which pieces could be selected, or just as commonly, as a suite or 'cycle' intended as an integrated whole. While solo music of composers such as Schubert, Schumann, Mendelssohn and Brahms is quite well known, the rich repertoire for vocal ensemble with piano accompaniment is largely neglected. Some partsongs remain popular with choirs, but their true essence is fully revealed when presented by skilled chamber ensembles whose members can take a soloist role when required.

Each of the major German romantic composers created a large body of song. Skilful text setting is displayed in musical interpretations of contemporary poetry, equally evident in repertoire for solo quartet and piano. Stunning harmonies are created by the interplay of well-matched voices in four-part ensembles, in juxtaposition to solo, duet and trio combinations. Just as a solo song cycle traces a narrative thread, some vocal quartet sets are also a throughcomposed entity. This program endeavours to recreate the ambience of the refined salons of the romantic era by featuring some highlights of this repertoire. While the texts are mostly German, the emotions and moods speak to universal truths and common experiences across centuries. Aspects of love and relationships, also life's joys and challenges, are brought to life through a medium which is both artistically satisfying for the performers, and appealing to audiences.

Franz Schubert needs no introduction as a song composer, but his partsongs are less often performed. **Der Tanz** conjures the atmosphere of a party of friends, where singing, dancing and drinking would be enjoyed as a relief from daily cares. Composed in early 1828 to a text by Karl Kolumban Schnitzer von Meerau, it belies the challenges that beset Schubert in the last year of his short life. In contrast, **Gebet** was composed in a single day at the request of the Countess Esterházy. Schubert was spending the 1824 summer at the noble family's palace at Zseliz as music teacher, so as a courtesy he wrote his setting of Fouqué's poem with them in mind, including the Count who sang baritone. While Schubert may have objected to the militant images of some of the stanzas, he captured the poem's overall reverential tone beautifully, in particularly through expanding the final stanza, with several repetitions of the text.

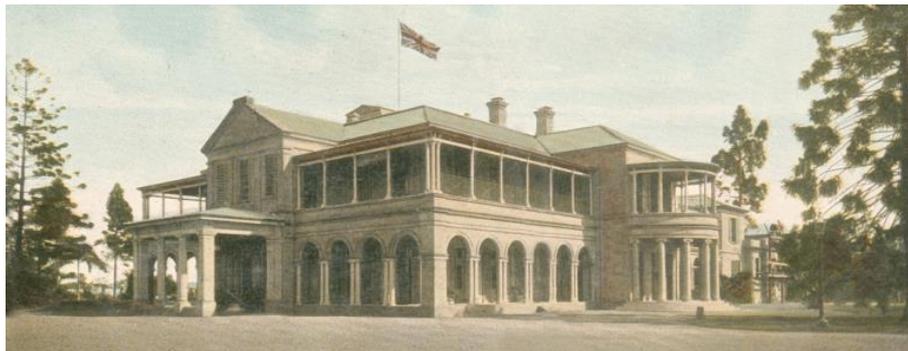
After composing several song cycles, **Robert Schumann** explored the 'song-play' medium, where a loose plot connects a series of solos, duets and quartets. The **Spanisches Liederspiel** is based on translations of Spanish poetry by Emanuel Giebel, the Iberian culture being evident in the bolero rhythm of the central quartet number and also the final duet. Otherwise, an extreme range of hot-blooded emotions is on display, from the exuberance of first love, through tender serenades, to a melancholy monologue. A single couple is involved in the scene, but the female-male dichotomy is highlighted through duets and also solos, where different aspects of their respective personalities come to the fore. Schumann originally composed 12 songs, of which three were dropped, including 'Der Contrabandiste' which was published instead as an appendix. We have chosen to include this rousing baritone solo, as it provides a possible motivation for the finale's mood of resignation and resolution in response to 'vicious village gossip'. Perhaps the male lover was after all someone of ill repute, but the female partner can only see his better side.

Clara Schumann (née Wieck) was both a virtuoso pianist and accomplished composer, and was encouraged in both pursuits by her husband Robert. After his death, she however ceased composing and preferred instead to advocate for his reputation by performing Robert's works extensively. She also gave première performances of their young family friend Johannes Brahms. Her **Soirées Musicales** is a set of six short piano pieces, composed in 1836 at the age of 17. By then her future husband had already moved into the Wieck household, but he postponed proposing marriage until the following year. The **Nocturne** from this set is quite unlike those by Chopin, although both Schumanns admired his music. The right hand is lyrical throughout, and the middle section is well contrasted, but there are numerous harmonic and textural touches that sound quite unlike either Chopin or Robert Schumann.

Gioacchino Rossini is best known for his operas and some choral works, but his partsongs and duets are less familiar. After several operatic successes in Paris in the 1820s, the composer retreated from the stage and settled there, and spent five years composing little except for his delightful set of songs and duets **Soirées Musicales**, published in 1835. Some of these conjure up scenes from Venice, firstly the soprano duet **La regata veneziana** depicting its famous regatta, and secondly the male duet **I marinara**, which is set on the high seas where the Venetian Republic and its navy once ruled. Continuing the Venetian theme, the quartet **I gondolieri** comes from Rossini's final period, when he again settled in Paris, from 1855 until his death. This vocal quartet is the first work in Volume 1 of *Péchés de vieillesse*, or 'sins of my old age'. While not to be taken too seriously, all these vocal ensembles by Rossini are charming. The famous expatriate Italian was celebrated in elegant Parisian salons, where these songs were probably first performed.

Johannes Brahms as a chamber music composer *par excellence* was naturally attracted to the vocal quartet and duet medium, and so created a large body of ensemble repertoire. His **Zigeunerlieder** were written in 1887 and premiered the following year in Vienna with the composer at the piano. Having already scored a huge hit with his various sets of Hungarian Dances, these vocal settings continue in a similar idiom, dominated by strong *Csárdás* rhythms. The texts were supposedly Hungarian Gypsy songs, freely translated by Hugo Conrat - their short lines and stanzas give Brahms great scope for his kaleidoscopic anthology of captivating miniatures and energetic piano writing.

Soirées Musicales Quintette



Old Government House, George Street Brisbane
5pm Sunday 2 October and 7.30pm Friday 7 October 2016

At home with Lady Chelmsford's Piano - romantic partsongs in a gracious colonial drawing room

Program

Two partsongs

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

Der Tanz (The Dance), D 826

Gebet (Prayer), D 815

Lebenslust (Joy of living), D 609

Chansons des Bois d'Amaranthe (Songs of the amaranth forest)

Jules Massenet (1842-1912)

O bon printemps (O beautiful spring - trio)

Oiseau des Bois (Bird of the woods - duet)

Chères fleurs (Dear flowers - quartet)

O ruisseau (O little stream - trio)

Chantez! (Sing! - quartet)

Three piano pieces from *Soirées Musicales* Op.6

Clara Schumann (1819-1896)

Nocturne in F major

Ballade in D minor

Mazurka in G major

Three quartets Op. 64

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

An die Heimat (To the homeland)

Der Abend (Evening)

Fragen (Questions)

Three partsongs

Gioacchino Rossini (1792-1868)

I Gondolieri (The gondoliers)

La regata veneziana (Venetian regatta) from *Soirées Musicales*

La passeggiata (The promenade)

About the program

Soirées Musicales Quintette is proud to present its second annual series of programs at Old Government House, in association with the National Trust of Queensland during the lead-up to Brisbane Open House weekend. The combination of fine music with colonial heritage architecture is a perfect blend of elements sure to inspire and delight.

The nineteenth century saw a flourishing of domestic music-making, particularly in German-speaking states. All cultured families owned a piano, around which social entertainments focussed, either for the sole delight of participants, or with small audiences. For this burgeoning market much repertoire was composed for solo piano with or without voice(s). Countless settings appeared, either as a free collection or as a cycle forming an integrated whole. Our first program focussed on German repertoire, and now we extend our exploration to France and Italy.

Each of the major German romantic composers created a large body of song. Skilful text setting is displayed in musical interpretations of contemporary poetry, equally evident in the repertoire for solo quartet and piano. Stunning harmonies are created by an interplay of well-matched voices in four-part ensembles, in juxtaposition to solo, duet and trio combinations. Just as a solo song cycle traces a narrative thread, some quartet sets are a through-composed entity. This program endeavours to recreate the ambience of the refined salons of the romantic era by featuring some highlights of this repertoire. While the texts are in languages other than English, they speak to universal truths and common experiences across centuries. Aspects of love and relationships, also life's pleasures and challenges, are brought to life through a medium that is both artistically satisfying for performers, and appealing to audiences.

Franz Schubert needs no introduction as a song composer, but his partsongs are less often performed. **Der Tanz** conjures the atmosphere of a party of friends, where singing, dancing and drinking would be enjoyed as a relief from daily cares. Composed in early 1828 to a text by Karl Kolumban Schnitzer von Meerau, it belies the challenges that beset Schubert in the last year of his short life. In contrast, **Gebet** was composed in a single day at the request of the Countess Esterházy. Schubert was spending the 1824 summer at the noble family's palace at Zseliz as music teacher, so as a courtesy he wrote his setting of Fouqué's poem with them in mind, including the Count who sang baritone. While Schubert may have objected to the militant images of some of the stanzas, he captured the poem's overall reverential tone beautifully, in particularly through expanding the final stanza, with several repetitions of the text. **Lebenslust** returns to the spirit of friendship through socialising and music, with a setting that is reminiscent of the Austrian Ländler, a waltz-like dance form. It is set to a text by Johann Karl Unger, a professor at the Ritterakademie in Vienna, which was a finishing school for men of noble birth. Unger may have also introduced Schubert to the Esterházy family, so this song was probably composed during his first summers with the family in 1818.

Jules Massenet is best known as an opera composer, but his output including over 200 songs is not well known today. His music is not directly equivalent to any of his contemporaries such as Fauré and Debussy, but he is credited with some innovations, such as introducing the song cycle to France as early as 1866. However it was not until 1901 that his **Chansons des Bois d'Amaranthe** for vocal quartet was composed. Its internal unity is derived from the poetry, but each song is distinct in style and scoring. The opening trio with its welcome to spring is quite ingratiating, followed by a female duet depicting a light bantering conversation with forest birds. The central quartet recalls the style of a Renaissance unaccompanied madrigal or chanson with floral imagery, while the next trio is in the style of a tenor aria with baroque 'echo' refrains that illustrate a rhetorical dialogue with a flowing stream. The finale is an energetic plea for the birds of spring to rejoice in nature, with all voices in full operatic flight underpinned by a vivacious piano part.

Clara Schumann (née Wieck) was both a virtuoso pianist and accomplished composer. She was encouraged in both pursuits by her husband Robert, but after premature his death she ceased composing, instead advocating for his reputation by performing his works extensively. Her **Soirées Musicales** was composed in 1836 at age 17, by which time Robert had moved into the Wieck household. The **Nocturne** is unlike those by Chopin, although both Schumanns admired his music. The right hand is lyrical throughout, and the middle section well contrasted, but numerous textural and harmonic touches sound quite unlike either of those male contemporaries. Similarly the **Ballade** does not reach the dramatic heights of Chopin's, but rather tells a more intimate and reflective story. The *Mazurka* is also on a modest scale, but it gained prominence later. Clara's future husband used it as the basis of a large set of dances, and coincidentally (or deliberately) published as his Opus 6, the **Davidsbündlertänze** (Dances of the band of David).

Johannes Brahms as a chamber music composer *par excellence* was naturally attracted to the vocal quartet and duet medium, and so created a large body of ensemble repertoire. His **Quartets Op.64** were composed over a decade and published together as a set in 1874. Using contrasting texts by three different poets, it is their quasi-choral style that perhaps suggested to the composer they belonged together, and he even condoned their performance by a small chorus. The first song is quite autobiographical, in that during its composition in 1862 Brahms was spending his first extended stay in Vienna, perhaps realising he had left his beloved home town of Hamburg forever. The middle song to a text by Schiller is replete with mythological imagery, with a rolling accompaniment symbolising the movement of Apollo's horses as the god rises up in the sky and engages in dialogue with Thetis, the goddess of the sea. The last song juxtaposes a self-contained tenor solo with trio refrains from the other voices, each component representing one side of the tormented lover's personality – they ask urgently what troubles him, yet he delights in the pain of passion.

Gioacchino Rossini is best known for his operas and some choral works, but his partsongs and duets are less familiar. After several operatic successes in Paris in the 1820s, the composer retreated from the stage and settled there, and spent five years composing little except for his delightful set of songs and duets **Soirées Musicales**, published in 1835. Some of these conjure up scenes from Venice, including the rollicking soprano duet **La regata veneziana** depicting its famous regatta. Also featuring a strong Venetian theme is the quartet **I gondolieri** which comes from Rossini's final period, when he again settled in Paris, from 1855 until his death. This vocal quartet is the first work in Volume 1 of *Péchés de vieillesse*, or 'sins of my old age'. Also from that set is **La passeggiata**, which charmingly represents a leisurely walk in the outdoors. The voices commence in happy agreement, but the central section with animated vocal counterpoint depicts the rising threat of a storm, after which the opening mood returns leading to an exultant conclusion. While not to be taken too seriously, these ensembles are charming - the famous expatriate Italian was fêted and celebrated in elegant Parisian salons, where these songs were probably first performed.

Soirées Musicales Quintette presents *A Christmas Songbook*

'Rockton', Newtown Ipswich
5pm Saturday 3 December 2016

Program

Prelude

'Die Hirten an der Krippe' (The shepherds at the manger) based on Franz Liszt (1811-56)
'In dulci jubilo' - from *Der Weihnachtsbaum* (Christmas tree suite) S.186

Christmas in Germany and Austria

'Weihnachten' (Christmas) from Johannes Brahms (1833-97)
Volkskinderlieder (Children's folksongs) WoO 31 No.12

'Weihnachtlied' (Christmas song) from Robert Schumann (1810-56)
Lieder-Album für die Jugend (Songbook for the young) Op.79 No.16

'Mariä Wiegenlied' (Mary's lullaby) from Max Reger (1873-1916)
Schlichte Weisen (Simple tunes) Op.76 No.52

'Die Könige' (The magi) from Peter Cornelius (1824-74)
Weihnachtslieder (Christmas songs) Op.8 No.3

'Weihnachtsgefühl' (Christmas feeling) TrV 198 Richard Strauss (1864-1949)

Interlude

'Weihnachtstraum' (Christmas dream) based on 'Stille Nacht, heil'ge Nacht' from Max Reger
Aus der Jugendzeit (From childhood) Op.17 No.9

Christmas in Scandinavia

'Sang til juletræet' (Christmas tree song) from Edvard Grieg (1843-1907)
Barnlige Sange (Children's songs) Op.61 No.2

'Jo jouttu ilta' (Outside it is getting dark) from Jean Sibelius (1865-1957)
Fem julsånger (Five Christmas songs) Op.1 No.3

'Barn Jesus' (Baby Jesus) from Niels Gade (1870-90)
Børnenes Juul (Children's Christmas) Op.36 No.2

Interlude

'Jule Klokkerne' (Christmas bells) from Niels Gade
Børnenes Juul (Children's Christmas) Op.36 No.1

Christmas in France

'Il est né le divin enfant' (The divine child is born) arranged by Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)

'Cantique de Noël' (Christmas song – O holy night) Adolphe Adam (1803-56)

'La Nuit de Noël' – Pastorale (Song of Christmas) Gioachino Rossini (1792-1868)

'Noël des enfants qui n'ont plus de maisons'
(Christmas carol for homeless children) Claude Debussy (1862-1918)

'Chantez Noël!' (Sing Merry Christmas) Charles Gounod (1818-93)

Interlude

'Scherzoso' from 'Der Weihnachtsbaum' S.186 from Franz Liszt
Der Weihnachtsbaum (Christmas tree suite) S.186

Christmas in England

'When I view the Mother holding' and arranged by John Stainer (1840-1901)

'The shepherds went their hasty way' from *Christmas Carols Old and New*

Interlude

'Adeste fidelis' (O come, all ye faithful) – March of the Magi from Franz Liszt
Der Weihnachtsbaum (Christmas tree suite) S.186

Christmas in America

'Little star of Bethlehem' Charles Ives (1874-1954)

'I wonder as I wander' arranged by Benjamin Britten (1913-76)

About the program

Concerts of Christmas music are a regular feature throughout the world at this time of year. Whether performed in a church, school or other venue, the spirit of the season imbues the many carols and songs one is likely to hear. While continuing this tradition, today's concert also offers something slightly different. To be sure, some well-known Christmas carols and songs will be heard, either in their original setting or in an arrangement. We also present some music which may not be as familiar, but which is equally interesting.

A concert like this could be themed around the progress of the events of the first Christmas, proceeding from the announcement of the angels, the nativity scene with the shepherds and animals, and through to the arrival of the wise men or 'magi'. Another approach is to sample how various cultural traditions have produced music of the season. A *Christmas Songbook* is such a musical journey of the mind, to many countries and languages. Some are simple children's songs, others more elaborate pieces. While messages of joy and peace feature often, a few references to the effect of war, and the absence of peace, are also to be found in some of these songs.

In researching Christmas composers from nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the musical era we normally perform, many gems have come to light. As well as artsongs by Reger, Cornelius, Strauss, Debussy and Ives, we present some children's songs and folksongs by Brahms, Schumann, Grieg, Gade, Sibelius and Britten. A favourite French song by Adam is heard alongside some concert pieces by Rossini and Gounod.

Our journey commences in German-speaking countries, where images of the Christmas tree abound. By way of a prelude, and recurring later as instrumental interludes, are excerpts from Liszt's *Christmas Tree*, a suite for solo piano composed for his family. The long intense winters of Scandinavia have given inspiration to some poignant imagery, including the Christ child also being the Light of the World. The pastoral simplicity of some of the French songs is contrasted by some operatic settings, and these are followed by two examples of Victorian-era domestic music. We finish our journey in North America, with a modern setting of an ancient hills song.

Carols are normally settings of a simple melody across multiple stanzas, and this format will also be heard various selections today. Set piece genres such as the shepherds' pastorale, Mary's lullaby, and the march of the Magi, which give rise to different types of music, are also included. With most of the program being performed as works for solo voice or piano, we also present several pieces for full quartet, or solo-refrain settings where different combinations of voices are heard as well. While some of the music is sure to be familiar, at least in the melodic lines, we hope that *A Christmas Songbook* will also take you somewhere new and interesting today.

About the venue and its partners in preserving Queensland's heritage

Rockton

Rockton, today described as a large, Victorian mansion, commenced as a three room brick cottage constructed in 1855 for bank manager William Craies and his wife Sabina. Extended in 1856, it was sold due to financial difficulties in 1862 being described as 'a good substantial edifice built of bricks with shingled roof'. The Rockton of 1862 featured front, side and back verandahs, an entrance hall, dining and drawing rooms, four bedrooms and a nursery.

Owned from 1862 by Robert Towns, then Samuel Hodgson, Rockton was purchased in 1882 by Edward Augustus Bullmore. In the 1890s EA Bullmore, the owner of the Trelawney Dairy near Harrisville, extended Rockton yet again, this time introducing a more elaborate two-storeyed wing that included bedrooms, bathrooms and a staircase. The upper section of the 1890s wing features polychromatic brickwork and a steeply hipped roof capped by a widows' walk with cast iron lace balustrading. The breezeway created between the 1865 wing and the 1890s extension was enclosed to form a ballroom. To the north, this ballroom overlooks the garden through an elaborately detailed bay window. The tower was added around 1900.

The current owners are Angela and Wybe Geertsma. Angela's grandparents, Will and Laura Haenke, purchased Rockton in 1918 when it was in a state of disrepair. Will Haenke was an architect. He relocated the kitchen to its corner position and imposed 1930s details in the living area. Willis and Helen Haenke, Angela's parents, inherited the property in 1953. Rockton is approached along a circular driveway through a garden of mature trees and palms. Throughout Rockton's history the garden has served as a place of tranquillity and nourishment, as well as providing a backdrop to this wonderful home.

The National Trust is very proud to be partnering with Rockton to present *Soirées Musicales Quintette*.



We also wish to express our thanks for the support of 4MBS Classic FM 103.7 and 4MBS Ticketing