

# THE FIRM

SERIES 2001

Arnold Schoenberg  
Verklärte Nacht (Scherzo)  
Violin and Piano

Raymond Chandler  
String Quartet No. 2

Johannes Brahms  
Seven Variations on a Theme by Paganini

SHORT INTERVAL

David Koloway  
In the Shade of the Light

Concert one

Ludwig van Beethoven  
String Quartet in F major Op. 134

Langbein String Quartet

**Langbein String Quartet**

Nicholas Milton	violin 1
Michael Milton	violin 2
Juris Ezergailis	viola
Sarah Denbigh	cello

**TUESDAY JUNE 5, 2001**

**Arnold Schoenberg**  
Verbundenheit (Solidarity)

**Raymond Chapman Smith**  
String Quartet No.3

**John Polglase**  
Seven Bagatelles for String Quartet

SHORT INTERVAL

**David Kotlowy**  
of shade to light

**Ludwig van Beethoven**  
String Quartet in F major H.34

The **Langbein String Quartet** is an invention of the Firm, in recognition of the late Brenton Langbein – violinist of international repute; friend and mentor to many South Australian composers and musicians, and a composer whose works we are just beginning to appreciate.

Brenton was a great advocate for new music and the Langbein Quartet will focus on the performance of recent compositions alongside quartets by some of Australia's senior composers and a necessary sprinkling of pieces from the broader repertoire.

The establishment of this ensemble is also an acknowledgment of the commitment and superb musicianship of the leading Adelaide Symphony Orchestra players with whom we have been privileged to work with in recent years.

## **Arnold Schoenberg** **Verbundenheit (Solidarity)**

Transcribed for String Quartet from Six Pieces for male chorus Op.35

This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of Arnold Schoenberg's death. He had always been suspicious of the number 13 and died at 13 minutes past midnight on July 13, 1951 at the age of 76.

This very beautiful choral work is the last of a set of otherwise twelve-note compositions composed, in the early 1930's, while Schoenberg was completing the second act of "Moses and Aaron". The texts of Op. 35 explore, in Schoenberg's very original and condensed language, his favourite concerns of ethical irony.

A striking example of his sovereign mastery of the tonal language he so radically extended, this rare example of sustained "Schoenbergian" calm transcribed itself with remarkable ease. The male voice parts fitted the strings without any need for adjustment or arrangement and, while the original would certainly be best, we offer this wordless version in homage to a composer who embodied the ethic of the dedicated artist in its most uncompromising form.



**Raymond Chapman Smith**  
**String Quartet No.3**

Assai Sostenuto  
Allegro ma non tanto  
Molto Adagio  
Vivace assai  
Assai Sostenuto

The first of three quartets based on closely related material, my third (surviving) quartet adopts a five movement structure which is, in part, a reflection of a continuing fascination for Haydn's quartet sets Op. 1 and 2 – the Divertimento origins of the medium – which all employ a similarly symmetrical formplan.

The scale, expressive character and very spare linearity of this quartet also owes much to my, relatively recent, acquaintance with "Der Inferner Park" – the remarkable, and little known, suite of sixteen "baroque" drawings which Paul Klee completed in 1939 – works which seem to hover in a region somewhere between pure abstraction and deeply expressive but always elusive and mysteriously organic figuration.

**John Polglase**  
**Seven Bagatelles for String Quartet**

These seven short pieces were composed several years ago for an ensemble of students from the Elder Conservatorium who performed in a concert organised by an earlier manifestation of 'The Firm' and as such are more direct than other of my works for the medium.

Varying in length from just over one minute to about three, each is based on a single, straight-forward idea. Their difference in character is meant to highlight some of the flexibility of the string quartet; from the sparse texture of the first and dynamism of the second, through ostinati and individual instrumental colour to capriciousness and spiky ensemble work. The final bagatelle, the longest of the set, is reminiscent of a folk-ish style and concludes on a somewhat whimsical note.

**David Kotlowy**  
of shade to light

This is my first twelve-note composition since my student days; it employs the pitch series from Schoenberg's Klavierstück, Op. 33b. However, my compositional procedure remains resolutely minimalist. Process governs both twelve-note and minimalist composition, though Schoenberg's interest is with variation while Reich advocates repetition. I reconcile these contrary inclinations by superimposing variations of orchestration, timbre and duration upon reiterations of pitch.

A twelve-note series does not automatically produce atonal music – compare the lyrical rows of Schoenberg and Berg to those used by Webern. Centres of tonality are easily seen when the series is divided into cells of three or four notes. My string quartet is a sequence of such cells; however, consequent tonal centres do not produce the functional harmony normally associated with tonality.

**Ludwig van Beethoven**  
String Quartet in F major H.34

Transcription of Piano Sonata in E major Op.14 No.1

Allegro moderato  
Allegretto  
Allegro

Beethoven's own masterly arrangement of his familiar Sonata Op. 14 No.1 was published in 1802, four years after the original. As with the sonata, the new quartet version was dedicated to Baroness Josefine von Braun, wife of the future lessee of the Theatre-an-der-Wien, where Beethoven's opera "Fidelio" was to be staged in 1805. In a letter to his publisher, in the year of the arrangement, Beethoven expressed his disapproval of the contemporary fashion of arranging piano music for strings unless, of course, it was, or had been, in the hands of Haydn, Mozart or himself. It is difficult to understand why this lovely work has never become part of the canon. It is rarely recorded and concert performances are even more scarce.

Comparison of both versions of this music offers many fascinating glimpses into Beethoven's perception of his material – the quartet textures that so often appear in his piano music and the transformation of accompanimental figuration from one medium to the other. The choice of key, raising the sonata a semitone, allows Beethoven the use of the cello's 'low C' as the crucial dominant pedal, a tonal characteristic which may further explain Beethoven's particular attraction to F major, the key of his first and last quartets and, in the middle, "Rasumovsky" No.1.



## About the Players of the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra

An orchestra's place in its community extends much further than the concerts it presents: it is an integral part of the fabric of a town's cultural life. Adelaide's orchestra enjoys a much closer integration with its community than many other orchestras do. The interaction ranges from the highly-visible participation in large-scale community celebrations to activities such as those of The Firm, where public profile is not so much the issue.

Over a period of years Adelaide's active and wonderfully self-motivated community of composers have drawn on the members of the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra to help in the realisation of their works, building, un-selfconsciously, a long-term collaboration that has become a fantastic little tradition.

The benefits are mutual: as well as airing the works of local composers the musicians also develop their skills as chamber musicians and interpreters of contemporary music. What's more, they enjoy the music-making and the discovery of new music.

James Koehne, Artistic Administrator  
Adelaide Symphony Orchestra

## THE FIRM

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