

The Firm



the firm 2009

concert one

*When morning sets in,
the coolness of night
moves out into the plumage
of fishes, when once more
the air's circumference
grows visible, then at times
I trust the quiet, resolve
to make a new start, an excursion
perhaps to a reserve of
camouflaged ornithologists*

W.G. Sebald

Pilgrim Church provides wheelchair access via the rear (northern) doors.

Toilets can be accessed through the door on the left of the performance area.

The Firm

presents

Greta Bradman, soprano

with the

The Langbein String Quartet

Michael Milton violin
Lachlan Bramble violin
Rosi McGowran viola
David Sharp cello

**String Quartet 13
(Island Dreaming)**

Peter Sculthorpe

String Quartet in D minor, Op. 103

Joseph Haydn

Irish Songs

Quentin O'Grant

Interval

String Quartet No. 1

Luke Altmann

**Two Songs
for Soprano and String Quartet**

Oswaldo Golijov

String Quartet 13 **Peter Sculthorpe (1929-)**
(Island Dreaming) (1996)

This work is based upon ideas suggested by the musics of the Torres Strait Islands. In these islands, the cultures of aboriginal Australia and Papua New Guinea, as well as Indonesia, are brought together as one; and the mythology is concerned mostly with the sea and with sea-change. The text, sung in its indigenous language, was culled from poetry both modern and archaic. Some of the words have almost lost their meaning. My translation is as literal as possible.

PS

See, the dark water!
See, the deep water!

The morning star
Shines from afar:
Waia.

The morning star,
Home from windward,
Shines from afar,
Home from windward:
Waia.

Come, let us row,
Where waters run!
Come, let us go
To reef and sun!

Low tide, tide low;
High tides soon flow:
Waia.

String Quartet in D minor, Op. 103 **Joseph Haydn**

1. **Andante grazioso**
2. **Menuetto ma non troppo presto**

Every day the world compliments me on the fire of my recent works, but no one will believe the strain and effort it costs me to produce them. Some days my enfeebled memory and the unstrung state of my nerves crush me to the earth to such an extent that I fall prey to the worst sort of depression, and am quite incapable of finding even a single idea for many days thereafter; until at last Providence revives me, and I can again sit down at the pianoforte and begin to scratch away.

JH (June, 1799)

*In 1803, in his 70th year, Haydn directed a public performance in Vienna for the last time. In the same year, now increasingly frail, he wrote the second and third movements of what was to be the last of his 83 string quartets, a work he never completed. When the two movements were published in 1806, Haydn suggested the addition of a sad postscript, a canon to the words: *hin ist alle meine Kraft, alt und schwach bin ich.* (Gone is all my strength, old and weak am I). He died in 1809.*

Irish Songs

Quentin O'Grant

To Morfydd - Lionel Johnson

A voice on the winds,
A voice on the waters,
Wanders and cries:
*O! what are the winds?
And what are the waters?
Mine are your eyes.*

Western the winds are,
And western the waters,
Where the light lies:
*O! what are the winds?
And what are the waters?
Mine are your eyes.*

Cold, cold grow the winds,
And dark grow the waters,
Where the sun dies:
*O! what are the winds?
And what are the waters?
Mine are your eyes.*

And down the night winds,
And down the night waters,
The music flies:
*O! what are the winds?
And what are the waters?
Cold be the winds,
And wild be the waters,
So mine be your eyes.*

For Anne Gregory - W. B. Yeats

Never shall a young man,
Thrown into despair
By those great honey coloured
Ramparts at your ear,
Love you for yourself alone
And not your yellow hair.

But I can get a hair dye
And set such colour there,
Brown, or black, or carrot,
That young men in despair
May love me for myself alone
And not my yellow hair.

I heard an old religious man
But yester night declare
That he had found a text to prove
That only God, my dear
Could love you for yourself alone
And not your yellow hair.

The sunlight on the garden - Louis MacNeice

The sunlight on the garden
Hardens and grows cold,
We cannot cage the minute
Within its nets of gold,
When all is told
We cannot beg for pardon.

Our freedom as free lances
Advances towards its end;

The earth compels, upon it
Sonnets and birds descend;
And soon, my friend,
We shall have no time for dances.

The sky was good for flying,
Defying the church bells
And every iron
Siren and what it tells:
The earth compels,
We are dying, Egypt, dying.

And not expecting pardon,
Hardened in heart anew
But glad to have sat under
Thunder and rain with you,
And grateful too
For sunlight on the garden.

When first I saw your face - *Morfyd O'Brion*

When first I saw your face
You'd just turned seventeen,
And your smile was as clear as the morn,
Your green eyes, to me,
Were as truthful as the sea,
And your touch as gentle as the breeze.

Birds be singin' for you,
Flowers be shinin' for you,
Birds be singin' for you.

Feelin' happy, feelin' sad,
T'weren't sure if you'd be glad,
As I rode through the heat to your door,
But your smile told me then,

As it does each day ag'in,
That your gentle, gentle feelin's were for me.

Now as the years 'a' gone by,
You've been to me as sky,
As the dear open blue up above,
My Annie I've been true,
A steadfast friend for you,
My kiss, my promise, my love.



William Butler Yeats



Morfyd O'Brion

String Quartet No. 1

Luke Altmann

Written as a prankish nineteen-year-old university student ten years ago, the decision not to revise this piece beyond numerous basic corrections was not so easily made. It is rough, juvenile, and irreverent, and highly referential to the edgy twentieth century quartet repertoire I was listening to at the time. But this is its first complete performance, and so it is left to stand.

It is in five untitled movements developed from the same row:

the first movement reveals it with peaceful but ambiguously scratchy harmonics;
the second presents the row as starkly as a brick wall in unrelenting and mechanically repeated chords;
the third demolishes it completely through an exasperated transcription of the sounds of the bad plumbing which ran through the wall of my college dorm at all hours while I was trying to compose;
the fourth reconstructs the row and apologetically presents it with the salve of recognisable chord progressions of a relatively pleasant sort;
the lively fifth presents it as the opening ostinato in the cello, on which the ensemble rides off to a typical climax.

Two Songs

Oswaldo Golijov

for Soprano and String Quartet

1. How Slow the Wind (2001)

"How Slow the Wind, a setting of two short Emily Dickinson poems, was Golijov's response to the death in an accident of his friend Mariel Stubrin. He writes, 'I had in mind one of those seconds in life that is frozen in the memory, forever-a sudden death, a single instant in which life turns upside down, different from the experience of death after a long agony.'"

How Slow the Wind

by Emily Dickinson

How slow the Wind—
how slow the sea—
how late their Fathers be!

Is it too late to touch you, Dear?
We this moment knew—
Love Marine and Love terrene—
Love celestial too—



Emily Dickinson

"A dead man in Spain is more dead there than anywhere else' said García Lorca, explaining that Spanish poets define rather than allude. *Lúa Descolorida*, a poem by Lorca's beloved Rosalía de Castro written in Gallego (the language of the Galicia region in Spain) defines despair in a way that is simultaneously tender and tragic. The musical setting is a constellation of clearly defined symbols that affirm contradictory things at the same time, becoming in the end a suspended question mark. The song is at once a slow motion ride in a cosmic horse, an homage to Couperin's melismas in his *Lessons of Tenebrae*, and velvet bells coming from three different churches."

2. *Lúa Descolorida* (Moon, Colorless) (2002)

by Rosalía de Castro;

English translation by Osvaldo Golijov

Lúa descolorida
como cor de ouro pálido,
vesme i eu non quixera
me vises de tan alto.
Ó espazo que recorres,
lévame, caladiña, nun teu
raio.

Moon, colorless
like the color of pale gold:
You see me here and I
wouldn't like you
to see me from the heights
above.
Take me, silently, in your
ray to the space of your
journey.

Astro das almas orfas,
lúa descolorida,
eu ben sei que n'alumas
tristeza cal a miña.
Vai contalo ó teu dono,
e dille que me leve adonde
habita.

Mais non lle contes nada,
descolorida lúa,
pois nin neste nin noutros
mundos teréis fortuna.

Se sabe onde a morte
ten a morada escura,
dille que corpo e alma
xuntamente
me leve adonde non
recorden nunca,
nin no mundo en que estáo
nin nas alturas.

Star of the orphan souls,
Moon, colorless:
I know that you don't
illuminate sadness as sad as
mine.
Go and tell it to your master
and tell him to take me to his
place.

But don't tell him anything,
Moon, colorless,
because my fate won't
change here or in other
worlds.

If you know where Death
has her dark mansion,
Tell her to take my body and
soul together
To a place where I won't be
remembered,
Neither in this world, nor in
the heights above.

You are warmly invited to join us after
the concert for complimentary drinks and
a selection of Tortes by Gabriele.

Next concert:
Monday July 27th
Greta Bradman, soprano
Leigh Harrold, piano

Please refer to our web site for further
information on upcoming concerts

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and

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Passing Out

