

FLINDERS QUARTET

THIBAUD PAVLOVIC-HOBBA violin

WILMA SMITH violin

HELEN IRELAND viola

ZOE KNIGHTON cello

with JUSTIN BEERE clarinet

and BEN OPIE oboe

FQ MARGARET SUTHERLAND FESTIVAL

Margaret Sutherland's legacy is felt all over Melbourne. Most notably in the existence of our Arts Centre, which is now being developed into an Arts precinct, realising Margaret's vision as a nucleus of creative activity spilling into the streets of Melbourne. She was a tireless campaigner for contemporary music and composers, and the improvement in the standards of music education. She helped found the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts which later became the Australia Council for the Arts. To say she was the matriarch of Australian music in the 20th century is no exaggeration.

Margaret was born in Adelaide in 1897, studied in Melbourne, and then set sail to the UK where she studied with Arnold Bax and "a most interesting Woman composer" whose name will remain a mystery. Her fascination with Bartok, Stravinsky and Debussy is evident as she fought against what she described as the "barrenness" of contemporary musical life with so many working in musical styles which were a pale reflection of late Romanticism.

So much of Margaret's output is for chamber ensembles and she had an uncanny ability to pair unlikely instruments together. It's staggering to think that Margaret only received two paid commissions in her lifetime, that her (ex)husband thought her compositional ambitions a sign of mental illness, and that she still had the energy and conviction to stay true to her musical ideals. Margaret's compositional voice is supremely intelligent and heartfelt.

MARGARET SUTHERLAND (1897-1984)

Quartet for clarinet and string trio (composed 1967)

- I. With conviction, yet freely
- II. Scherzo with verve and spontaneity
- III. Poignantly
- IV. Decisively

with Justin Beere, clarinet

The quartet for clarinet and string trio was written just after her third string quartet in 1967 (which was one of the two paid commissions) and the crossover of themes is noticeable. Her harmonic language and nods to Bartok, Hindemith and Debussy abound with the skittish second movement scherzo bearing her hallmark razor sharp wit.

MARGARET SUTHERLAND (1897-1984)

String Quartet No. 2 "Discussion" (composed 1954)

The second string quartet was written in 1954 and originally given the title "Discussion". As its name suggests, her intention was the sharing of material between instruments and celebrating the conversational nature of chamber music. Written in a single movement approximately 10 minutes long, it has a rondo form which brings back the opening theme again and again.

MARGARET SUTHERLAND (1897-1984)

Serenade for oboe and string quartet (composed 1950)

I. At a moderate pace, jauntily

II. Blues: Slowly, as in a dream

III. With gusto

with Ben Opie, oboe

"Serenade" for oboe and string quartet was written in 1950 at a time when she was exploring extensively setting the words of Judith Wright to music. This piece is altogether lighter in character with the middle "blues" movement being the heart of the work.

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AGATHA YIM, POLYPHONIC PICTURES filming and editing

THOMAS GRUBB, MANO MUSICA sound engineering, editing and mastering

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Flinders Quartet acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we work, live and learn, and recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and culture. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.