



Ben Davis, Moya Cummings, Hedy Mameghan, Fiona Symons

The members of this string quartet are all amateur musicians from the Victorian Amateur Chamber Music Society. VACMS has about 60 members and holds regular meetings for music-making and other social activities for its members who live mostly in Melbourne.

This particular group have met a number of additional times for extra practice and for improvement in interpretative skill. They have also had the good fortune to receive tutorials from professional musicians such as Zoe Knighton of the Melbourne-based Flinders Quartet.



Hedy Mameghan & Friends

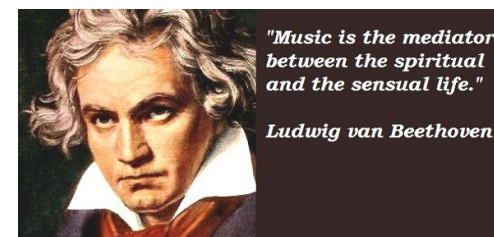
An afternoon of classical chamber music by Joseph Haydn and Ludwig van Beethoven will be performed by our guest musicians:

Ben Davis	First violin
Moya Cummings	Second violin
Hedy Mameghan	Viola
Fiona Symons	Cello



The program will feature two works:

Joseph Haydn	String Quartet opus 77 No. 1, in G major
Ludwig van Beethoven	String Quartet opus 18 No. 4, in C minor



*"Music is the mediator
between the spiritual
and the sensual life."*

Ludwig van Beethoven

Joseph Haydn

String Quartet opus 77 No 1, in G major

Haydn returned from England in 1795 to the service of the Esterhazy family, Prince Nicholas II, an unsympathetic personality, though a considerable patron of the arts.

The work we are playing today is the second last complete string quartet he composed.

The commission came in 1799 from Prince Lobkowitz (who was Beethoven's patron), but Haydn was unable to finish the promised set of six.

The main reason was long considered to be that he was busy with other musical duties, notably writing a Mass for the name-day of Princess Esterhazy. The Princess was a true friend to Haydn and as warm-hearted as her husband was cold and unbending. Between 1796 and 1802 there were six great Masses, as well as the oratorio, *The Seasons*.

The first movement is marked Allegro Moderato. It is written in sonata form as a march, but a lyrical kind of march. Here the first violin plays in typical Haydn style, showing off with his spectacular and acrobatic technique, changing keys often and weaving a melodic line, whilst the other three instruments accompany his dancing and singing in a measured, march-like background.

The second movement is marked Adagio. This is in a slow tempo, and written as a rather profound piece in the related key of E flat, moving along in solemn and majestic phrases, balanced and rich in scoring.

The third movement is a Minuet in G, but less dance-like because of its faster tempo, more like a Scherzo, something Beethoven would take up and develop in his later compositions.

The fourth and final movement is marked Vivace. It is a fast and lively piece that starts in hushed tones, then gradually develops its Hungarian style with increasing rhythmic complexity. Haydn seems to delight in throwing the instruments as much together as against each other, increasing the tension and quickening the dialogue between the upper and lower strings near the finale.

Although the young Beethoven wanted to be a student of Haydn, both times that he went to Vienna, Haydn was on his way to London! It is thought that Haydn may even have heard a performance of some of Beethoven's Op. 18 quartets as he was in the midst of working on his own Op. 77 set. Some have speculated that this was the reason why Haydn stopped composing quartets, essentially bowing out of the competition. Others have suggested that Haydn was busy, tired and possibly ill. Either way, it is a mystery why his Op. 77 contains only two quartets rather than the usual six.

Ludwig van Beethoven

String Quartet opus 18 No.4, in C minor

Beethoven wrote his set of six string quartets opus 18 over a number of years during the 1790s, dedicated them to Prince Lobkowitz. They were performed privately a number of times and were published in 1801. There is no agreement among scholars as to the order in which these six quartets were composed. However, it is generally accepted that they were written both in admiration for his teacher Haydn as well as with some elements of deliberate competition.

The first movement is marked Allegro ma non tanto, and is written in an operatic style, reminiscent not so much of Haydn but Mozart.

The second movement, Andante scherzoso quasi Allegretto, is written like a mock fugue. It moves along at a stately gait but ironically sounds like a minuet.

The third movement is marked as the 'official' Minuet and even has a traditional Trio section. However, it is a rather brooding and unsettled piece, instead of what Haydn would have done with his minuet with his customary grace and light touch. Here, however, when the minuet is repeated after the trio section as is custom, Beethoven asks for it to be played even faster!

The fourth and final movement is based on a gypsy-style theme with passages in alternating C minor with C major, The mood keeps changing right up to the final Prestissimo which ends the piece with three emphatic final strokes.