

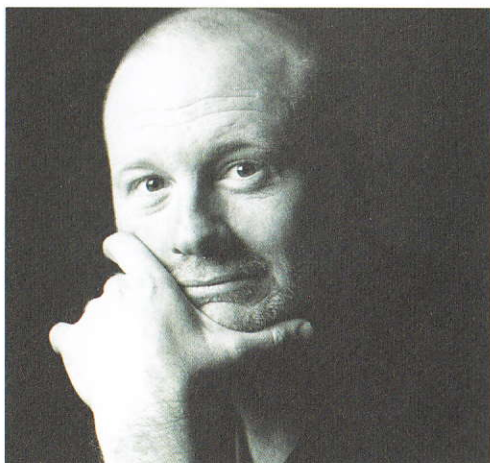
Brett Dean (b1961)

One of the most internationally performed composers of his generation, much of Brett Dean's work draws from literary, political or visual stimuli. He has been commissioned by the Berlin Philharmonic, Concertgebouw Orchestra and LA Philharmonic among other leading orchestras, and in 2009 Dean won the prestigious Grawemeyer Award for his violin concerto *The Lost Art of Letter Writing*.

Recent premieres have included Dean's first full-length opera, *Bliss*, in a highly acclaimed production by Opera Australia in Sydney, Melbourne and at the Edinburgh Festival and in a new production at the Hamburg Opera, and his string quintet *Epitaphs* has been performed at the Cheltenham Festival, Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, La Jolla SummerFest and the Cologne Philharmonic.

Dean combines his composing activities with a rich musical life performing internationally as a soloist, chamber musician and conductor with the world's leading orchestras.

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Mozart (1756 – 1791)

String Quintet in C Minor (K406) (1782)

Allegro, Andante, Minuetto in Canone, Allegro

Clarinet Quintet in A (K581) (1789)

Allegro, Larghetto, Menuetto – Trio I – Trio II, Allegretto con Variazioni

The two Mozart quintets featured in these Rush-Hour concerts share a seriousness of intent that, coupled with their sound world of radiant serenity, makes them highly effective partners for the more overtly commemorative pieces by Brett Dean and James MacMillan. As the Hebrides Ensemble's artistic director William Conway comments, "The two modern works are continuing a sort of lineage. I've got no doubt that both the contemporary composers were acutely aware of the medium they were writing for, and of composers like Mozart who had made such a good job of it. I'm very conscious of a tradition being carried on."

The String Quintet in C minor (K406) is Mozart's own arrangement of his Wind Serenade (K388), written in 1782 shortly after his move to Vienna from his home town of Salzburg. Its serious tone is established right from the opening bars of the first movement in a slow C minor broken chord for all five instruments. The lyrical second subject is in E flat major, but even here the melody's unequal phrase lengths hint at something more unsettling. The second viola comes into its own at the start of the short development section, in a resonant passage for the three lowest instruments, and then delivers a winding accompaniment in the recapitulation.

The Quintet's second movement is a lilting Andante in triple time, with a gracefully decorated melody for the first violin. Mozart uses the Minuet and Trio as a canonic work-out, with the five instruments imitating each other's themes in an often ear-bending fashion. The last movement begins with a seemingly innocuous little tune that Mozart puts through its paces in five sharply characterised variations. The cello is in the limelight for the first, and there's a strange, winding melody for second violin and

second viola in the third variation. The music shifts to the major for the theme's final outing, in what might seem a rather perfunctorily jolly ending given the seriousness that pervades the rest of the work.

Mozart wrote his Clarinet Quintet in 1789 for his friend Anton Stadler, principal clarinet in the court orchestra of Vienna. Although it was written when the composer was struggling (and failing) to make a living as a musician independent of both church and court, the work's mood of serenity and acceptance only hints at his personal woes. Mozart is masterful in exploiting the clarinet's full range, with floating melodies in the instrument's uppermost register punctuated by more assertive interjections from the lower range that almost sound as if they are coming from a different instrument.

Mozart sets the calm mood from the very opening with a series of slow-moving string chords punctuated by nimble arpeggios from the clarinet. In the Larghetto, the clarinet floats a glowing melody against gently undulating string chords, later decorating the texture, alongside the first violin, with scales ascending ever skyward. The clarinet is silent for the first of the minuet's two trios, but in the second it sets a folksy tone with a deceptively simple, arpeggio-based melody. The final movement's opening string theme has a wide-eyed, child-like quality, but its ensuing variations spotlight the quintet's various players before an Adagio episode and the briefest of reminiscences of the first movement herald a conclusion that owes more to poise and dignity than to fun and jollity.

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