

ANAM RECITAL: MATTEA OSENK (VIOLA) Viola and Voice: The Vessel of Emotion

FRIDAY 22 NOVEMBER 11AM
ROSINA AUDITORIUM, ABBOTSFORD CONVENT

Rebecca CLARKE (1886-1979) Viola Sonata (1919) 24'
i. Impetuoso. Poco agitato
ii. Vivace
iii. Adagio – Allegro

Claude DEBUSSY (1862-1918) String Quartet in G Minor, op. 10 (1893) 26'
i. Animé et très décidé
ii. Assez vif et bien rythmé
iii. Andantino, doucement expressif
iv. Très modéré

Emily SHEPPARD (b. 1993) *Aftermath* (2022) 7'

Mattea Osenk * (SA) viola
 Leigh Harrold (ANAM Associate Faculty) piano
 James Armstrong * (NSW) violin
 Olivia Bartlett * (WA) violin
 Joshua Jones * (QLD) cello

Approximate duration: 60 minutes

ABOUT MATTEA OSENK

Born and raised in Adelaide, Mattea Osenk started playing viola at the age of seven. Mattea graduated from the Elder Conservatorium with a Bachelor of Music with first class Honours in 2022, under the tutelage of Keith Crellin OAM and Stephen King. In 2023, Mattea commenced her Masters at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, supported by the Corinna D'hage Mayer String Scholarship under the guidance of Roger Benedict. In 2024, Mattea commenced her studies at ANAM under the tutelage of Caroline Henbest and is looking forward to exploring more of her inner artist. Find out more at anam.com.au/musicians

Mattea is supported by ANAM Syndicate donors Jerry Koliha and Marlene Krelle, Anonymous.

Mattea plays a Coghill viola purchased with the assistance of the Lesley McMullin Fund.

** Denotes a musician supported by ANAM Syndicate*



ANAM relies on the generous support of donors to help us develop our young and talented musicians. To provide the very best performers for your concert experience today and in the future, please donate to ANAM now via this link, call (03) 9645 7911 or speak to our Box Office staff at today's concert.

ANAM respectfully acknowledges the traditional custodians of the lands spread across Australia on which we work and live. We uphold and honour their continued relationship to these sites, we pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging, and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

PROGRAM NOTES *Written by Mattea Osenk*

My first year at ANAM has been a transformative journey, granting me the freedom to explore and craft music that I love, because what is the point otherwise? This program is a reflection of that, exploring a diverse range of music that evokes a spectrum of emotions—filling me with excitement one moment and melancholy the next. This exploration has highlighted the vulnerability inherent in sharing these feelings with an audience. Whether performing pieces that exude charm or those that delve into more harrowing themes, I've come to realise that the act of expressing through music is both daunting and a privilege. I have deeply enjoyed exploring the way my viola and I can create and share this music that I love. This performance is dedicated to the people who give me reason to grow into the musician I would like to be, and allow me the creative space to do so: the listeners, ANAM's faculty and musicians, and most especially my teacher Caroline Henbest and the viola family.

A notorious love for all violists is **Rebecca Clarke's** Sonata for Viola and Piano. A staple in our repertoire, it is a deeply expressive and evocative work, drawing on the lush harmonic language and colours of French Impressionism. The first movement, *Impetuoso*, bursts open with a fanfare-like celebration of sound and sets up the fiery character of the movement and the rising theme which will recur throughout the sonata. Throughout this movement, there is a restless searching and energetic drive that suddenly contrasts with fleeting calm and dreamier lines. The second movement, *Vivace*, takes a lively turn, filled with rhythmic exuberance and bright, playful exchanges between the viola and piano. The dialogue between the two instruments gives it a sense of joyous competition, each voice pushing the other forward in a playful chase. Interrupting this spirited momentum is a timeless trance, as if one were distracted by day dreaming. The movement drifts in and out of this conscious energy and mind-wandering lyricism. The final movement of the sonata begins with a pensive *Adagio*. It is here that we can indulge in Clarke's harmonic shifts and lush sound world. The viola echoes the piano's soulful, languorous opening melody which slowly and temporarily builds before subsiding to stillness. The viola sings tranquilly above the piano which gently ripples – a Debussy-inspired accompaniment. Similar to the previous movements, the romantic tempo and changing moods take us between tenderly lyrical fragments (often rhapsodic) and bursts of colourful energy, further reflecting the musical language of Debussy. This sonata is so masterfully evocative, exploring a spectrum of colours and feelings in every shape and form, a journey that happily concludes with the jubilant return of the opening character.

There is no better way to understand the inspiration behind the harmonic language of Clarke's sonata than by following it with **Claude Debussy's** String Quartet in G minor. It is undoubtedly a cherished work in the repertoire, due to the stunning sensual beauty and diverse textures Debussy weaves with the four string instruments, often together giving the sense of fluttering and rippling. What is most incredible to me is how Debussy ties all four movements together in the quartet with recurring themes, painting them in such different colours as to make them almost unrecognisable between movements. The first movement, *Animé et très décidé*, presents us with a bold, charming, and unmistakably French theme. His exploration of texture and sound has frequently been likened to Impressionist painters' fascination with light. Debussy creates a dynamic interplay between clear and hazy moments, often creating dense textures in the accompaniment for melodies to soar above. As a violist in this group, I am fascinated and excited by how my role blurs the line between these accompanying blankets of sound and undulating, fluttering melodies. The scherzo movement, *Assez vif et bien rythmé*, features the bold theme from the first movement brought back to us with a playful and seductive flair. The opening pizzicato and ostinato patterns feel balmy and exotic and are perhaps suggestive of flamenco. Some of Debussy's most emotional and sensual writing exists in the third movement of this quartet, *Andantino doucement expressif*. The dreamy melody and the sensuous harmony are enough to cause heartache. With a rustling, the viola seems to invite you closer to share in sweet secrets. The final movement, *Très modéré*, begins with an uncertain theme that at first drowsily carries itself before building suspenseful momentum. This movement is eager to find itself, constantly getting caught up in a whiplash of tempo changes – one moment passionate and the next settled. The music's underlying exhilaration to breakthrough ultimately prevails, and the quartet concludes with a flourish of sound and ascends the music into the air with brilliance.

We've heard the viola in its most extroverted fashion: vibrant and powerful. To finish today's recital, I invite you to take a moment to observe an intimate moment between myself, my viola, and my voice. Written by ANAM alum and Tasmania/Lutruwita based composer, **Emily Sheppard** composed *Aftermath* in response to the devastation of the Tasmanian bushfires. In 2016, Emily walked through those blackened ruins and amongst it, saw two speckled eggs hatching right in front of her. It was in this place between loss and fragility of new life that *Aftermath* was created. Your presence here today makes this connection possible, and I encourage you to feel the depth of this moment alongside me, interpret the sounds and visualise anything that resonates with you. For me personally, this beautiful piece flickers between light and dark, hope and despair. The opening evokes a powerful image of devastation, steeped in the sorrow of grief or lost hope, while the tender, almost ethereal calling of the voice seems to echo a mother's gentle attempt to console her child. The viola beckons and seeks comfort, before developing into a tumultuous disaster of the fires in which it resembles. The voice is calling out again, only this time crying out as it bears witness to the destruction of its sanctuary, its home. The light we find within the aftermath is the new life that prospers; the delicate fluttering of new butterfly wings or the tiny eggs hatching on the coast.