

The NAXOS logo is located in the top left corner. It consists of the word "NAXOS" in a white, serif font, centered within a blue square. Above the text are stylized white lines representing a classical building facade with columns.

NAXOS

DOUGLAS WEILAND

(b.1954)

STRING QUARTETS NOS. 4 AND 5

THE MELBOURNE QUARTET

WORLD PREMIERE RECORDINGS

Douglas Weiland (b. 1954) String Quartet No. 4, Op. 50 • String Quartet No. 5, Op. 51

These outstanding works were composed in Old Beetley, Norfolk, UK, the *Fourth Quartet* between September and December 2011 and the *Fifth Quartet* between April and July 2012.

Douglas Weiland has long been acclaimed as a master of the quartet medium, most conspicuously for his *First Quartet* which was composed in Australia in 1985, a work which has received high acclaim in many countries. These two later quartets reveal him at the height of his artistic power.

The *Fifth Quartet* sets out with a certain innocence and mystery. The first theme comprises the same note played four times followed by a dotted falling figure, Classical in its simplicity and inherently ripe for development in a conventional classical sense.

Within a mere 24 bars this initial searching utterance has transformed into something authoritatively heroic, even defiant, and somewhat reminiscent of the primal white heat of Bartók with the doubled violins in canonical competition with the doubled viola and cello. Indeed, there is barely a bar whose DNA cannot be traced to this first theme in this tightly constructed first movement. As is often the case in Haydn, Beethoven and Bartók, much comes from little. Having begun with a shy B flat major, the first movement concludes with a most emphatic confirmation of this key in spite of having had a serious atonal flirtation just prior to the recapitulation. It is as if Weiland has gently and briefly summarised Bartók's grand harmonic journey across six quartets, of diatonic harmony to atonality and back (going to the brink, looking over the edge, then retreating) in one brief Haydnesque exploration.

Indeed, Douglas Weiland is a Classical composer in his commitment to form, invention and beauty and the inherent limitless possibilities that these three pillars awaken, embracing as he does, the essential aesthetic and philosophical underpinnings of the Classical masters – made new in his own unique voice. Connection across time rather than alienation is the key. So the *Fifth Quartet* of Weiland is made possible by the Haydn *Quartets* in a

loosely equivalent way to that which connects the 24 *Préludes* of Chopin to the *Well-Tempered Clavier* of Bach, a bridge of about one hundred and twenty years in the latter instance and about two hundred and fifty in the former.

The second movement of the *Fifth Quartet* is influenced by the slow movement of Haydn's *String Quartet, Op. 20, No. 5* quite specifically. This is the heart of the *Fifth Quartet* and a lifetime in the making. It is representative of the pinnacle of Weiland's art and his striving, a major landmark in the forward journey of the string quartet medium, first gathering up history, then thrusting it forward with rich invention and a noble heart, a 21st-century re-affirmation of the string quartet medium as a primary vehicle for what is most personal in music.

The third and final movement begins with a searching introduction, somehow striving to gently brush away any mystery which might stand in the way of the dazzling, and at times most charming invention of the bustling finale which follows. Here, Weiland stands with Haydn as fellow master in wit, form and imagination, concluding with a resounding endorsement of B flat major more than a century after Schoenberg was suggesting that it's day was done.

The *Fourth Quartet* is a five-movement construct comparable in symmetry and scope to the five movement *Fifth Quartet* of Bartók. The composer himself states that his *Fourth Quartet*: 'is built upon a large Schubert-scale concept, with a full blown *Scherzo* and Trio (III. – *Germanesque*) the central arch around which two large outer movements (I & V) hang fully extended. Placed comfortably one on either side are the more humble *Adagio* (II) and fleeting *Intermezzo* (IV).' More specifically of the third movement he adds: 'the scale and scope of the *Scherzo* I refer to as Schubertian; 'Germanesque' refers to the movement's intrinsic character that I saw in this way.'

While the *Fifth Quartet* roundly affirms B flat major, the *Fourth Quartet* veritably hunts for C major.

The work begins with a casual falling minuet gesture. The key is immediately ambiguous, a reality which pervades much of the work in spite of C being central. Even in

ultimate moments such as the end of the first movement where the supertonic (one tone above the tonic) is added to an otherwise C major chord, or at the very end of the whole work where a dystopian dissonance undermines C major, ambiguity is normal.

Throughout the work the composer dances around C major, longing for it, rarely providing it, visiting nearby though unrelated neighbours such as B major, D minor as well as related ones, Schubert-like such as the mediant (third degree of the scale therefore E). Most strikingly at the end of the central movement (III) when we believe we are landing in B flat major we are, in the final cadence (last

two chords) suddenly jolted upwards from B flat, avoiding C into D. This is followed by a serene, eagle-like soaring of B major (again passing over C but in the opposite direction) in the *Intermezzo* (IV), 'B' itself being the leading note (one before C) which is promising to take us home to C in due course. Then, when seemingly close to home we are, in the finale (V) teased and taunted at length in the most exhilarating manner with any number of delightful and often mysterious obfuscations before journey's end.

William Hennessy AM

Douglas Weiland

The English composer Douglas Gordon Weiland (born 16 April 1954 in Malvern, Worcestershire) is the late Sir Neville Marriner's most commissioned composer with three major orchestral works spanning 1992 to 2006: *Divertimento for Strings* (1992), *Clarinet Concerto* (2002) and *Triple Concerto* (2006). Along with the *Fourth* and *Fifth Quartets* (2011 and 2012 respectively) for William Hennessy AM, a large-scale *Flute Concerto* (2014) for Susan Milan and a newly commissioned choral orchestral *Requiem, Op. 59* (2019), these works represent the pinnacle of his artistic contribution today. Weiland's complete works are to be held in the Schusterwerkstatt at the Brahms Museum, Mürrzuslag, Austria. douglasweiland.com



Photo © 2019 douglasweiland.com

The Melbourne Quartet

The Melbourne Quartet comprises four eminent Australian musicians with long collective association, especially through the Melbourne Chamber Orchestra and the Australian String Quartet. William Hennessy AM, violin, was founder and leader of the Australian String Quartet (1985–96), has made over 300 concerto appearances, and has served as artistic director of the Melbourne Chamber Orchestra since 2006. Markiyano Melnychenko, violin, has performed in 17 countries, and with orchestras in Australia, Japan, Ukraine and the US. In 2013 he performed at the luncheon for Barack Obama's Presidential Inauguration. He is principal first violin with the Melbourne Chamber Orchestra. Keith Crellin OAM was founding violist of the Australian String Quartet (1985–2001) and associate professor at The University of Adelaide (2001–15). He has been artistic director of the Adelaide Youth Orchestra since 2003 and has long played a major role in Australian musical life as performer, teacher, conductor and mentor. Michael Dahlenburg, cello, has appeared in many countries as soloist, chamber musician, orchestral musician, recording artist and teacher. He is a founding member of the Hamer Quartet and also has a significant conducting career. He regularly conducts the Melbourne Chamber Orchestra and has conducted numerous other Australian orchestras. melbournequartet.asn.au



Photo © Agatha Kim of Polyphonic Pictures

British composer Douglas Weiland has long been acclaimed as one of contemporary music's most outstanding composers for the string quartet medium, and his evolving cycle has won much admiration. Composed between 2011 and 2012 the *Fourth* and *Fifth Quartets* show him at the height of his artistic powers, where he seeks connections across time, and shows a Classical commitment to form, invention and melodic beauty. His conceptions can be Schubertian in scale and scope, while also displaying the influence of Haydn and Bartók.

**Douglas
WEILAND**
(b. 1954)

- | | |
|--|--------------|
| String Quartet No. 5, Op. 51 (2012) | 24:20 |
| 1 I. Allegro, molto moderato, quasi <i>Alla Marcia</i> | 6:14 |
| 2 II. Siciliana <i>La Toscana</i> | 10:44 |
| 3 III. Introduction: Allegro/Adagio – Presto | 7:18 |
| String Quartet No. 4, Op. 50 (2011) | 37:49 |
| 4 I. Allegretto/Andante/Allegro molto | 9:35 |
| 5 II. Misterioso, quasi allegretto – Adagio | 5:50 |
| 6 III. Scherzo <i>Germanesque</i> : Allegro giocoso & Trio: Largo, molto espressivo – Presto/Largo | 9:55 |
| 7 IV. Intermezzo <i>Pastorale</i> : Grazioso, appassionata | 3:08 |
| 8 V. Allegro molto | 9:13 |

The Melbourne Quartet
William Hennessy, Violin I • Markiyana Melnychenko, Violin II
Keith Crellin, Viola • Michael Dahlenburg, Cello
WORLD PREMIERE RECORDINGS

Recorded: 30 November to 2 December 2018 at the Iwaki Auditorium, Melbourne, Australia
Producer: Stephen Snelleman • Engineer: Alex Stinson • Post-production and editor: Kevin Roper
Mixing and mastering: Neville Clark of Disk-Edits Pty Ltd • Booklet notes: William Hennessy AM
Publisher: Fountayne Editions, Edition: Living Composers 4031 Weiland Collected Quartets
This album is made possible due to the generous financial assistance of Igor Zambelli, HyonJu Newman, Emilia Baes, Thanh Ha, Susan Oliver, Catherine Cherry, Mary Muirhead, Meg & Anthony Bartel, Bronwyn Francis, Cathy & Huy Truong, Karl Nelms and Barbara Manovel
Cover photo: Sunrise over wheat field, Salhouse, Norfolk, UK (© Gary Rayner / Dreamstime.com)



8.574028

DDD

Playing Time
62:13



Made in Germany
www.naxos.com

© & © 2020 Naxos Rights (Europe) Ltd
Booklet notes in English