



# **the firm 2008**

six concerts

**concert one**

*It is music whose efforts are palpable... it is different from music where we can follow a clear trajectory with a goal and a purpose. This music is difficult to "place" or "situate" (more in terms of its development than its style). Thus Schumann's music, especially in his late works, is rather difficult even for the previously initiated musical mind. He prefers concrete artistic reality to academic consistency.*

*Our ears have been sharpened to perceive rapid shifts of densities, states of mind and soul, different types of movement (in the musical sense), the juxtaposition of clarity with darkness, and the kinship between places of ill repute and lofty aspirations; we can hear the agonizing battles between musical ideas, and how the music is paralysed or else drills deep into the ground; we can perceive the melancholy gaze and the sense of going round in circles.*

*Wolfgang Rihm on Schumann*

Pilgrim Church provides wheelchair access via the rear (northern) doors.

Toilets can be accessed through the door on the left of the performance area.

## **The Firm**

presents the

### **Settembrini Piano Trio**

**Fremde Szene I**

**Wolfgang Rihm**

**Nocturne no.3**

**Luke Altmann**

**Nach der Natur**

**Raymond Chapman Smith**

**- 5 minute interval -**

**12 Journeys**

**Quentin Grant**

**Trio in A minor  
'Fantasistücke', Op. 88**

**Robert Schumann**

**Fremde Szene I (1982)      Wolfgang Rihm (1952 - )**

*Wolfgang Rihm: I attach great importance to the time that belongs to me alone, time that is not taken up with appointments. I have a cellphone. If someone leaves a message on my mailbox, I call back. In relation to what is known these days as "globalisation," I'm provincial. I'm no world traveller. A Tibetan sage once said you have to remain in one place an order to see your own shadow move around you.*

*What surrounds you when you sit over your musical composition?*

*György Ligeti once said that when composing, he derived stimulation from the odour of a freshly-sharpened Faber Castell pencil.*

*For me, there is nothing in particular. My greatest stimulus is the movement of the mind itself. I find that the matter at hand is the greatest stimulus. The creative act! And time. That's the most important thing! To take enough time! That's why one of my main activities is to constantly free myself from external obligations.*

*Do you ever experience despair in your work?*

*Despair is something vast. You don't despair because your shoelace comes untied, but because self-doubt interferes with your productive interaction. Then doubt turns into despair. In relation to perpetual demands we find ourselves unable to fulfil, we speak instead, I think, of irritation and helplessness. There are days when everything seems to go wrong, from the very start. There*

*is a wrong number, or someone asks: "How long is it going to be? We need the piece." I can't deal with that.*

*How do you translate that which you perceive into musical expression?*

*There is no direct line connecting one with the other. I always keep a little notebook with me, where I jot things down. Here, for example, are notes from a conversation I had with a gourmet chef, Monsieur Emile Jung of Crocodile in Strasbourg. He explained to me the principle of seasoning. (Rihm points out a page in his notebook where a list of ingredients is written.) To one strong element, you add three of middling strength and six weak ones. What a marvellous lesson for composing. The result is not grey values, but rather a relationship of dominance that is orchestrated from various different sides. In music, if you distribute the dynamics in this way, with one strongly singled out, three of medium strength, and six weaker ones, you achieve an equilibrium, even if the form is asymmetrical. But don't worry, I don't cook up my pieces like that.*

*Our deficiencies themselves are our greatest hopes.*

*Friedrich Schlegel*



Nocturne no.3  
for cello and piano

Luke Altmann

This piece, part of an open-ended series of Nocturnes, receives its first Firm performance tonight. It is clearly about being in bed, and leaves nothing to the imagination.

*...Thus it follows that the faculty of imagination is the gift of making interpolations into infinitely small spaces, of conceiving every intensity as an extensiveness, thereby discovering in it a newly compressed fullness – in short, of receiving every image as if it were that of a folded fan that only in unfolding draws breath and presents, by way of its new expanse, the features of the beloved object within.*

Walter Benjamin

Nach der Natur  
for solo piano

Raymond Chapman Smith

1. Allegro assai
2. Andante sostenuto
3. Allegro moderato

*For it is hard to discover  
the winged vertebrates of prehistory  
embedded in tablets of slate.  
But if I see before me  
the nervature of past life  
in one image, I always think  
that this has something to do  
with truth. Our brains, after all,  
are always at work on some quivers  
of self-organization, however faint,  
and it is from this that an order  
arises, in places beautiful  
and comforting, though more cruel, too,  
than the previous state of ignorance.  
How far, in any case, must one go back  
to find the beginning?*

W.G. Sebald: *After Nature* (Nach der Natur)

## 12 Journeys

Quentin Grant

1. the dawn sky was shining, and so, they walked.
2. two small hands holding, and to the river -
3. to the final traces of the path, until it led into an enormous verdant field, ringed with pine forest
4. they were given a tin, a notepad, chocolate, and a map with detailed instructions on where to go and who to meet
5. on the third morning I climbed slowly up to the snow line
6. before leaving again she emphasised how each path has its own particular obstacles
7. under the full moon we walked the entire circle, and continued walking it until the moon gave way to the dawning sun
8. so before breakfast, before the children had awoken, she drove out and visited her childhood home for the first time in over thirty years
9. he said *where children are, there is a golden age*
10. it would be a matter of some time, probably not until after first light, before the small train took them up to the plateau.
11. ( )
12. it was the first dawn she had seen since the accident so many months before, and her senses tingled with feelings of fresh life

Trio in A minor  
'Fantasiestücke', Op. 88

Robert Schumann

1. Romanze
2. Humoreske: Lebhaft
3. Duett: Langsam und mit Ausdruck
4. Finale: Im Marsch-Tempo

### *Feelings*

*my friend  
wrote Schumann  
are stars that  
guide us only  
in brightest daylight*

*It is certainly an error to think that composers take up pen and paper with the miserable intention of expressing, depicting or portraying this or that. Yet one should not underestimate the importance of fortuitous influences and external impressions. While the musical imagination is at work, so too, though often unconsciously, the eye is just as active as the ear, seizing powerfully upon certain contours amidst the sounds and tones that can condense and develop into distinct shapes as the music proceeds. The more that the musically related elements embody thoughts or images engendered along with the tones, the more poetic or plastic the expression of the composition will be.*

R.S.

*Music is the only one of the fine arts in  
which not only man, but all other  
animals, have a common property, - mice  
and elephants, spiders and birds.*

*Jean Paul*

You are warmly invited to join us after  
the concert for complimentary drinks and  
a selection of Tortes by Gabriele.

Next concert:  
Monday August 4<sup>th</sup>, 8pm  
with  
Robert Macfarlane, tenor  
Greta Bradman, soprano  
Stefan Ammer, piano

Please refer to our web site for further  
information on upcoming concerts

[www.firmmusic.com.au](http://www.firmmusic.com.au)

**the firm**

and

Dani Raymond

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*Memory is the only paradise from which we  
cannot be driven.*

*Jean Paul*