



## Australian String Quartet

### **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **EMGARGOED UNTIL THURSDAY 8 SEPTEMBER**

#### **NEW LOOK AUSTRALIAN STRING QUARTET REVEALED**

The much anticipated new line up of the Australian String Quartet (ASQ) has been announced on the eve of a national farewell concert tour for its current members.

In a major coup for music lovers around the nation, the ASQ's 2012 Season beginning in March will see the debut of its new line up.

The 'new look' ASQ will include two of the most sought after names in classical music in violinist Kristian Winther and violist Stephen King who will share the stage alongside existing members Anne Horton (violin) and Rachel Johnston (cello).

The new line up, which will begin a new era for the internationally renowned quartet, follows on from the announcement that current violinist Sophie Rowell and violist Sally Boud will depart the ASQ in November.

**Kristian Winther** is considered one of the most ambitious and engaging violinists in Australia. As a violinist and conductor Winther has a youthful virtuosity that exceeds his 27 years.

"Kristian has an infectious energy and is not only one of the brightest stars in classical music, but he has the personality and presence to match. He's a seasoned performer, having worked with all of the major Australian symphony orchestras", says ASQ Executive Officer Alison Beare.

"To be joining the ASQ family is the greatest honour of my career. I've always admired the group's journey. I believe that the world deserves great quartets and I'm looking forward to creating new musical chemistry alongside Stephen, Anne and Rachel and bringing great music to stages around the country", says Kristian Winther.

**Stephen King** returns to string quartets after a nine year stint with the Australian Chamber Orchestra (ACO). King is one of the most respected musicians in the country and brings international experience which has seen him perform around the world with the likes of the Coolidge String Quartet and The Boston Philharmonic Orchestra.

"Stephen is held in such high esteem both nationally and internationally and we're delighted he has decided to return to his string quartet roots", Alison Beare says.

"I can't wait to begin this new musical adventure with the ASQ. It is humbling and exciting to build on the incredible history of the group and help take it into the future both in Australia and abroad. It is the opportunity of a lifetime", says Stephen King.



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Remaining players Anne Horton and Rachel Johnston are anticipating the change and the new possibilities that both Kristian and Stephen will offer.

“We’re looking forward to celebrating the end of a very special era with Sophie and Sally in our farewell tour this month. While, this particular journey is coming to an end, we’re filled with a sense of excitement for the new beginnings that are around the corner. There are great possibilities, and with change comes new creative energy and great opportunities for growth”, says Anne Horton.

Audiences can experience the final performances from the current line up on the ‘Sunset’ national tour, which opens in Perth on 19 September followed by performances in Adelaide, Melbourne, Brisbane, Sydney and Newcastle.

The ASQ will unveil their 2012 season in October.

Interviews with Kristian Winther and Stephen King are available upon request.

### **For further media information:**

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