

# SOUTHBANK CENTRE

## Attacca Quartet: Dowland, Glass & Pärt

Thursday 25 September 2025, 8pm  
Queen Elizabeth Hall

We are proud to be a place where people come together to discover and connect with the wonder of classical music. Throughout the year, we provide unrivalled opportunities to encounter, live in person, the full range of music, and a variety of different ways for you to experience it.

Some of the world's most exciting artists, including our Resident Orchestras and Resident Artists, join us to shine a light on this incredible art form. Welcome to Classical Music: Autumn/Winter 2025/26.

Toks Dada, Head of Classical Music, Southbank Centre

**Dowland** Lachrimae Pavan arr. Nathan Schram  
for string quartet

4'

**Philip Glass** Quartet Satz

8'

**Arvo Pärt** Summa

6'

**Anne Müller** Drifting circles arr. Domenic Salerni  
for string quartet

6'

**Clemens non Papa** Ego flos campi a 7 (I am a flower  
of the field) arr. Amy Schroeder for string quartet

5'

**Francisco del Pino** Tu me sequere me (Follow me)  
(UK premiere)

10'

**Bennet** Weep, O mine eyes

3'

**Philip Glass** String Quartet No.3 (Mishima)

18'

- I. 1957: Award Montage
- II. November 25 – Ichigaya
- III. Grandmother and Kimitake
- IV. 1962: Body Building
- V. Blood Oath
- VI. Mishima/Closing

**Arvo Pärt** Fratres

11'

### Performers

Attacca Quartet:

Amy Schroeder *violin*

Domenic Salerni *violin*

Nathan Schram *viola*

Andrew Yee *cello*

From then to now, across a bridge of 400 years that we pass and re-pass this evening, is not so far. In its time, John Dowland's *Lachrimae Pavan* was enormously popular, played across Europe from Italy to Sweden. So it is now, over a further range, when hundreds of recordings are available online. It is the archetype of Late Renaissance melancholy, music of tears (in Latin, *lachrimae*) in which a drop is falling across an unseen face at the very start, as the melody trickles down – a sad dance, too, the pavan having a rhythm of two slow beats to the bar. Dowland, highly regarded as a lutenist, included it in a book of lute music he published in 1596. The next year he made it into a song, with words (flow, my tears) he may have written himself. It works well, too, on a small group of instruments, as in this version by the Attacca's viola player.

And so to Philip Glass in 2017, writing a piece for the Kronos Quartet: *Quartet Satz*, or 'Quartet Movement', to translate the German word in the title. (Schubert composed a lone movement for string quartet that is customarily called *Quartettsatz*.) As so often with Glass, the piece is made from gliding sequences that keep looping back and that make a great circle returning almost to the starting point.

Arvo Pärt's *Summa* was, in 1977, among the first compositions in what he called his 'tintinnabuli' style, alluding to the chiming of bells. Against a melody, another line flows through notes from the relevant triad (here G, B flat and D, the melody being in G minor). Another two lines soon enter below, and a pattern is set up: two upper voices, four, two lower voices, four. However, our sense of that pattern is undermined by constant change – in the lengths and divisions of the bars, in the harmony and in the melody, for though the principal lines have certain recurring formulae, they are continuously self-similar rather than repetitive. The piece is always the same, always different. Originally it was a choral piece setting the credo of the Latin mass; Pärt adapted it for string quartet in 1990.

This performance lasts approximately 1 hour and 20 minutes.  
There is no interval.

Next up, *Drifting circles* is an arrangement by another Attacca musician, Domenic Salerni, of the penultimate track from the 2019 solo album *Heliopause*, created by the Berlin cellist-

composer Anne Müller. We are back with Glass-like repetitions on several layers, with new layers dodging in, old ones falling away, and some very old ones sticking around a long time. You could hear the work as a complicated piece of machinery. Or you could hear it as sunlight through trellises.

All of which takes us back to music in which repetition is enfolded in continuous onward movement as motifs come forward for a few rounds before being let go again: the choral music of the High Renaissance, as represented by Clemens non Papa's *Ego flos campi* for seven voices. Nobody knows why 'Clement not the Pope' was so called, or where he came from, though it must have been somewhere in present-day Belgium or the Netherlands. *Ego flos campi* (I am a flower of the field), setting words from the Bible's great love song, the Song of Songs, would have been sung to honour the Virgin Mary. Again, we hear an arrangement by a member of the quartet.

It is all about pattern and flow. Indeed, this whole programme is all about pattern and flow, which we now find almost as near as yesterday in Francisco del Pino's 2024 piece *Tu me sequere me*. Born in Buenos Aires, del Pino now lives in the United States. Of this piece, which he composed for Attacca, he writes: '*Sequere me* (follow me) is one of many enigmatic inscriptions that can be found in riddle canons of the 15th and 16th centuries. It feels like a nice metaphor for friendship and trust, and is an apt description of how this piece is built: four parts in unison that slowly drift apart in time, only to reunite at the very end.'

Through one more traverse of the bridge to the past we reach a point very near where we began: a response to Dowland's *Lachrimae Pavan* that came only three years later in the first book of madrigals published by John Bennet, of whom little is known for sure. The tear formula is here again, with words that parallel those of the Dowland song: 'Weep, o mine eyes'.

The return journey then brings us to the two living composers, both nearing 90, from whom we heard after the Dowland. Glass wrote scores for string quartet for two collaborative ventures of the mid-1980s: a New York staging of Samuel Beckett's story *Company* in 1983 and Paul Schrader's biographical film *Mishima* in 1984. In each case, a finished quartet was the result a year later.

The six short movements of the *Mishima* Quartet, whose combined duration is not much more than a quarter of an hour, are titled after scenes from the film. November 25, in 1970, being the date of Mishima's assault on the military headquarters at Ichigaya and subsequent ritual suicide, and Kimitake the first name he was given at birth. However, the music is in no sense atmospheric or narrative, nor does it sound like traditional Japanese music, though it could be said to underline the highly formal, semi-abstract nature of Schrader's work.

At the same time it is thoroughly characteristic of Glass' output in its oscillations, its level surfaces barely ruffled by arpeggiation, and its repeated, repeatedly rescinded, harmonic progressions, motors of stasis or circularity, producing altogether an effect of quiet ominousness.

*Fratres* (Latin for 'brothers') is a second piece from Pärt's breakthrough year of 1977, an ever-circling chain of variations on a sequence of chords. There are no words this time and never were, perhaps only a sense of benediction.

**Programme notes © Paul Griffiths, 2025**

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