

**Australia's youthful Orava String Quartet which has been making waves in recent years represents generational change.**

Their pared down focused approach is a welcome relief from the overly self-indulgent emotive performances audiences frequently encounter and their edgy, almost angular sound is certainly not sugar-coated.

So, Mendelssohn's great *String Quartet in F minor Op 80* (a requiem for his sister) was presented as a miniature symphony in almost Beethovenian style relying on its innate craftsmanship and creative brilliance for effect rather than as a sentimental tear-jerker.

There was lightness and dexterity throughout coupled with immense rhythmic drive and flawless precision, making its conflicted opening movement, resigned *Adagio* and resolute

*Finale* all the more impactful as a narrative.



The Orava Quartet.

Earlier, Haydn's quirky, humour-filled and ever-so-clever *String Quartet in B minor Op 33* positively bustled along with fine technical finesse and absolute rhythmic unanimity, doubtless the benefits of a group playing together since 2011.

The Orava's program included two twentieth-century middle European works that summed up that continent's artistic changeability to a tee.

Jewish composer Erwin Schulhoff's life was taken in 1942 and his *Five Pieces for String Quartet* show the depth of that loss.

Cryptic, acerbic, tragic and cynical by turns, these intense short works leave a lasting impression.

And Wojciech Kilar's more recent *Orawa*, with its pulsating minimalistic rhythmic drive and real tensile strength was powerfully projected by its namesake group as a rousing final number.

**Orava Quartet**