
STAYING IN TUNE: CHAMBER MUSIC NEW ZEALAND AT 60

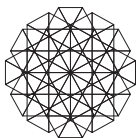
Jane Dawson



STAYING IN TUNE: CHAMBER MUSIC NEW ZEALAND AT 60

Jane Dawson

Published by



Chamber Music
New Zealand

This book is dedicated to the memory of Kate, my first chamber music partner. Our rendition of ‘There is a Tavern in the Town’ at the primary school talent quest led us on to other levels of music-making.

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SECTION ONE
OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCES



Michael Houstoun has been a favourite with New Zealand audiences since he was a student, and in 2009 he was appointed as Advocate for Chamber Music New Zealand. Photo: from a 1974 recital programme

1. 'TO STIMULATE THE GROWTH OF NEW ZEALAND'S MUSICAL LIFE' NEW ZEALAND MUSIC & MUSICIANS

*"... Chamber Music New Zealand is a rare set up and I can't think of any musician who has toured for them who doesn't feel really grateful for that set up, for that chance to consolidate their repertoire and to keep playing night after night. You learn a huge amount about yourself."*¹

Michael Houstoun

Michael Houstoun's first piano recital tour was for the Music Federation in 1972, when he was in his second year of study at Otago University. Now one of New Zealand's leading soloists, he says that gave him an introduction to touring and the challenges of playing day after day, dealing with different towns, audiences and pianos, plus having to drive himself about and meet lots of people. He enjoyed the experience, even the schools concerts, where he played to the whole school and remembers the students as "well-behaved".

Jenny Grieve of the Eastern Southland Music Society remembers one of his first concerts, held at Gore High School. "We had such a good audience we gave him extra money, and Michael said he would buy his first set of tails with it." She regrets that they cannot repeat that concert now as they do not have a concert grand. "We don't have a 'Michael Houstoun piano' any more. Our current one is an upright, a little Broadwood. A piano dealer bought it for his wife and she gave it to our Society."

1. Interview by Eva Radich on 'Upbeat', Radio New Zealand, 21 July 2008.

Michael recalls that when he returned in 1981, after seven years developing his career in Europe and America, being a soloist resident in New Zealand was unusual, but having a supporter base gave him the confidence to try. “In hindsight, the smartest thing I ever did was to create a following in New Zealand, a bunch of people who were interested in what I was doing.” He feels there is a ‘loyalty factor’ involved, but that he still has to deliver: he aims to constantly raise his own standards, and give the audience “a little bit more than last time”.

One of the highlights for CMNZ audiences of the 1990s was his performance of the complete Beethoven sonatas over seven concerts. Initiated by the Wellington Chamber Music Society in 1993, the series was repeated during the following three years in Auckland, Napier, Christchurch and Dunedin. Michael Houstoun kept a note of the audiences on those tours, and says some concerts had triple the usual subscriber numbers attending. He remembers that one of CMNZ’s founders was very excited about the project. “Fred Turnovsky had started with the view that all decent culture was imported, but the Beethoven cycle was confirmation for him that it was happening here.”

“If it was not for the Society, I would not have thought of it. The idea was so gargantuan, I needed their enthusiasm. The experience was great for me from the point of view of being a musician. Doing the whole cycle increases what you learn exponentially: you really *know* Beethoven and you are submerged in the language. It was transforming.”

Local musicians have always been part of the CMNZ concert series, either as stand-alone groups or in combination with visiting performers. The list of artists engaged by the Music Federation in the 1950s is liberally sprinkled with well-known New Zealand names such as violinists Alex Lindsay and Francis Rosner, pianists Dorothy Davies, Frederick Page, Maurice Till and Janetta McStay, as well as groups entitled ‘NZ Wind Quintet’, ‘NZ Quartet’ and the ubiquitous ‘Players from the National Orchestra’. From the mid-1960s, the number of overseas groups in the season increased, particularly in the main centres, but this coincided

with an expansion in the total number of groups appearing. By 1980 the number of groups had risen from five (in 1950) to twenty each year, and around half of the groups were resident in New Zealand.

Elisabeth Airey remembers that during her time as General Manager of CMNZ, excellent musicians were increasingly basing themselves here. "We asked 'how could we help them have careers here?' I felt New Zealand was ready for that We were moving into a generation who felt like New Zealanders, who had grown up with a feeling of nationhood."

*Both members of Flight - Carolyn Mills (harp), Bridget Douglas (flute) - are leading players in the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, and have toured for CMNZ in a variety of chamber ensembles.
Photo: CMNZ archive*



Berys Cuncannon began working for CMNZ in 1997, and was Artistic Manager from 2002 to 2007. "Our mandate was 'bringing the world stage to New Zealand', but also we did not want to undervalue what we had here. When considering overseas groups, we would ask the question: 'Are you better than the people we have here?' As times got leaner for CMNZ, local artists were gaining in stature, so we could include locals in the Celebrity Season." The duo Flight epitomises this trend. Both flautist Bridget Douglas and harpist Carolyn Mills are experienced chamber

musicians and internationally regarded in their fields, and their 2005 concerts included an attractive mixture of the familiar and new, ranging from sonatas by Bach and Scarlatti to Takemitsu's Greenpeace-commissioned *Toward the Sea* and the seldom heard *Naiades Fantasy-Sonata* by William Alwyn. The repertoire for this well-established combination of instruments was further enhanced by commissioning Eve de Castro-Robinson to write *Pearls from the Sea* for the tour.

CMNZ also had the ability to negotiate an interesting programme when it toured contemporary music ensemble Stroma in 2004. The flexibility of the group allowed for variety in the works presented, from George Crumb's impressionistic *Eleven Echoes of Autumn* to a new commission from Ross Harris, *At the Edge of Silence*. The draw-card, though, was Messiaen's 20th century classic *Quartet for the End of Time*, which had not been included in the CMNZ season since 1981, when it was played by the Auckland Chamber Music Players. Not all subscribers welcomed a whole evening of modern music, but those who did attend found the music rewarding, even if they did not like it all. Stroma had its own established audience, too, which drew in new people to the CMNZ concerts. Some centres made a feature of the newness of the music: a contemporary music enthusiast in Napier, Dermot Horne, arranged a pre-concert talk in which four local performers each discussed the way Messiaen had written for their own instrument.

The 2009 tour by wind quintet Zephyr and pianist Diedre Irons also saw performances of outstanding but rarely heard works, such as the Mozart and Beethoven Quintets for piano and winds, and the engaging Poulenc Sextet, which had not been presented since a memorable performance by the Auckland Wind Quintet and David Guerin in 1988.

Marketing local players is a particular challenge. Clarinetist and saxophonist Debbie Rawson has toured both large and small centres over the last 30 years, and says she makes sure her groups, which include Saxcess, have nice-looking publicity material so local societies find the concerts attractive. She has always taken the photos herself, and has now started taking pictures for other artists. "As a musician, I know how to capture the best bits, particularly when people are playing."



The availability of New Zealand performers such as Zephyr and Diedre Irons enables CMNZ to programme works that require a wider range of musicians than in the standard touring ensembles.

[l. to r., back] Robert Orr (oboe), Bridget Douglas (flute), Robert Weeks (bassoon), Phil Green (clarinet); [front] Ed Allen (horn), Diedre Irons (piano)

Photo: CMNZ archive

Berys Cuncannon agrees that CMNZ needs to find New Zealand artists who will sell. “Some local artists, such as Saxcess, are very entrepreneurial and present themselves successfully. They are aware of the commercial side of what they are doing.”

The biggest change she has noticed is in early music groups, which have developed an ‘entertainment’ approach to making concerts saleable by using the music to tell a story. A themed programme was featured in the 2005 tour by Wellington-based group Scaramuccia, which used the music of Corelli and his contemporaries to recreate an 18th century evening at a Scottish Musical Society. Concerts by Baroque Voices & Phantastic Spirits in 2008 used the passage of a day to describe the course of true love: “from the promise of the dawn, the heat of the day and fulfilment of noon, to the brashness of the afternoon, disillusion, parting, the despair and heart-break of night, and then the promise again of dawn”.



Pioneering freelance musicians Robert and Andrea Oliver built up an interest in early music through their recitals and school concerts.

Photo: John Johnstone Ltd



Baroque Voices first toured for CMNZ in 1996, and in 2008 teamed up with early instrument group Phantastic Spirits for the programme 'Love is in the Ayre'.

[l. to r., back]

David Morriss (bass),

Pepe Becker (soprano),

Helen Webby (harp),

Andrea Cochrane (alto);

[front]

Peter Reid (cornetto),

Donald Nicholson

(organ & virginals),

Robert Oliver (bass viol),

Shelley Wilkinson (violin & viola),

Jayne Tankersley (soprano),

Richard Taylor (tenor)

Photo: CMNZ archive

There has been a significant increase in the number of musicians making a living as performers in New Zealand, and CMNZ’s activities help to make that a viable choice. Between 60 and 70 percent of CMNZ concerts in main and associate centres each year are given by New Zealand performers, and the organisation has long had a policy of encouraging the performance of New Zealand compositions.

Viol player and singer Robert Oliver began touring for the Music Federation in 1973, was a member of The Troubadours in the late 1970s and Ensemble Dufay in the early 1980s, and most recently co-directed the Baroque Voices & Phantastic Spirits concerts in 2008. He came back from Britain by ship in 1972 with his wife Andrea, who played a variety of flutes and keyboard instruments. “We did an on-board concert in the smoky cocktail lounge, and realised we had enough instruments between us to give concerts by ourselves. CMNZ had recently toured [Dutch group] Syntagma Musica, so there was interest in early music. Just about every concert made money.”

“People thought we were mad to attempt to freelance, and some were quite hostile. I rang up one school and the music teacher objected to us charging a fee. He was quite angry, and used my toll call to harangue me. ‘What right do you have to do this? How are you different from me?’ But we were able to succeed because of the way the New Zealand scene changed.” Robert says that university music departments used to be primarily academic: “They did no instrumental teaching. As soon as you get people learning to be performers, music comes higher up the barometer.”

The CMNZ tours were just a small part of Robert and Andrea’s freelancing work, and they would do up to two each year, with different programmes. “We bought a caravan and would tour in it with three kids, a van and a six-foot harpsichord. I made a false floor in the van, and put a mattress on top of that, with the harpsichord under. CMNZ would organise babysitters for when we did the concerts. All we had to do was drive the van and turn up.” He says that the caravan was fun but physically demanding, and after a while they stayed in normal places, like motels.

Most of the groups they were in also played in Australia, but Robert Oliver says that New Zealanders face a particular problem. “The international groups have played their programmes hundreds of times. For New Zealand groups, the programmes are under-performed: there is a smaller population, and people only want to hear you once in a while. For the recent Baroque Voices & Phantastic Spirits tour, everyone had to take three weeks leave without pay, and we spent one week rehearsing intensively, then two weeks on tour.”

He points out that early music is mainstream now, and that much of it is chamber music. “CMNZ was fantastic under Elisabeth Airey and Arthur Hilton. They were adventurous, and brought in early music and contemporary groups. Then it became very conservative – they did a survey which showed that people preferred the core repertoire, and drew in their horns. Some thought that Brahms was contemporary!”

Robert and Andrea Oliver gave schools concerts until the mid-80s, and recall that one year CMNZ offered them a tour that they turned down because there were fewer concerts than they had managed to organise for themselves. They moved to Britain in the 1990s, where they also worked as freelance musicians, and found the situation there more fragmented. “The Early Music Network is similar to CMNZ in that they subsidise local societies. But there is not a single concert network to go to. CMNZ is that network here, though the New Zealand touring scene is getting more diverse.”

The Troubadours was one of the groups taken on by the Music Federation when it began acting as an agent in the late 1970s. A percentage of concert fees was retained to cover administration expenses, and Elisabeth Airey says that artist management was one of Arthur Hilton’s ideas for getting new groups going. The Gagliano Trio was the first, and Allan Chisholm was their cellist. He had been sub-principal cello in the BBC Symphony Orchestra in London, and had recently returned to play in the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra. His violinist brother John was Assistant Concertmaster and had toured for CMNZ in the past, and was asked if he would like to start a group. Allan had not met pianist Bruce Greenfield before the Trio started, but they all just loved playing chamber music concerts, and wanted to do as well as they could.

In its first year, 1976, the Gagliano Trio toured 18 centres during their days off from the orchestra. They travelled in a rental car and organised their own accommodation. “We were a bit hard up one year, and stayed in cheap places – that was not a good idea.”

They felt looked after by the local societies, but Allan says they were conscious that the audience expected a good show too. People who attended the concerts were not disappointed: the debut tour was considered very successful, and the Trio received a standing ovation in Gisborne. “The most satisfying were the small places like Motueka – they seemed pleased to hear something live. The main centres were blasé, and there was a feeling of separation between performers and audience.” The group wanted to do well as New Zealanders, and felt they were measured up against overseas groups. “We did not talk to the audience. We wore penguin suits. I would give anything to go back and not!” He recalls that the old quartets that visited here would not even smile.

The Pleyel Piano Quartet was an extension of the Music Federation-initiated Gagliano Trio, but also recreated a string trio that had performed in the first School Contest (see page 127).

[l. to r.]

John Chisholm (violin),

Bruce Greenfield (piano),

Brian Shillito (viola),

Allan Chisholm (cello)

Photo: John Ashton Photography



The Gagliano Trio (or its extension, the Pleyel Piano Quartet, with Brian Shillito) toured in New Zealand every two years, and in 1983 the Trio toured both China and Australia. The China tour was organised through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and they played to audiences of 1200 people, and attended banquets. They were accompanied by an interpreter, who was their ‘minder’ but was not intrusive, and Allan says the tour was well organised.

He remembers Australian cellist Nathan Waks commenting that in New Zealand you got lovely audiences and were wined and dined, but in Europe, they just look to see whether you have turned up. Allan says he was also looked after well by Musica Viva societies when the Gagliano Trio toured Australia.

A planned New Zealand tour by the Trio in 1984 did not eventuate because of the death of John Chisholm, and the Music Federation did not take on the management of any further groups, ceasing to be the agent of its remaining artists in 1986. Elisabeth Airey remembers that being an agent was time-consuming and not cost-effective. “We had to abandon the concept. But if we had not done it, we would never have had the skills to set up and establish the New Zealand String Quartet, so it paid off down the line.”

Rae de Lisle was another artist managed by CMNZ after she returned to New Zealand from studying the piano in Britain. She was taken on in 1981, the same year as the Baroque Players and percussionist Gary Brain. Her tours would include more small centres than the normal Societies network, and CMNZ would arrange a group of activities around an area, where she would do school concerts, masterclasses and recitals. Her own children were young, so she would not be away for more than two weeks at a time, though when she did a tour of main centres in 1979 with the group Minerva (soprano Heather Taylor, flautist Amelia Skinner) she took her daughter Rachael with her. She says doing that when travelling by herself was too challenging, though there was always someone to look after the child during concerts.

Media releases made a feature of the arrangements. “An additional touring member will be with the all-woman soprano-flute-piano trio Minerva during a fourteen centre tour of the country – pianist Rae de Lisle will have her five months old baby girl with her. Miss de Lisle is keen to have both a musical career and a family Rachael will slumber contentedly in a bassinet backstage while her mother ‘earns their supper’ with her two counterparts on the concert platform.” Local societies were asked by the Federation to provide a babysitter, and were assured that “Rachael is a particularly good baby, so should present no problems to the people caring for her”.

The flexible Zelandian Ensemble programmed a wide variety of music, from Bach and Mozart to King Curtis and Jenny McLeod.

*[l. to r., back]
Uwe Grodd (flute),
Debbie Rawson
(clarinets, saxophones),
Donald Maurice
(violin, viola);
[seated]
Rae de Lisle (piano)*



For main centre tours like that, CMNZ would organise all the travel, but for the rest Rae de Lisle would fly somewhere and hire a car. She tried being billeted at the beginning, but found that too tiring – she needed her own space. Sometimes she stayed with friends, but they had to understand that she might need a rest in the afternoon, and could not eat a large dinner before the concert.

Concerts would be held in the evenings at the homes of local people: two she remembers were the owner of Nelson's famous Chez Eelco cafe, Eelco Boswijk, and Canterbury arts patron Christopher Marshall. She also performed in local halls and other venues. "One of the funniest concerts was held in the Ladies Rest Rooms in Waipukurau, which was the biggest venue available then – they have a hall now – and they had about 90 people." Another concert that has stuck in her mind was held in a community complex in Balclutha, in a room that was next door to the badminton court. "They had forgotten to make sure the badminton was not on, so there were thuds from next door all through the concert. I just had to get on with the concert and ignore the noises."

Mostly she played in nice halls, and on reasonable pianos – but not always. In Te Anau, the piano had come from a pub and had obviously had beer

spilled on it, so the keys stuck at the lower end. The piano tuner had come up from Invercargill before the concert, but had gone home. She was playing a work by Bartok and every time she played in the bottom octave her hand would thump the note but no sound came out. In another now-forgotten place when she was touring with the Zelanian Ensemble, one of the hammers broke in the piano. “We pulled the action out and glued it together. The local concert organiser was having kittens, and they had to delay the concert for half an hour while the glue dried.”

Rae de Lisle says that people enjoyed the concerts, and she thinks the audience mostly knew something about music. She liked being involved with different groups as a performer. “I would rather do chamber music than solo playing – you are working with other people, communicating with them.”

She believes it is important for CMNZ to bring in overseas groups, whose standards are sometimes higher than those of New Zealand groups, and sometimes just different. “We need them, need to see those standards. We cannot be insular and just have our own standards, and the audience needs variety. The Zelanian Ensemble used to get together two or three times a year, and that’s not the same as a quartet that is together all year – there is a different level of ensemble playing.”

Her pupil John Chen and her daughter, violinist Julia McCarthy, have both toured for CMNZ, and she appreciates the opportunities now given to young people to tour and perform. As Michael Houstoun found thirty years earlier, building a support base is part of developing a career. “It is really important for John to continue to play at home. And he gets the opportunity to play a programme multiple times – though being John, he wants to play two programmes!”

The value of repeating programmes has also been noted by Michael Houstoun in a radio interview. “The music life in New Zealand is very much about once only, unless you’re very fortunate and can tour with CMNZ – that’s about your only chance of doing any kind of repetitive work. I can’t tell you how many pieces I’ve spent months learning to play once.”¹

1. Interview on Radio NZ Concert, 21 July 2008

For Debbie Rawson, touring gives her the opportunity to rehearse and perform quality music. “You get to do the programme more than once. One-off concerts are scary and unsatisfying. When you’re on tour, you are entirely focussed on playing. No distractions: it is a pure time. Extracting yourself from your normal life is a big effort, but worth it.” She finds CMNZ good to deal with and totally professional, with everything organised in advance. “I just make a phone call, and send in the proposal, and they decide to tour you or not.” She has been in a wide variety of groups over the years, starting with Pro Musica which was initiated by CMNZ in the 1970s. “Bruce Greenfield said to me years ago that the way to keep touring is to change your look and change your groups. New Zealand is a tiny circuit, so you cannot keep doing the same thing. Specially with winds, because there is such a small repertoire.”

*Saxcess is probably
New Zealand’s longest-lived
wind ensemble, having
formed in 1992 at the
suggestion of the
Music Federation.*

[clockwise, from top]

*Debbie Rawson,
Rachel McLarin,
Graham Hanify,
Moira Hurst*

Photo: CMNZ archive



Most recently she has been running Saxcess, another group that was suggested by CMNZ: “I was surprised they would look at a saxophone quartet”. That type of ensemble has a history stretching back at least to 1878 and has a different sound from jazz, so Debbie had to start by teaching students to play classical saxophone. “Then they went off overseas and I had to train up more. You have to plan so far ahead when

you have to train them. Now young players are coming back from study and I can just organise a tour and pick a team.” She says that members of the group enjoy each others’ company. “It helps, when you play together, but is not essential. I used to think you had to be good friends, but after a few experiences of playing with people I did not like, I realised that you could just get on with the music and survive.”

Debbie wants the audience to hear each player in Saxcess talk, because the formal atmosphere is broken. “We talk about the pieces, and about ourselves. A saxophone quartet is not a string quartet – it has different traditions.” As a performer, she has noticed differences between the large and small centres. “The little societies like you to talk, but I would feel a bit odd about doing so in Dunedin. You get paid more for the larger centres: they are more high-profile, more professional, less personal. There are better halls and lighting, and a stage manager. But the paperwork is the same!”

The personal contacts have left enduring memories. Debbie remembers touring with Rae de Lisle. “We were in our travelling clothes, and turned up to the hall. An elderly lady was there doing the flowers and her face fell. We asked what was wrong, and found that she had seen Rae on TV – she said ‘I thought you always wore a beautiful blue dress!’” Another time, Debbie was in Motueka and flautist Alexa Still, known for her long blond hair and ‘donut’ hairstyle, was coming next. “People were asking me whether I thought she would wear her hair up.”

Venues are a problem in some places. “So many theatres are not designed for music. The audience enjoy nice comfortable seats, but get short-changed on the sound. I’ve learned that I can ask about alternative venues – we don’t complain about acoustics often enough.” Saxcess uses electronic equipment in large or particularly dull halls, to give the sound more ‘presence’. “The concert is more fun for the audience if the sound is not dry, dead and clinical.”

Not all performers have been satisfied with what CMNZ could offer. During 1979, recorder player and early music specialist Steve Rosenberg was very keen to have the organisation act as his agent, and when it became clear that was not going to happen, he shifted to Australia. From his point of view, he needed some security of income, but

Alexa Still became well known to audiences in the 1990s through her recitals, and from television broadcasts of the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, where she was Principal Flute.

Photo: CMNZ archive



Steve Rosenberg toured regularly for the Music Federation between 1976 and 1983, both as a member of The Troubadours and as a solo artist.

Photo: CMNZ archive



CMNZ was already moving away from peripheral activities such as artist management to concentrate on building a strong and sustainable organisation. Although he had moved to New Zealand in the mid 1970s after visiting as part of the French group *Les Menestriers*, Steve said in 1981 that “I do consider myself a New Zealand artist” and was keen to maintain his relationship with CMNZ. He returned with the harpsichordist Webb Wiggins several times during the 1980s, and undertook extensive tours of smaller centres and schools in the South Island in 1988 and 1990, but his teaching commitments in America prevented subsequent visits.

A more public disagreement occurred in 1996, when the pianist Eugene Albulescu complained in the media that CMNZ had cancelled his recital tour for the following year, after he had spoken out against a reviewer during a concert for the Wellington Chamber Music Society. The situation was actually somewhat different: negotiations had taken place over concert dates to offer to Associate Societies, and he had not been contracted to perform anywhere. CMNZ saw his actions in the Wellington concert as less than professional and had withdrawn from the negotiations, but the resulting national reporting and discussion did neither side any favours.

Eugene Albulescu was probably not well-disposed towards CMNZ at the time, having completed a difficult tour with the *Turnovsky Trio* the previous year. Like the *Gagliano Trio* twenty years earlier, members of the *Turnovsky Trio* were some of New Zealand’s best emerging artists, and after forming in 1991 they quickly established themselves as a leading chamber group, giving outstanding performances of core repertoire such as the ‘Dumky’ Trio by Dvořak. By 1993, Wellington reviewer John Button was both praising and supporting them, saying “it is clear that these talented young musicians wish to explore further the piano trio repertoire but the means to stay together seems to be beyond them in these difficult times.” Two days earlier, the newspaper had highlighted their situation, quoting violinist Sam Konise: “It’s going to be hard to stay here,” Konise says. “But we’re mates and we love it here. We want to represent New Zealand. You don’t have to have a bunch of foreigners to get a quality music group here.”¹

1. Review by John Button, *The Dominion*, 22 July 1993; article by Alice Taylor, *The Dominion*, 20 July 1993; reproduced courtesy of *The Dominion Post*.

The original Turnovsky Trio distinguished themselves by gaining fourth place in the Melbourne International Chamber Music Competition.

*[l. to r.]
Sam Konise (violin),
Eugene Albulescu (piano),
Christopher Kane (cello)
Photo: The Evening Post*



The new-look Turnovsky Trio was resident at the University of Waikato for four years, and toured for CMNZ in 2000.

*[l. to r.]
Catherine McKay (piano),
Sam Konise (violin),
Ashley Brown (cello)
Photo: CMNZ archive*



Early in 1995, the Trio did get a chance to represent New Zealand, when they were a last-minute selection for the International Chamber Music Competition in Melbourne. Part of their rapid preparation included fund-raising concerts, which elicited some barbed comments from another Wellington reviewer. Lindis Taylor contrasted the country's support for the arts with that for the recent America's Cup race in San Diego and Rugby World Cup in South Africa. "They desperately need the proceeds from these benefit concerts to survive the competition financially – in the absence of any apparent support from the Arts Council or any major corporation It is a disturbing commentary on our values, where we have witnessed vast corporate expenditure on yachting and rugby but cannot find \$20,000 to ensure that the most talented musical group New Zealand has produced does its best in a top international contest."¹

1. Review by Lindis Taylor, Evening Post, 27 June 1995; reproduced courtesy of The Dominion Post.

CMNZ's Music Advisor, Miles Rogers, attended the Melbourne competition to report on possible groups to tour in the future. He says that the Turnovsky Trio made an impact, and people loved them. Cellist Christopher Kane described the event as "the equivalent of the World Cup – in chamber music", and the Trio distinguished itself by reaching the semi-final stage.

Things turned sour when they returned, however. CMNZ had previously arranged a tour of seven Associate Societies for them, but the group added an extra six concerts to their schedule, in contravention of their contract. The organisation was particularly concerned about a concert in Christchurch that had the potential to reduce the audience for a nearby Associate Society concert in Akaroa, and the Turnovsky Trio agreed to cancel that one. From their long experience of touring artists, CMNZ had also found that performance standards started to fall when too many concerts were scheduled in a concentrated period, and the extra concerts organised by the Trio had taken them well beyond that limit. It is easy to see that a young, enthusiastic group would not take kindly to being told that they could not manage an ambitious schedule, and a newspaper article in October 1995 announced that they would organise their next tour themselves.

"New Zealand's acclaimed Turnovsky Trio is ending its association with the national organisation set up to help chamber musicians after just one tour They say CMNZ had not promoted them where it counted for their careers – in the main centres. 'We would like to do what their institution is set up to do and play chamber music to New Zealand, but they offer limited opportunity,' said pianist Albulescu."¹ A sad footnote is that the group's cellist, Christopher Kane, fell ill shortly afterwards and died in 1997. Eugene Albulescu returned to America, where he had been living, and has never toured for CMNZ since. Sam Konise re-formed the Trio with cellist Ashley Brown and pianist Catherine McKay but the group only lasted four more years and did not regain the prominence of the earlier formation.

1. Article by Angela Ots, The Dominion, 23 October 1995; reproduced courtesy of The Dominion Post.

New Zealand String Quartet

One of the most significant changes in New Zealand's musical landscape was the establishment of the New Zealand String Quartet in 1987. The idea had first been attempted in the early 1950s, with one of the main motivations being the enormous cost of flying artists to New Zealand. The Minister of Education at that time was asked to help fund a quartet (in collaboration with the Federation, the Broadcasting Service and the National Council for Adult Education) with the idea that it would give 75 school concerts each year. At the end of 1951, the Music Federation's committee reported that "although the initial approach to the Minister was unsuccessful, the Executive feels the proposals should be brought forward again at the earliest opportunity".

In 1954, stalwart of the Wellington Chamber Music Society and historian Dr JC Beaglehole complained that "we are coming to depend more and more on the [visiting groups], we're combing the world and the locals only fill gaps", and pointed out that this did not fulfil the original intention of the Society, which was to stimulate the growth of New Zealand's musical life. "What we need is continuity; what we need is a quartet working hard and primarily as a quartet all the while and then we should have a local team we could listen to with satisfaction time after time."¹ Early hopes that the Malcolm Latchem Quartet (with Vivien Dixon, Glynn Adams and Farquhar Wilkinson) would fill the role after they opened the 1957 concert season faded when the leader and second violinist returned to England after two years.

The Federation's inspirational President Arthur Hilton challenged the Board in November 1981, just three months before he died, to think about the organisation's future, expressing his view that any organisation that remains static is invariably going backwards. One of the ideas to come out of his challenge was a renewed push to establish a professional string quartet, and a small committee was formed to make it happen.

Funding of \$40,000 was obtained from the QEII Arts Council in 1983 but had to be relinquished because a commercial sponsor had not been found by the end of May 1984. Elisabeth Airey was General Manager at the

1. John Thomson, 'Into A New Key', The Music Federation of New Zealand Inc., 1985, page 72.

time, and recalls that the organisation needed a “totally different funding concept – we wanted to set the quartet up but it could not be at any financial risk to the Federation”. There were two motivations: the feeling that New Zealand musicians could give better concerts than some of the groups being imported; and a desire to have more say in the repertoire being offered.

“The catalyst was when the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra’s General Manager Peter Nisbet said that for a limited number of years the quartet members could play in the orchestra. That made it fly. It was not the ideal way, but it was a wonderful way.” By the end of 1986 a leader for the quartet was engaged. Wilma Smith had left New Zealand in 1978 to study the violin at the New England Conservatory in Boston. She played in the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra for two years before that, and says that “chamber music really got going” for her at the Conservatory, particularly in her second year of studies when she was a member of the Graduate Quartet. Two players from that group then formed the Lydian Quartet, which obtained a part-time position at Brandeis University. They continued to study with Robert Koff, one of the founding violinists in the Juilliard Quartet.

She was seen as an excellent choice for the new venture: an experienced leader and founder of a successful quartet. For Wilma Smith, it gave her the opportunity to return to New Zealand to live – “if I was going to go back, this was the thing to entice me”. Her first task was to find fellow players. “The preference was to have all Kiwis. I got in touch with those I knew around the world, and got back together in New Zealand with a bunch of them. I would play with various combinations of them over time, at my parents’ house.” Gillian Ansell was her first choice, after three days. “Then I had an ally to help, and she and I tried out others.”

Gillian had been freelancing as a violinist in London, and loving the life there. Deciding to audition was a big dilemma for her, as she was not ready to return to New Zealand. After changing her mind constantly for several months, she finally decided not to, but by then CMNZ had bought her ticket so she felt obliged to come. “The second I started to play with Wilma, I thought ‘this is what I want to do.’”

From three strong contenders for the cello position they chose fellow Aucklander Josephine Young. A violist was harder to find, and Wilma Smith says the three of them eventually convened in Boston for auditions. Sandro Costantino, an Italian who had been studying at the New England Conservatory, was chosen. "So we had a 75% Kiwi quartet – not quite the brief, but almost."

The new quartet started rehearsing at the end of 1987. "We were rehearsing at Victoria University, in a room in an old building. I think it had been a chemistry lab, but it was falling to bits. We had to get black curtains and props from the drama department to deaden the sound."

A separate legal entity, the New Zealand String Quartet Trust, had been set up to employ the musicians, and CMNZ was paid to manage the Quartet's activities. Initial funding came from the QEII Arts Council and the Stout Trust, and by hiring the four players to the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra for half their time. Wilma Smith says for the quartet members, playing in the orchestra was fine. "We knew it was only for a limited time, and most of us had been doing a combination of stuff anyway. It was quite nice socially to be in the middle of the music scene; otherwise we would have been closeted away."

Fred Turnovsky, who had been part of the push to get a quartet going in the 1950s, arranged for the group to be based at Victoria University, channelling his donations through that institution, and he maintained a close interest in the Quartet's development. "He was a wonderful mentor. He had been so long in that world, and had a wealth of life experience."

Wilma Smith says they knew they were very privileged to have everything organised. "People in other places could not believe it was happening." But she was clear about why the Quartet was needed. "There were people like Fred who just missed having something there on the ground all the time. They had visiting quartets, but also the desire to have the staples of the repertoire in their back yard. And he saw the value of having a string quartet teaching and being mentors for young players. It was a presence in the country to get other things going – that was part of his vision."

Miles Rogers, who was the Federation's Music Advisor at the time, remembers the excitement of hearing the Quartet trying out repertoire,

and says their first public concert in the 1988 main season was wonderful. House concerts were used as a fund-raising opportunity. Graeme Edwards was one of those involved in setting up the Quartet, and recalls three concerts at people's homes, with the audience paying a large donation to attend. He regrets that those events did not continue, as they were a good way to bring in money. Since then, the emphasis has been on grants from Creative NZ and charitable trusts, and corporate sponsors.

Personal sponsorships were initially offered at \$1000 per head, but the Wellington Chamber Music Society chair of the time Basil Stanton says "some of us did not have that much, so we were organised into syndicates". Finding donors this way was more successful than attracting commercial sponsors at that early stage, and former Quartet manager Maureen Revell notes the sense of commitment engendered by the scheme. "Some people have been donating for the whole life of the String Quartet, and really identify with it."

Managing a professional group on top of their existing workload proved difficult for the staff, and after a couple of years the Board realised that the Quartet needed a dedicated administrator. Maureen Revell was employed half-time in 1990, operating from a small room within the Federation's offices. She had worked for the Federation during the 1980s, and part of her job had been to organise tours. That experience was valuable, as she had a feel for the smaller centres and knew the venues and committees. The group played in both large and small centres each year. "Some small centres could afford them, but it would have been difficult if the Quartet had not been given big centre tours. There was a feeling they were favoured by the Federation, and so they should have been."

The relationship between CMNZ and the Quartet was a good one, and Maureen Revell enjoyed being surrounded by people working in the same field. But there were some tensions. "The New Zealand String Quartet was pretty ambitious – they wanted to succeed, to be an international quartet. Sometimes the String Quartet did not get enough concerts, and sometimes the Federation wanted a programme that the String Quartet did not want to play."

From its first season in 1988, the New Zealand String Quartet was an integral part of the Federation's touring schedule, performing in large and small centres and giving school concerts.

[l. to r.]

*Sandro Costantino (viola),
Josephine Young (cello),
Wilma Smith (1st violin),
Gillian Ansell (2nd violin)*

*Photo: Commercial
Photographers Ltd*



Now managed independently, the New Zealand String Quartet continues to enrich CMNZ's concert series by presenting innovative programmes.

[l. to r.]

*Rolf Gjelsten (cello),
Gillian Ansell (viola),
Helene Pohl (1st violin),
Douglas Beilman (2nd violin)*

Photo: CMNZ archive



“We had to get recognition that the Quartet was not supported by the Federation. The New Zealand String Quartet was set up with its own Trust so that if something went wrong, the Federation would not be pulled down.” She says there were cash-flow problems: she got to know the bank manager well, and would worry at night about how she was going to pay salaries the following week.

Repertoire was an issue for the new Quartet, and they were constantly having to produce new programmes because they were going back to the same centres. Maureen Revell says that every concert counted, so they could not say ‘no’, but they had to factor in the amount of rehearsal time needed to get pieces to a performance level.

Personnel changes in 1989 saw Gillian Ansell shift to the viola and Douglas Beilman brought in from America for the second violin position, and in 1994 Helene Pohl took over from Wilma Smith as first violinist and Rolf Gjelsten came in on the cello. That line-up has remained for the past fifteen years, and is generally considered to be more even in quality than the original group. The Quartet has developed a strong identity, attracting corporate sponsors and clothing designers, touring overseas, recording numerous CDs, and running an annual chamber music school. Arnold Solomons, a CMNZ Board member and former Chair, sits in on those summer school classes most years. “The New Zealand String Quartet has the ability to fire up young performers, and open up the emotions behind the music, at a level the kids can appreciate. They have contributed a tremendous amount to New Zealand.” He regrets that CMNZ gave up managing the Quartet, which he thinks would have been an asset to the organisation.

Maureen Revell goes further and believes it is a national asset. “It is difficult to imagine New Zealand without the Quartet. It gives encouragement to students, and has given confidence to other groups.” Former CMNZ President Andrew Sykes says that the establishment of the New Zealand String Quartet was one of the most satisfying things for him. He credits Elisabeth Airey with making it happen, and rates the venture as “a marvellous achievement for the country”.

Basil Stanton, who was Music Federation President from 1989 to 1991, says the String Quartet was going from strength to strength during his time. "There were always going to be strong links, but the Quartet needed to be independent: it was starting to fly of its own accord". Initially the New Zealand String Quartet Trust and the Music Federation Board had personnel in common: the Federation's President was automatically chair of the Trust, and the Federation nominated four of the seven trustees. During the 1990s those overlapping roles gradually dropped away, so that by 1997 CMNZ no longer had a majority on the New Zealand String Quartet board, nor the right to chair that Board. In 1997 the New Zealand String Quartet manager moved out of the CMNZ offices and into a room in the Victoria University Music Department, where the musicians had officially been Quartet-in-residence since 1991. CMNZ withdrew completely from the New Zealand String Quartet Trust in 2001, with the Board minutes recording that because "the Trust had become increasingly aggressive on the subject of fees and [because] CMNZ was one of its major employers, it was apparent that representing the interest of both organisations equitably was not possible" for the remaining representative.

From the beginning, CMNZ had included the New Zealand String Quartet each year in main centre concert seasons, and often in the smaller centre and education tour roster also. Brian Budd was General Manager in 2001 when the Quartet was not offered a main centre tour. "There were more New Zealand groups around, and the standard of them was improving, so there was not room for the New Zealand String Quartet. We had to keep the quota of overseas groups, and the Quartet had been filling the 'New Zealand spot' in the Celebrity Season. The New Zealand String Quartet attitude was that they were there as of right, but they did not always produce concerts that were up to scratch."

June Clifford was a CMNZ Board member at the time, and recalls that the Quartet was very upset at not being offered a tour. "But there was a feeling that perhaps they were getting over-exposed – that was always going to be a difficulty." When he was President of CMNZ (1989–91), Basil Stanton was also on the Quartet's Board, but has subsequently

been re-appointed as a member in his own right. He remembers the New Zealand String Quartet having concerns that they were only offered national tours in conjunction with another player, and that they also wanted to do concerts on their own. “Another issue was that the New Zealand String Quartet needed their own series to sell to sponsors. They were having to balance the CMNZ work with overseas work, and to balance what they wanted to play with what people wanted to hear.”

The overwhelming view seems to be that setting up the New Zealand String Quartet has been a success for CMNZ for a variety of reasons, some hoped-for and some probably not originally thought of. Touring a New Zealand-based group is undeniably cheaper than flying one in even from Australia. Right from the beginning, the New Zealand String Quartet has been paid the same concert fees as equivalent visiting groups, but naturally their tours do not incur international airfares. Given the pressures on CMNZ’s finances over the years, that is an important factor in the organisation’s survival.

Influence on programming has been possible to a much greater extent than with international groups. CMNZ has arranged collaborations between the Quartet and visiting artists, resulting in rarely-performed works such as the Brahms String Sextet Opus 18 with Katherine Murdock and Euan Murdoch¹ (1997), and the Mozart and Brahms string quintets with German violist Hariolf Schlichtig (2004). Partnerships with other string quartets (Goldner Quartet in 1999; St Lawrence String Quartet in 2009) have enabled CMNZ to present the popular Mendelssohn Octet, and in 2007 audiences were introduced to works by Portuguese composers when the New Zealand String Quartet shared the platform with percussionist Pedro Carneiro. The presentation of Haydn’s *Seven Last Words from the Cross*, a work written for Good Friday and performed around Easter 2009, simultaneously acknowledged the 200th anniversary of Haydn’s death and placed his music into a New Zealand context with the inclusion of poetry by Dinah Hawken, lithographs by Nigel Brown and video images by Andrew Brettell in the performance.

As a stand-alone group, the 1995 Bartok quartet cycles and the presentation in 2000 and 2001 of the complete Beethoven quartets

1. Euan Murdoch replaced cellist Paul Katz, who cancelled his trip for medical reasons the day he was due to fly to New Zealand.

stand out in the minds of many audience members. Such events would probably not have happened in recent years using overseas quartets, and the significance was noted in the annual report for 2000. "No New Zealand ensemble had ever performed all sixteen Beethoven quartets as a complete cycle before and indeed, the complete cycle had been performed only once before in this country (in Wellington) when the Hungarian Quartet toured for CMNZ in 1962." Those were the days when visiting artists toured for longer periods, and it is astonishing to realise that the Hungarian Quartet's other programmes – which they performed around the country between the Beethoven concerts – included all six Bartok quartets.

Equally ground-breaking was the New Zealand String Quartet's national tour of 2005 that saw George Crumb's *Black Angels* performed in eight centres, giving most people in the audiences their first chance to hear – and see – this 20th century classic played live. The group was also an integral part of the 1994 contemporary music series 'Earthshine', which saw works by Gorecki and Schnittke rubbing shoulders with local composers Jack Body and Gillian Whitehead. CMNZ obtained specific funding from Creative NZ for this initiative, which also utilised the group CadeNZa and singer Margaret Medlyn in another rarely performed classic, Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire*.

Other consequences of having an internationally-recognised resident group were probably not fully anticipated at the beginning. As overseas touring artists, members of the Quartet are ambassadors for the New Zealand music scene, reminding promoters and artists of the strong support for chamber music that exists within the country. And their status has drawn attention to the genre in myriad ways, a notable example being recognition given to their principal business supporter in the 2008 NBR Arts Sponsorship Awards.

The Quartet has also raised the profile of chamber music within New Zealand by establishing the biennial Adam Chamber Music Festival in Nelson, attracting international musicians to perform alongside locals. Initial fears that audiences would be taken away from CMNZ concerts have given way to a recognition that both organisations benefit from 'growing the audience'. Former CMNZ President Andrew Sykes is one

of those who enjoys the Adam Festival: “There was a worry that it might make things more difficult for CMNZ, but that seems to have been managed well. The New Zealand String Quartet running a festival in Nelson has an impact outside its own chamber music series.”

New Zealand composers

Performers are not the only New Zealand musicians to benefit from CMNZ’s touring schedule, and the organisation’s support for the music of New Zealand composers has mirrored the expansion of home-grown composition. The first work commissioned by the organisation was Edwin Carr’s Piano Trio of 1959, and that has been followed by more than 60 others, most of which had their first performance during CMNZ concerts. Pieces are usually scheduled for performance by particular groups, and not all of those are local artists. During their 1997 visit, the Nash Ensemble was very happy to have a work commissioned for them to play, and their Auckland performance of Eve de Castro-Robinson’s *A pink-lit phase* was subsequently issued on CD. Although the work seems to have disappeared from the Nash Ensemble’s repertoire list, it has since been performed by other New Zealand groups.

John Psathas’s third string quartet *A Cool Wind* was written for the 2008 tour by the Takács Quartet. Members of the Quartet commented that working with the composer was good, and that they expected the piece to change as they played it more – they had chosen to include that work in their Carnegie Hall recital in 2010.

Unusual circumstances led to the Eroica Trio performing the winning piece from the 2002 School Chamber Music Contest. Jenny Thomas’ work commemorated the 2001 attacks in the United States, and the New York based Trio readily agreed to perform the piece in their Auckland concert.

“The audience appreciated the inclusion of September’s Scars by the young Aucklander, Jenny Thomas. This work, which won Thomas the Composition Prize at CMNZ’s School Music contest last year, did not seem at all out of place between Shostakovich and Dvořak and the Americans treated it with the seriousness and sincerity it deserved.”

William Dart, New Zealand Herald, 3 September 2003

The Eroica Trio frequently performs contemporary works, and was happy to include the winning composition from the 2002 School Contest in their programme.

[l. to r.]

Erika Nickrenz (piano),

Adela Pena (violin),

Sara Sant’Ambrogio (cello),

Jenny Thomas (composer)

Photo: CMNZ archive



According to a file note from the early 1990s, David Hamilton’s *Nix Olympica*, commissioned for the 1986 tour by the Auckland Wind Quartet with pianist David Guerin, was recorded by Kiwi Pacific and became one of CMNZ’s most successful commissions: the fact that a commercial recording was available led to frequent airings on radio. June Clifford recalls the Hawkes Bay audience enjoying the work. “In fact, people in the audience asked if they would play the piece again that night, and they did. It is quite accepted that New Zealand music will be a part of the CMNZ season, and that’s good. It is a real coming-of-age for New Zealand composers.”

In addition to commissioning new works, CMNZ encourages the performance of existing New Zealand compositions, and this has been seen as an integral role since the organisation’s inception – part of the aim of ‘stimulating New Zealand’s musical life’. In his role as Music Advisor, Miles Rogers noted that fostering New Zealand music was an important element. “Choosing repertoire that’s right for the audiences is difficult. You need to make sure the traditional core audience is pleased, but you also need to extend their experience.”

Composers have benefitted hugely from having resident groups such as the New Zealand String Quartet to work with. The first piece written for it was David Farquhar’s earliest String Quartet, which was performed during 1989. Gillian Whitehead’s *Moon, Tides and Shoreline* was also commissioned by CMNZ that year, and performed the next season. Since then, the Quartet has played over 40 new New Zealand works in concert,



The Auckland Wind Quartet and David Guerin made a commercial recording of the work commissioned for them by the Federation.

[l. to r.]

*John Ure (horn),
David Angus (bassoon),
Peter Scholes (clarinet),
David Guerin (piano),
Stanley Jackson (oboe)
Photo: CMNZ archive*

and around 200 student compositions in workshops. The personal strengths of the players have influenced at least one of the new works: Jack Body used the hidden talents of cellist Rolf Gjelsten to include a part for piano accordion in his quartet *Saetas*, commissioned by CMNZ for the 2003 season.

Gillian Ansell says they also introduce overseas audiences to New Zealand music, and have included works by John Psathas, Jack Body, Gareth Farr, Ross Harris and Gao Ping in their programmes. “Audiences are generally interested in New Zealand compositions. In 2008 we toured Europe with Gillian Whitehead’s *Puhake ki te rangi*, with Richard Nunns playing whalebone Maori instruments, and people talked about that piece.”

Rae de Lisle feels CMNZ has an important role in providing work for composers. “People are always surprised when they hear something they have not heard before, and say ‘I really enjoyed that – it reminded me of a place I know’.” She cites the work played by Julia McCarthy and John Chen in 2007, Robin Toan’s *Tutukaka*, which carried the name of a Northland coastal town and painted a picture of “that type of beach holiday”.

Composer residencies

Between 1988 and 1995 CMNZ went one step further and established a ‘composer-in-residence’ scheme, with special funding from the QEII

Arts Council. The intention was to stimulate the composition of chamber works that would be performed by touring artists, and interest was strong – nine composers applied for the first year-long position.

Noel Sanders, a New Zealander teaching in Sydney, was the composer chosen, and during his tenure in 1989 he produced the required three works: *Wolf* (for the New Zealand String Quartet), *Spook* (for the Zelianian Ensemble), and *Geek* (for use in schools). His presentation to the National Council meeting in October 1989 stimulated discussion about the need to have contemporary works in CMNZ's programming as a means of attracting more young people to concerts. He also suggested that the resident composer be given more freedom to choose what ensembles to write for, but the Music Federation felt it was essential that the outcomes of the residency remain targeted: specifically, that there was a need to expand the repertoire of the New Zealand String Quartet.

Some Board members had doubts about the value of the scheme, as none of the works Noel Sanders wrote had been played during his residency, and there were difficulties over the production of performing parts for some of them. *Wolf* was eventually performed in 1991, and *Spook* some years later.

The Arts Council decision on funding the position for another year came through too late to set up a residency for 1990, and no-one was appointed in 1991 either because the chosen applicant found work elsewhere.

Auckland composer Ivan Zagni, who had been composer-in-residence with the Auckland Philharmonia in 1990, took up the position in 1992, and the scheme seemed to run much more smoothly. The New Zealand String Quartet premièred his *String Quartet No 1 'Wellington'* that same year. *The Cospatrick Tragedy* was toured by the New Zealand Chamber Orchestra the following year, as was *Double Faced Mask*, written for the Auckland Wind Quintet plus dancer as a piece for schools concerts. However, none of these works appear to be published or recorded.

In his end-of-tenure review, Ivan Zagni stressed the importance for him of being in Wellington for the term of the residency, to get a feel for the local community and to be in touch with the musicians who would be

playing his music. He commented on the financial burden of maintaining two households for the nine month period, and suggested that CMNZ, as the commissioner of the three required works, should pay for the writing out of parts and score.

There were some initial concerns about the choice of Gareth Farr in 1993, as he was considered very young – he was not yet 25 and had just finished studying in the US. Even he was not sure: “I thought they had got the wrong person when they rang up. I was a bit scared. It was intimidating – it was not just like getting a good mark for an assignment. What if CMNZ didn’t like what I wrote?” He says that at that time he was still learning what his voice was, and the residency gave him more time than he has ever had since to get the pieces right. The string quartet he wrote that year, *Owhiro*, is one of the pieces he is most happy with in his whole output. “I loved working with the New Zealand String Quartet. There were lots of changes – they don’t keep their opinions to themselves. But they were right.”

“I was hearing first-hand what the piece sounded like. With students you get a false impression, because they are not such good performers. But with the Quartet, if it sounded bad I knew that there was something wrong with the piece.” The work changed even after the first performance, as he took out a middle section that he felt was too long.

Gareth Farr believes that any collaboration is good for composition, and should always be part of residencies. “It is important for the groups to be in touch with composers as well, otherwise they just play music of dead people. With those, they cannot suggest changes, for example to notes, to make the music easier to play or sound better. Good performers are creative.” With his work *Cadenza*, he did not have the experience of the group (called CadeNZa) rehearsing, as by then he had returned to America to study. He says that work was written as his contribution for a homage to ground-breaking contemporary French composer Pierre Boulez, and pokes fun at “the more extreme elements of the Darmstadt school”.

Neville Hall was the last resident composer, returning to New Zealand in 1995 from Slovenia, where he had been living. By then, the scheme

had been refined to last only six months, which was felt to be more appropriate in relation to the salary offered. He was keen to work with school students, and CMNZ organised a series of workshops in Taranaki and Southland which were highly praised by schools and the regional music advisor. "The overall impression has been 'What a wonderful opportunity to work face-to-face with a young composer'. A big thank you to CMNZ for making him available. He has provided a real breath of fresh air with the stimulus of a different approach to composition. We need much more of this type of thing."

The composer himself found the exercise very worthwhile. "Almost all of the people I dealt with seemed grateful to have some input into what is rather a difficult aspect of the new school music curriculum I can see that there is a genuine need for more projects of this kind in schools and I hope that you retain this aspect of the CMNZ Composers Residency in future years."

The New Zealand String Quartet and Peter Scholes performed his clarinet quintet *A Splinter of Silence in the Belly of Time* in November 1995, but a planned performance of *Six Preludes and a Postlude* by the group CadeNZa was delayed until 1997 because Creative NZ funding was not available for the continuation of CMNZ's series of contemporary music concerts.

For Miles Rogers, who was on the selection panel, the composers-in-residence were "all wonderful to work with, very different, and worthwhile. Composers nowadays see the importance of communicating with the audience; producing accessible music, but still experimental." But he felt the scheme was not as successful as the Auckland Philharmonia's, because not as many works were picked up by other groups.

Changes in funding criteria meant that the scheme was discontinued from 1996, but it has left a legacy: at least one of the works written during residencies has been taken into the repertoire of an established group, and many others are publicly available as scores and recordings.

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Opus 29 'Storm'
Dvořák: Quintet in E flat Opus 97

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