



Chamber Music New Zealand THEME

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The year that's gone... delights to come!



The Song Company visits in October 2010

This issue of Theme appears between our 2009 and 2010 seasons, giving us the perfect opportunity to reflect on highlights of concerts past, and to anticipate some of the joys to come. Some of our staff around the country share memories of 2009 and thoughts about next year.

Hearing Pinchas Zukerman in concert was a pinnacle for many, but those who heard him speak were doubly blessed. When programmes for the Chamber Players concert were in short supply in **Christchurch**, **Jody Keehan** was thrilled to see the audience treated to the maestro's wonderful sense of humour and his passion for the ensemble when he agreed to speak between pieces to help explain the programme. Earlier in the year Jody, herself a wind player, appreciated the beauty of the woodwind section without the full orchestra in the concert by Zephyr. As a jazz singer, she's particularly looking forward to hearing the Song Company from Australia in 2010.

In **Manawatu**, **Karen Carter** organised for the Dohnanyi Trio, winners of the Manawatu School Music Contest, to play on stage at the Zephyr concert. This elicited very positive responses from both the audience and the reviewer, and provided a great performance opportunity for the group. In 2010, Karen is looking forward to 'something old, something new and something challenging', and reconfiguring the Regent Theatre for the *Schubertiade* experience!

"In Hamilton, the Eroica Trio concert started off the year with lots of energy and colour. The University and school students were encouraged to 'dress up' for the concert and the whole atmosphere was very festive," reports **Hamilton's Gaye Duffill**. Next year, Gaye is looking forward to having seven concerts to manage; to introducing the Flexi Pass option; and to seeing how popular the new 5pm Sunday time slot will be.

The magical atmosphere created by Jack Liebeck and Stephen De Pledge was a stand-out memory for **Jennifer Sinclair of Southland**. She also loves watching young people getting swept away by the music and experiencing the power of live performance for themselves. "They suddenly have a realisation of how far music can take them if they want it to, and it is exciting watching their hunger for good music take hold."

CONTINUES PAGE 3



Zukerman and his Chamber Players

30 NOVEMBER DEADLINE

Remember to subscribe before 30 November 2009 if you wish to retain your seat for the 2010 season.

In Wellington, the Borodin Quartet appear as part of the 2010 New Zealand International Arts Festival, so it is even more important to book your subscription early if you wish to keep your seat!

From the Chief Executive



It's been quite a year! Looking back over our 59th concert season line-up there have been numerous highlights. It has been a year-long celebration of two of my favourite composers for the genre, Mendelssohn and Haydn.

We have enjoyed the Mendelssohn piano trios from the Eiroicas, string quartets from the St Lawrence and Tokyos, quintets from Zukerman Chamber Players and the monumental octet, as the season finale from the combined forces of the St Lawrence and New Zealand String Quartets. There are few other composers who have left us such a rich selection of chamber music.

However, in terms of invention and humour it is impossible to go past Haydn as the 'father of the string quartet'. Geoff Nuttall from the St Lawrence String Quartet played the first violin lines last month as though the ink on the page had not yet dried. Hearing this music in the hands of the masterful Tokyo String Quartet was also a revelation. *Seven Last Words* showcased our own New Zealand String Quartet along with the talents of poet Dinah Hawken, artist Nigel Brown and director Sara Brodie.

Zephyr wind quintet and pianist Diedre Irons introduced us to less-known music by composers other than Haydn and Mendelssohn! Their popular programme featured a new work by kiwi Anthony Ritchie. Jack Liebeck and Stephen De Pledge performed more than 20 concerts in September alone.

Emerging kiwi artists and ensembles such as the Cook Strait Trio, Tasman and Matariki String Quartets, Amalia Hall and John-Paul Muir, and John Chen's prize-winning Saguaro Trio based in Los Angeles, have all caught our attention. The NZCT Chamber Music Contest was won by a flute, viola and harp trio and the overall standard was staggering. Ensembles in Schools this year featured Strike percussion ensemble. Their spirited performance, with several hundred primary school children, was magically facilitated by Julian Raphael and it nearly lifted the roof off the Masterton Town Hall.

2010 promises even more.

On behalf of us all, thank you for your wonderful support this year. Have a great summer and see you at the Borodins in March.

Euan Murdoch
Chief Executive

New Board member



We are pleased to welcome Gretchen La Roche onto the Board of CMNZ. She has recently returned to the Christchurch Symphony Orchestra after being away for three years during which time she managed the national music portfolio for Creative New Zealand in her role as Senior

Programme Advisor. Gretchen is one of New Zealand's most successful clarinetists, and has played in orchestras, chamber ensembles and as a soloist in New Zealand and overseas. She is also tutor in clarinet performance at the University of Canterbury.

"Growing up in Gisborne I remember attending concerts presented by visiting CMNZ musicians. The influence this had on my own personal musical development was considerable. Hearing performances by artists such as Michael Houstoun, The Zelanian Ensemble, Peter Scholes and David Guerin provided both inspiration and motivation and I hope that future audiences continue to have this opportunity.

I feel very privileged to be part of Chamber Music New Zealand. It is such a dynamic organisation and makes a vital contribution to the cultural fabric of New Zealand; I hope to make a positive contribution towards ensuring CMNZ continues to flourish for a further 60 years."

New website



Our new look website was launched recently to coincide with the launch of our 2010 season. As well as an updated look, there are many features that make it easier to use, and to find your way round.

One of the useful new features is the option on the artists' page and the calendar which allows you to search concerts

by centre – helpful if you're planning a trip, or just need to remind yourself of what's coming up in your own centre.

Currently programme notes from past concerts are available for download from the Resources page. We hope to be able to make the basic notes about the compositions available in advance of the concerts in future. If you subscribe to our 'In the Loop' email newsletter, we'll alert you to when the notes are available. If you aren't 'In the Loop' already – you can sign up through the website on the 'Contact Us' page.

Thanks to the team at Springload for listening to our ideas and creating a look that's fresh, colourful and user-friendly.

Front page story Continued ▼▼▲▲▼▼▼▲▲▲▲



The Borodin Quartet opens our 2010 Season in March

Rosie-Anne Pinney works hard in **Nelson** to find opportunities for visiting artists to share some of their knowledge with local musicians. "The grand finale of Nelson's Chamber Music New Zealand experience this year was an opportunity for a Nelson duo to have some coaching in a workshop situation with Geoff Nuttall from the St Lawrence String Quartet. The insights given by Geoff were invaluable, and the musicians very much enjoyed being pushed 'so far, but not too far' to achieve some wonderful improvements in their playing and interpretation."

In **Hawkes Bay**, **Megan Mannering** enjoyed welcoming back so many familiar artists that have toured in recent years. "It is a real perk of our job to meet these amazing people and catch up on what has happened personally and professionally since they were last in Hawkes Bay." She also enjoyed meeting Stephen and Jack, recalling a moment as they were picking up their rental car: "There was the wicked gleam in Jack's eye when he picked up their Commodore V6 SS. I warned them that the Napier-Taupo Road didn't have too many straights and the smile widened even more. 'Cornering is his thing', said Stephen clutching his seat belt!"



Jack Liebeck and Stephen De Pledge

For **Susan Case** in **New Plymouth**, the reality of the eagerly awaited arrival of Pinchas Zukerman joyfully matched the anticipation, and it was a perfect gift for her 50th birthday! For 2010 she is really excited about hosting the Borodin Quartet in New Plymouth. Susan notes that it's her 17th year working for Chamber Music New Zealand, and says that her job just gets better and better.

All in all a kaleidoscopic collection of experiences, with many more promised for 2010!

A WORD OF THANKS TO OUR SUPPORTERS

Regular Theme readers will be aware that Chamber Music New Zealand receives generous funding and support from a variety of contributors, and that this is integral to our ability to tour ensembles, both international and local, across our ten centres. A recent example of support that contributed to the feasibility of a tour was the funding we received from Pub Charity and The Southern Trust for the St Lawrence String Quartet tour (pictured). Pub Charity also provided venue support for the Tokyo String Quartet tour in June.



Pub Charity's focus is on supporting communities all over New Zealand. Every year they return millions of dollars in gaming machine proceeds to New Zealand communities, which make a huge difference to a wide range of local causes. The Southern Trust operates gaming machines and returns the net proceeds to charitable purposes.

For their significant support of our activities, CMNZ extends its grateful thanks to both Pub Charity and The Southern Trust. Funding from organisations and individual donors enables CMNZ to continually offer the very best chamber music experience. Please join us in applauding their support.



Changing over to a new millenium (1990-Present)

We were prepared for a devastating change-over in to the new millennium. Y2K threatened to bring life as we knew it to an end. However, it turned out to be 'a storm in a tea cup' and the music played on!

Euan Murdoch – Nov 2009



The '90's

Throughout the 90s an impressive line-up of international ensembles continued to visit our shores. A few of these stand out vividly in our memory. Yuri Bashmet was a musical phenomenon and an enigma, touring twice with his Moscow Soloists. String quartets from all corners of the globe continued to feature including the Borodins, Emersons, Prazács, Tokyos and the Takács. Alongside them, the New Zealand String Quartet appeared in every concert season as they developed their distinctive voice.



Tokyo String Quartet

One of the highlights of this decade was the monumental achievement by Michael Houstoun to present complete Beethoven piano sonata cycles. This project was initiated by the Wellington Chamber Music Society who hosted the first cycle in 1993. Further cycles were presented in Auckland, Christchurch, Napier and Dunedin.

In 1995, the New Zealand String Quartet presented all six Bartók quartets in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin. This led on to a special 50th anniversary project to herald the new millennium where they presented complete Beethoven string quartet cycles over six concerts in our major centres.

These projects represented artistic milestones in the history of chamber music in New Zealand and in hindsight, signalled a coming-of-age for our musicians and audiences.

In 1992, the Music Federation of New Zealand changed its name to Chamber Music New Zealand. They also experimented with hosting Composers-in-Residence, including Gareth Farr and



Buskaid Soweto String Ensemble

continued a commitment to commissioning and presenting new New Zealand music. There is a real logic to composers writing for small ensembles. With fewer players, it is more likely that works will be performed. Moreover, dynamic groups like the New Zealand String Quartet have actively encouraged composers to write for them and they have become ambassadors for our music abroad.

This has led to New Zealand ensembles and composers gradually building an international profile. CMNZ has also been responsible for commissioning works for international groups who tour our country and take our music home with them.

The new millennium

The ongoing challenge facing us this decade is that our core audience is growing old gracefully with us. Many subscribers have remained loyal to us since 1950. However, the subscription model is under threat as new audiences pick and choose which events they will attend. Our total attendances dipped significantly through the first half of this decade but are gradually returning with a greater number of single-ticket buyers taking the place of subscribers. The emphasis is on attracting new audiences and retaining them through audience development. To some extent, the makeup of our concert seasons reflects this change.

In recent years Kronos Quartet (2005), Jonathan Lemalu and Malcolm Martineau, and Buskaid Soweto String Ensemble (2007), Hesperion XXI (2008) and Zukerman Chamber Players (2009) have all attracted large numbers of new audience to our events. There has been a more diverse range of chamber music presented and a greater emphasis on collaborations with arts partners including festivals, orchestras and other arts organisations.

Several dynamic young international ensembles have burst on to the scene this decade. Repeat tours by the Jerusalem and



Jonathan Lemalu

St Lawrence Quartets and our favourite fraternal trio, the Eggners from Vienna, have created affection for them as part of our extended family. We follow their careers with a sense of pride.

We have identified our role as a development agency, not solely as a concert presenter. In this capacity, we are investing in the sector and in developing our audience. Our education work has become more vital than ever for our future. The schools' Chamber Music Contest is a shining example of the importance of this investment in our unique musical landscape.

Since 2000, outstanding musicians such as pianist John Chen have shone through this event, been nurtured as performers on our small-centre touring network and are now emerging on to the world stage. His piano trio recently won the Hamburg International Chamber Music Competition. Another kiwi ensemble, the Tasman String Quartet were also accepted in to this prestigious event and are currently resident in the States following a two-year residency with Takács Quartet.

It is easy to identify many things that measure the success of our organisation, e.g. artistic excellence, fiscal responsibility, longevity, international line-up of stellar artists etc. However, for me, one thing stands above all else. Our musicians and ensembles are tasting success on the international stage and we are immensely proud to present them on our national stages. This is proof that the vision and astute investment over six decades is paying handsome dividends.

Devoted stewardship



One person stands out as having made a life-long contribution to chamber music in New Zealand. Our Chair June Clifford has overseen many changes in our history and remains as passionately ambitious today as ever. We are indebted to her commitment and support over four decades. Thank you!

Euan Murdoch

LISTENING POST

Tchaikovsky String Quartets 1 and 2

Although the Borodin Quartet's tour is still a few months away, you may like to become more fully acquainted with the first two Tchaikovsky String Quartets in advance. I wasn't at all familiar with these works, and initially found it difficult to reconcile what I was hearing with the 'grand statements' of, for example, his 1812 Overture and Piano Concerto No 1 - even though he was writing for the smaller forces of a string quartet. The Classical eloquence of the first quartet in particular, was quite a surprise. I was also intrigued to discover that the quartets are sometimes described as Russia's first serious chamber music works.

Considering the sense of history and achievement that surrounds the Russian institutions and musicians that contribute so much the 'classical' music world of today, I was motivated to do a little digging into the country's musical past to find out why.

Concert life in Czarist Russia had always been strongly influenced by that of Western Europe, attracting touring European composers and performers who were popular with the aristocracy. However, in the mid-1800s the music scene was around 100 years behind the times, compared with contemporary London. There were almost no formal training institutions for musicians until pianist/composer Anton Rubinstein founded the St Petersburg Conservatory in 1861 – many musicians in employment in Russia were Italian. Rubinstein had also established the Russian Musical Society in 1858 which gave an annual season of chamber music concerts, generally string quartets. Both institutions were closely allied to the Austro-German traditions of past generations, and were criticised by some as being old-fashioned and 'un-Russian'. Tchaikovsky, a student of Rubinstein's, wrote these quartets at the beginning of his career in 1871 and 1873, partly as a 'profile-raising' exercise, and so the 'early' Tchaikovsky is revealed, and all is explained!

The first movement of String Quartet No 1 is truly Classical in style, with no clue to its Russian origins at all. However, in the second movement an endearing folk melody from the Ukraine gives more than a hint of nationalism - Tchaikovsky's skilful setting of it apparently reduced Tolstoy to tears. A certain amount of 'Russian-ness' appears in the following movements, which for me inspired images of Cossacks and energetic peasant dances.

In the second quartet, Tchaikovsky makes use of a darker palette of colours. Drama and emotion filter through all movements, and there's much more of the 'symphonic' Tchaikovsky in evidence.

There is a wonderful recording of the first quartet by the Jerusalem Quartet, which is coupled with Shostakovich's 3rd. The Gramophone Guide recommends a recording by the Borodins from 1993. It includes the three string quartets, plus the Sextet *Souvenir de Florence*, and is available to order online.

Julie Sperring

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Regional touring in 2010



Clockwise from top:
Emma Sayers and Richard Mapp
Elios
Aroha Quartet
Niels Bijl, saxophonist
Wellington Guitar Duo



In 2010 we have an eclectic range of ensembles spreading out across the country delivering some wonderful concert experiences.

In **February**, the New Zealand Chamber Soloists are visiting Wanganui and Waikanae.

April sees Richard Mapp and Emma Sayers in Wanganui Warkworth, Rotorua, Gisborne and Upper Hutt.

In **June**, the Wellington Guitar Duo visit Whangarei, Warkworth, Kerikeri, Te Awamutu, Gisborne and Wanganui; Goeknil Biner-McGrath and Tom McGrath go to Gore; the New Zealand Chamber Soloists visit Lower Hutt; and Josef Špaček, winner of the 2009 Michael Hill International Violin Competition, kicks off his tour in Waikanae.

Josef Špaček and Michael Houstoun continue their extensive tour in **July**, adding another four regional centres to their main season tour – Whangarei, Motueka, Whakatane and Rotorua. Diedre Irons tours with saxophonist Niels Bijl to Warkworth, Tauranga and Blenheim.

Our two 'emerging ensembles' visit a total of 12 centres in **August**. Amalia Hall and John-Paul Muir travel to Gore, Wanganui, Taihape and Lower Hutt; and the Cook Strait Trio head to Kerikeri, Whangarei, Warkworth, Gisborne, Rotorua, Te Awamutu, Tauranga and Wellington.

In **September**, newly-formed ensemble Elios, comprising flute and string quartet, take their special programme to Waikanae and Wellington; Jenny Wollerman and Bruce Greenfield give a concert in Tauranga; and the Aroha String Quartet perform in Rotorua and Putaruru.

The Aroha Quartet continue on to Tauranga in **October**, and Jonathan Besser and Miranda Adams take their special brand of music to Wanganui.

Elios wraps up the year visiting Kerikeri in **November** and Motueka in **December**.

More details about these artists and their programmes will be on our website soon, and in future issues of Theme.

Encore

For the Future of Chamber Music New Zealand



Michael Houstoun, Advocate

Encore is our new supporter programme endorsed by Michael Houstoun. Launched in September this year, it has already attracted a number of generous one-off donations and encouraged some of our supporters to become regular monthly donors or to volunteer their time.

The aim of this programme is to build up the endowment fund held by Chamber Music New Zealand Foundation to secure our future. To achieve this, we are also seeking bequests to add to those already administered by the Foundation. These gifts can really make a difference and will help to guarantee that others may continue to enjoy chamber music as we do today.

If you wish to find out more about Encore, please ask your branch chair, local Concerts Manager or call Jenni Hall or myself on 0800 266 2378.

Thank you
Euan Murdoch

Bravo!

We are very grateful to the Auckland branch committee, in particular to Chair Sidney Smith and Lyndell Shannon who raised \$9,000 for the CMNZ Foundation at their Bravo fundraiser held recently at James Wallace's Rannoch. This event showcases university ensembles from the Auckland Chamber Music Society chamber music competition. The winning trio featured violin, clarinet and piano. Thank you to all those who contributed to the success of this evening including the performers, organisers, guests, auctioneer Peter Webb and MC Professor Robert Constable.

Buskaid's new release



Buskaid's new CD, *Crazy*, is now available, and we have limited copies for sale at \$25 plus postage and packing.

Crazy is a compilation of brilliant and original string arrangements by Timothy Kraemer, of favourite classic pops. *Mamma Mia*, *Sweet Dreams*, *Georgia*, *Fever*, *Son of a Preacherman* and *Bridge over Troubled Water* are just a few of the great tracks on this CD, which also features three of the ensemble's string players as vocalists. *Crazy* was four years in

the making, and is not only a vibrant collection of classic pops played by a group of talented young township musicians, but also a unique musical document reflecting the shifts and changes which are an inevitable feature of a project such as Buskaid.

More information is on Buskaid's website www.buskaid.org.za.

If you'd like to order a copy in time for Christmas, please phone 0800 266 2378 or email info@chambermusic.co.nz.



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Waipukurau, Wanaka, Wanganui, Warkworth, Wellington,
Whakatane, Whangarei and Upper Hutt.

NZCT Chamber Music Contest Celebrations



2009 winners, the Wäldchen Trio

In a fantastic evening of performances at the James Hay Theatre in Christchurch, The Wäldchen Trio, comprising Anita Huang (harp), William Frost (flute) and Kate Oswin (viola), took first prize in the New Zealand Community Trust Chamber Music Contest 2009, playing Israeli composer Lior Navok's *Veiled Echoes*.

The winner of the original composition section was Dunedin student Corwin Newall with his piece *57 Octaves Below*. Corwin also won this section in 2007.

Now the 2009 contest is over, planning is well underway for the 45th Chamber Music Contest in 2010. One of the notable

changes is the introduction of National semi-finals held on the day prior to the National Final. Up to 12 groups will be invited to Wellington to perform in the semi-final with 6 groups then selected for the Final.

This year we welcome the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music as the principal sponsor of the regional coaching workshops. These offer a fantastic opportunity for groups who live outside of the main centres to gain access to extra professional tutoring.

Key Contest dates for 2010:

Entries Open	5 February
Entries Close	31 March
Coaching applications close	5 April
District Contests	7 – 20 June
National Semi's and Final, Wellington	30 – 31 July

The New Zealand Community Trust continues their generous support of this event alongside ABRSM, SOUNZ (Centre for NZ Music), The Wallace Arts Trust, KBB Music and various regional funders who support their district events. CMNZ acknowledges the core funding it receives from Creative New Zealand

Ensembles in Schools 2009

In 2008 CMNZ launched *Ensembles in Schools* at three primary schools in the Wairarapa community of Masterton. At the heart of this project was a desire to bring students, teachers and professional musicians together in a celebration of youth and the arts.

In August 2009 *Ensembles in Schools* returned to Masterton with phase two of the project. Over 240 children were involved this year, with visitors noting the high level of focus and participation shown by the students. The goal this time was to bring into the programme the wider school community (new teachers and students). Once again, the inspirational Julian Raphael worked directly in schools ahead of the residency week with Strike Percussion.

When Strike Percussion arrived in Masterton on September 14 and started unpacking cars filled to the brim with all manner of percussion gear, the students knew instantly that this was going to be a great week. Over the following days, students and teachers played with Strike and Julian in a variety of classroom activities, full school assemblies and lunchtime 'jam' sessions. At the end of the week, when all three schools came together for the final concert, the result was astounding. In front of the Mayor and a packed Masterton Town Hall the kids raised the roof in a spectacle of percussion and song.



Schools are a microcosm of the wider community, and wellbeing in the classroom is reflected beyond the school walls. What makes *Ensembles in Schools* unique is that in addition to delivering a focused music programme to primary school students with ongoing professional support to teachers, we can now prove that we are raising community awareness to the benefits of linking New Zealand musicians directly with schools.

Ensembles in Schools could not happen without the generous support of Trusts and community groups like Trust House Charitable Trust, Creative Communities, the Masterton Trust Lands Trust and the Eastern and Central Community Trust.

**THEME
ONLINE**

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