

Chamber Music New Zealand  
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CONCERT SEASON 2009



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ENDOWMENT TRUST

# Seven Last Words

THE NEW ZEALAND STRING QUARTET

PRESENTS

HAYDN AND THE

# STRING QUARTET



NEW ZEALAND  
STRING QUARTET



Two programmes of discovery and celebration to mark the bi-centenary of Haydn's death.

- Concerts in
- Wellington (August 25, 27, 29)
  - Auckland (September 4, 6)
  - Dunedin (September 15)
  - Nelson (September 16)
  - Napier (September 19, 20)

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Warkworth, Wellington, Whakatane and Whangarei.

# Welcome

Welcome to this very special performance that honours the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Haydn's death. He is acknowledged as the father of the string quartet and his compositions are renowned for their innovation and surprises. Two centuries later, Alfred Schnittke was another innovator, breaking new musical ground while also honouring music from earlier times.

The centrepiece of this concert is *The Seven Last Words of Our Saviour on the Cross*. We have combined the talents of some of New Zealand's finest artists to present a uniquely kiwi perspective on this work. We began this project with a desire to illuminate Haydn's music more vividly through commissioned words and images. We acknowledge the ongoing role that Creative New Zealand plays in funding New Work such as this production and are hugely grateful to them.

Our partnership with Deane Endowment Trust is another reason that we are able to bring you this wonderful music. We could not have toured this production throughout the country without their generous support.

Enjoy!



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**Euan Murdoch**

Chief Executive, Chamber Music New Zealand

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## Message from the tour donors

We are pleased to support this very special performance of Haydn's Seven Last Words. This showcases the extraordinary creative talent that New Zealand has to offer. Helene Pohl, Douglas Beilman, Gillian Ansell and Rolf Gjelsten of the New Zealand String Quartet, artist Nigel Brown, poet Dinah Hawken and director Sara Brodie are renowned in their own genres. Chamber Music New Zealand is to be congratulated for bringing them together for this innovative project. Our partnerships with CMNZ have previously supported singers Jonathan Lemalu and Anna Leese and pianists Terence Dennis and Malcolm Martineau.

### Deane Endowment Trust

*Trustees Gillian and Roderick Deane were honoured last year for the substantial and sustained generosity they have provided to the arts in New Zealand. They received the annual Arts Foundation of New Zealand Award for Patronage, presented by Perpetual Trust.*

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## PROGRAMME

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### INTERVAL

Haydn      The Seven Last Words of Our Saviour on the Cross Opus 51      Page 4

HAMILTON	15 APRIL	NEW PLYMOUTH	17 APRIL	MANAWATU	20 APRIL
HAWKES BAY	21 APRIL	NELSON	29 APRIL	CHRISTCHURCH	30 APRIL

Please note: the lights will be dimmed during the performance

Out of respect for the music, the musicians, and your fellow audience members, please switch off all cellphones, pagers and watches.



# New Zealand String Quartet



Principal Sponsor:



**Helene Pohl: violin**

**Douglas Beilman: violin**

Chair Sponsor: Donald J Best

**Gillian Ansell: viola**

**Rolf Gjelsten: cello**

Chair Sponsor: Christopher & Jilly Marshall

The New Zealand String Quartet is the longest-standing chamber group in this country, and the most-travelled classical ensemble. Regular visitors to both large and small centres in New Zealand, the group also tours each year to North America. In 2008 the Quartet made its first ever visits to Poland and the Czech Republic, as well as playing in Scotland, Germany and the Netherlands and Curacao.

As teachers, the members of the group also conduct the annual Adam Summer School for young chamber musicians, and are Quartet-in-Residence at the New Zealand School of Music in Wellington. The Quartet's extensive list of CDs has recently been added to with the release of their recording of works by Berg and Wolf, and the first in a three volume series of Mendelssohn's complete works for string quartet.

# Dinah Hawken

**poet**

Dinah Hawken, born in Hawera and now living in Paekakariki, has written five collections of poetry, the first of which won the Commonwealth Poetry Prize for 'Best First Time Published Poet' in 1987. Others, including *One Shapely Thing* (VUP 2006), have been finalists for the NZ (or Montana) Book Awards. She currently teaches *Writing the Landscape*, a creative writing workshop, at the International Institute of Modern Letters, Victoria University.

# Sara Brodie

**director**

Born in Christchurch, Sara Brodie trained as a dancer and spent eight years working in theatre in Europe. Her directing credits include *The Opera Ball* (NZ Opera, 2009), *the Kreutzer*, (Auckland Arts Festival 2009, & STAB season 2007), *Kia Ora Khalid* (Capital E), and *Peter Pan* (Wanganui Royal Opera House 2008). Sara specializes in Laban Movement Analysis and teaches Acting at East 15 Acting School, London and is a co-director of Stage Left (a new company dedicated to combining the genres of text, music, media and movement).

# Andrew Brettell

**video designer**

Andrew Brettell has designed video projection for shows at Wellington venues including Circa and Bats Theatres, for a site-specific installation at Karori's Futuna Chapel, and a sandstone symposium at Harcourt Park. Film and television credits include videographer for Saturn Communications; co-editor of the feature film *hopeless*, co-creator and writer of television sitcom *lovebites*. Andrew is producing a Creative NZ-funded short film called *Double Happy* with Shahir Daud, and teaches at Massey University in Wellington.

# Nigel Brown

**artist**

Nigel Brown is an established and important figurative painter working in New Zealand. He has a dedicated history of working with symbols and narrative, and his unique works blend meaning with expression in a personal and socially relevant manner. A strong spiritual and humanistic concern adds breadth and real dimension to his art.

# Alfred Schnittke

Born Engels, Volga Republic, 24 November 1934

Died Hamburg, 3 August 1998

## String Quartet No 3

*Andante*

*Agitato*

*Pesante*

### SOVIET OUTCAST

Alfred Schnittke spent the best part of his creative life under the Soviet system, though he was young enough to escape the worst excesses of the Stalinist era. After the death of Shostakovich in 1975, Schnittke was the central figure for musical dissent in the Soviet Union in the 1970s and 80s. He was born in a German-speaking enclave in the Saratov District on the Volga River. From 1946-48 his family lived in Vienna, where he began piano lessons and made his first attempts at composition. His studies continued in Moscow at the choral-conducting department of the October Revolution Music Academy and then at the Moscow Conservatory. He subsequently taught at the Conservatory, at the same time as he was working at the Experimental Studio for Electronic Music.

His works of the late 1950s and early 1960s were produced according to the dictates of the officially-sanctioned 'socialist-realist' style. Overtly political, they were typified by such subject matter as that for his 1958 oratorio Nagasaki. Schnittke describes his evolution after that as a journey "from piano concerto romanticism, through neo-classicism ... to the unavoidable experiments with serial self-denial". In the early 1970s Schnittke developed the concept of 'polystylism': the use of diverse styles within a single work. Exemplified by his 1977 cadenza for the Beethoven Violin Concerto, which quotes from every significant concerto from Bach to Berg, polystylism was also a way of countering the mindless conformity of Soviet artistic policy.

Schnittke's First Symphony, premiered in 1972, lost him the support of the Soviet Composers' Union and ended his teaching career at the Moscow Conservatory. That and all his subsequent symphonies were banned, and he survived by writing film scores and commissions for fellow musicians. However, thanks to loyal and notable interpreters such as Gennady Rozhdestvensky, Gidon Kremer, Yuri Bashmet, Mstislav Rostropovich and Heinz Holliger, his music found an audience in the West.

In poor health following a stroke in 1985, Schnittke emigrated to Hamburg during the reforms of the Gorbachev era. Schnittke wrote a significant amount of chamber music, including four string quartets, a cello sonata and a piano quintet.

## String Quartet No 3

The String Quartet No 3 was commissioned by the Mannheim Society for New Music in 1983, and is typical of Schnittke's technique of incorporating past style within a musical language of the present.

The Quartet begins with three direct quotations: a cadence from a Stabat Mater by Orlando di Lasso; the main theme of Beethoven's Grosse Fuge; and the four-note musical signature (D-E flat-C-B) of Shostakovich, as a homage by Schnittke for his "late, great, colleague and compatriot".

The Stabat Mater quotation is developed in an imitatory fashion before violent outbreaks of intervallic material from the Beethoven and Shostakovich themes interject, each becoming the subject of intense development.

The scherzo-like second movement, which has the flavour of a rather disturbed and turbulent waltz, introduces a motivic theme which constantly circles around itself. It is heard with the Beethoven and Shostakovich motifs which are set into an increasingly tightly-knit configuration.

Pathos is the main sentiment at the beginning of the slow final movement, which builds to a tense climax in which the di Lasso quotation makes a surprise reappearance, after which the work dies away.

*Programme note from CMNZ files*

# Joseph Haydn

Born Rohrau, Lower Austria, 31 March 1732

Died Vienna, 31 May 1809



## The Seven Last Words of Our Saviour on the Cross Opus 51

Introduzione: *Maestoso ed adagio*

Sonata I: *Largo*

Pater, dimitte illis, quia nesciunt, quid faciunt  
[Father, forgive them for they know not what they do]

Sonata II: *Grave e cantabile*

Hodie mecum eris in Paradiso  
[Verily I say unto thee, "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise"]

Sonata III: *Grave*

Mulier, ecce filius tuus [Woman, behold thy son]

Sonata IV: *Largo*

Deus meus, Deus meus, utquid dereliquisti me  
[My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me]

Sonata V: *Adagio*

Sitio [I thirst]

Sonata VI: *Lento*

Consummatum est [It is finished]

Sonata VII: *Largo*

In manus tuas, Domine, commendo spiritum meum  
[Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit]

Il terremoto [The earthquake]:  
*Presto e con tutta la forza*

*In 1953 the Griller Quartet, who were resident at the University of California, made their second visit to New Zealand. Their final performance in Wellington included Haydn's Seven Last Words alongside a work they had commissioned, Edmund Rubbra's second string quartet. In addition to a concert tour through New Zealand in what historian John M Thomson described as "arduous winter conditions", the Quartet tutored at the first Cambridge Chamber Music School, where they also performed the Haydn.*

*The unsigned programme note from the Wellington concert, held at Old St Paul's Cathedral on 20 August, is reproduced below.*

In 1785 Haydn received an invitation to write an instrumental composition based on 'The Seven Last Words of Our Saviour on the Cross'. The circumstances attending its composition are best told in Haydn's own words:

"About fifteen years ago I was requested by a Canon of Cadiz to compose instrumental music on the Seven Last Words of Our Saviour on the Cross. It was the custom of the Cathedral of Cadiz to produce an oratorio every year during Lent, the effect of the performance being not a little enhanced by the following circumstances. The walls, windows and pillars of the Church were hung with black cloth, and only one large lamp, hanging from the centre of the roof, broke the solemn obscurity. At mid-day the doors were closed and the ceremony began. After a short service the bishop ascended

the pulpit, pronounced one of the Seven Words (or sentences) and delivered a discourse thereon. This ended, he left the pulpit and knelt prostrate before the altar. The pause was filled with music. The bishop then in like manner pronounced the second Word, then the third, and so on, the orchestra falling in at the conclusion of each discourse. My composition was to be subject to these conditions, and it was no easy matter to compose seven adagios to last ten minutes each, and follow one after the other without fatiguing the listeners; indeed I found it quite impossible to confine myself within the appointed limits."

The result was a series of seven slow movements, the whole preceded by an adagio introduction and followed by a presto 'Earthquake'. The work was an orchestral piece preceded by recitatives in which the individual exclamations of the Saviour were sung by a baritone voice. Almost simultaneously with the original orchestral version, Haydn published an arrangement of the seven slow movements for string quartet.

[Karl] Geiringer says of the work: "In his 'Seven Last Words' Haydn successfully avoids the danger of monotony presented by the text. From the powerful introduction to the slightly conventional earthquake, new musical pictures are presented again and again, illustrating not only the drama of the Passion but also the miracle of salvation which grows out of the sacrifice on the cross."

*Programme note from CMNZ files*

# Chamber Music New Zealand's Vision for the Seven Last Words

In traditional performances of Haydn's *'Seven Last Words of Our Saviour on the Cross'*, the words or phrases (taken from all four gospels) are spoken, then followed by a reading from the gospels, a homily or meditation on those words, then by the music.

Since its composition, this work has formed a basis for presentations that invite audiences to consider the deeper issues that continue to affect mankind. A recent example is the Brentano String Quartet with America Pulitzer Prize-winning poet laureate Mark Strand. The Vermeer String Quartet have produced a book and CD (*Echoes of Calvary*) with the texts of some 60 meditations given by various religious figures at the Quartet's performances over the years.

As part of the celebrations around the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Haydn's death, we were keen to offer this rarely-performed work in concert, played by the New Zealand String Quartet. The opportunity to present it in association with specially commissioned words led to the idea of using poetry from New Zealand. Wellington poet Dinah Hawken, whose voice "combines powerful inwardness with international awareness", was asked to respond to the challenge of providing words to accompany this music. Her thought-provoking poems are reproduced in the following pages.

The idea of incorporating visual images grew out of discussions between Chamber Music New Zealand and the New Zealand String Quartet. Nigel Brown's figurative representations which speak so strongly of New Zealand were considered to be ideal, and Nigel has produced eight lithographs in the series, also reproduced here.

In order to pull the three elements together we felt very strongly that another creative partnership was required. Director Sara Brodie, along with video designer Andrew Brettell, has designed a presentation that enhances and illuminates the messages inherent in the music, the words and the art works to create a contemporary New Zealand setting for this timeless music.

## Julie Sperring

Artistic Administrator  
Chamber Music New Zealand

# The Seven Last Words from the Cross

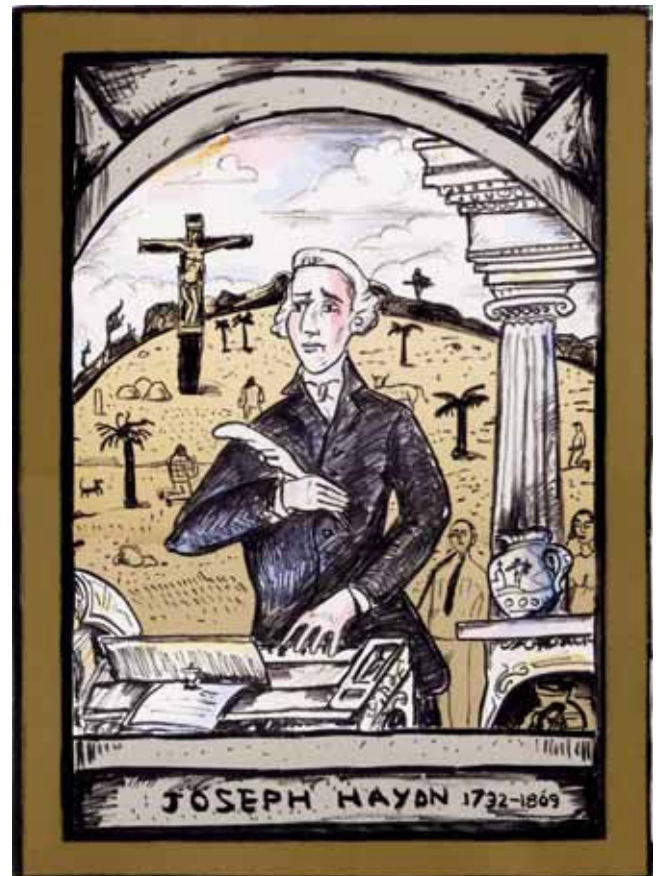
## Prologue

And a cross? Is it the wrong answer  
or is it the kiss we send out to make

light of our love? Is it the crossing  
of my standpoint and your viewpoint

or an intersection with no lights  
in a foreign city? Some say it is simply

the centre of the four directions, the place  
we return to and most want to be.



**Father, forgive them,  
for they know not what they do**

One holds the nail steady  
its point pressed into your palm.

How could you forgive them  
- on this day of crossed paths

and crossed branches, on this day  
of wide open arms and no hands?

Did you see and believe  
the short history of their faces?

\*

Their faces tell that life is hard  
and that they must go out

hard to confront it. They must forget  
the touch and the songs

of their mothers. 'I will not think  
of my children' the insurgent said

'such thoughts are the devil  
seducing me from duty to God.'

\*

We don't know if God is still a father  
and a father still God. We don't know

how hard to hold onto what we're taught  
and what we truly know. But when we look out

with our half-open hearts, our minds  
and our bones, we see that you, like Te Whiti,

gave us hope - when you weighed,  
then dared to put down, the second stone.



**Today, not tomorrow,  
you will be with me in paradise**

The sea will be breathing slowly.  
You will be breathing slowly.

The island will be attached  
to its mooring; its mooring

will be attached to the mantle.  
We will stand like pohutukawa

silent, far-sighted, in flower  
while the book,

lying open in full sunlight  
on the couch, takes down

our spirited names. *Oh you  
who are weary come home.*



## Mother, behold your son

See his large face  
and see his small face.

Watch his face in the trenches  
when he lets the letter

fall and picks it up to press  
- like a rangiora leaf -

into his breast pocket  
to dry and fade, and last forever.

\*

Son, behold your mother

See her take the low road  
with you alert and alight

in her arms. She loves to go down  
to the harbour where the ocean breaks

and overwhelms the wall of rocks.  
Her big face makes your small one

shine. Look at her face now. Full  
of what is too deep and unsheltered to say.

\*

Oh Mother, forgive us. Because  
we are so soft, we become

too hard and then we do not know  
what we do.



**My God, my God,  
why hast thou forsaken me?**

I am in the street.  
I am on the naked side of the mountain.  
I am in this cell. In the dark.  
Here I am alone in continuous light.  
Here in this bed here on this knife-edge

without shelter, without word

with nothing  
but the pain of the weight  
of my own body  
on my torn hands.

All I can do  
is bear it

all I can do  
is remember that bearing  
can carry the gifts  
of wisdom and witness,

that bearing  
can give its strength  
to the first air-filled breath  
of a child.



## I Thirst

The rain is acid.  
The stream is heavy with metals.  
There is no well.

To say I thirst is to imagine  
a second word, *wish*  
or a third, *hope*.

The parched land  
and the parched child  
imagine

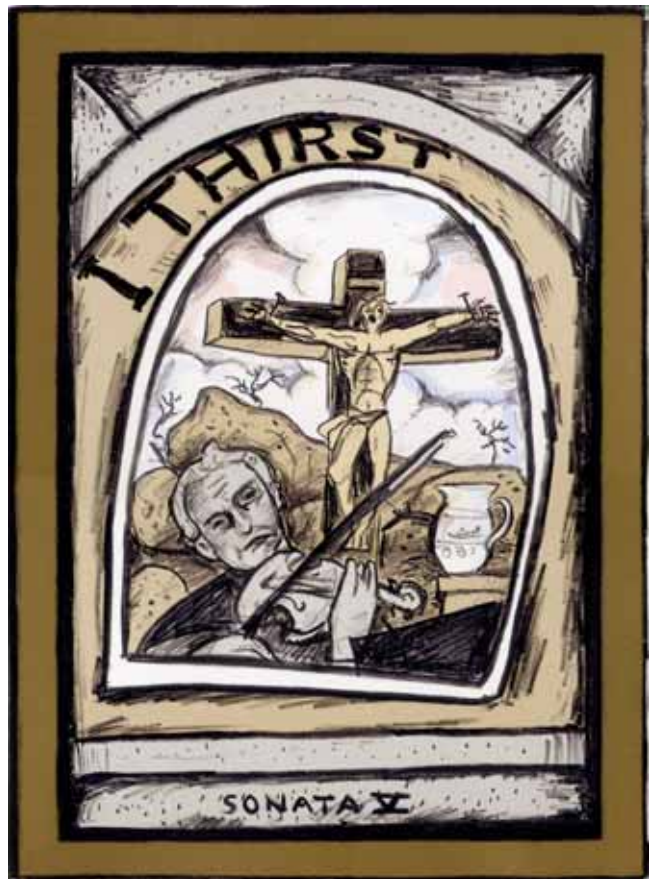
despite all they have seen  
and suffered  
that rain will fall and water

will be offered.  
To say I thirst  
is to begin to lean

towards a narrow log  
over a chasm,  
towards an unknown hand.

It is the hope,  
the faith even,  
in that hand, she said,

that in every human being  
is above all  
sacred.



## It is finished

Everything comes of itself  
at the appointed time.

All movements are accomplished  
in six stages. The seventh

brings return, and  
is named 'young light.'

Is a lamp brought inside  
to be put under a table

or should it hang from above  
pivotal in the dying light?



**Father, into your hands  
I commend my spirit**

And he gave a loud cry  
to break free from the earth,

to become inexplicable  
light on the horizon.

\*

We stand,  
like Mary and Mary  
and Mary,

like pohutukawa, silent  
and clear-sighted, still breathing  
like the sea.

\*

Sun. Water. Hands.  
Our songs of freedom.

In the work  
and the music of our hands

he commends  
his enlightened spirit.



Nigel's set of eight powerful lithographs are available to buy as a complete set of eight, or as individual works. Proceeds from their sale help support Chamber Music New Zealand. For enquiries, please contact PaperGraphica [info@papergraphica.co.nz](mailto:info@papergraphica.co.nz), phone 03 366 8487 [www.papergraphica.co.nz](http://www.papergraphica.co.nz)



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