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▼ **Tokyo String Quartet**

Message from the Tour Sponsors

Fred Turnovsky, who arrived in New Zealand in 1940, was a member of a small group of refugees from Europe who influenced immeasurably our cultural life. Having grown up in Prague, one of the undisputed cultural centres of Europe, he was struck by the fact that professional music, which he had taken for granted, did not appear to exist in his adopted country.

With his drive and dedication he set about, in a positive and practical way, to foster the Arts, especially music. In collaboration with other music enthusiasts he established what we call today 'Chamber Music New Zealand' and was a driving force in the early days of opera in New Zealand.

He also established the Turnovsky Endowment Trust which has, over a period of many years, generously supported the Arts. Fred died in 1994 but his family, in wishing to fulfil his vision of a strong cultural environment, continues to foster the Arts through the Turnovsky Endowment Trust.

We hope you enjoy tonight's concert by the Tokyo String Quartet.

Helen Philpott
Trustee, Turnovsky Endowment Trust



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Welcome

Thank you for joining us for this evening's performance - I know that we are all about to enjoy a real connoisseur's treat.

It is a privilege to host the masterful Tokyo String Quartet again in New Zealand. They have built a reputation as one of the finest string quartets in the world, and their interpretations are renowned for breathing new life and colour into the music.

We are most grateful to the Turnovsky Endowment Trust for their generous assistance and support. Our ongoing partnership ensures that we can all continue to hear music by the masters, played by the masters.



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Euan Murdoch

Chief Executive, Chamber Music New Zealand

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WELLINGTON 6 JUNE

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



Tokyo String Quartet

Martin Beaver: violin

Kikuei Ikeda: violin

Kazuhide Isomura: viola

Clive Greensmith: cello

The Tokyo String Quartet has built a distinguished reputation during its 40 years of existence, performing over a hundred concerts around the world each season. This is its third visit to New Zealand, with previous tours taking place in 1983 and 2002. Since 1976 the group has been quartet-in-residence at the Yale School of Music and has released more than 40 recordings, earning such honours as the Grand Prix du Disque Montreux, “Best Chamber Music Recording of the Year” awards from both Stereo Review and Gramophone magazines and seven Grammy nominations. Following its highly praised recordings of Beethoven’s Opus 19 and Opus 59 string quartets on the Harmonia Mundi label, the ensemble has just released a recording of the Opus 74 and Opus 95 quartets. The late quartets, which follow next season, will complete the entire cycle.

During the 2008-09 season the Quartet has performed with Pinchas Zukerman and Amanda Forsyth, and premièred the Concerto for String Quartet and Orchestra by Alexina Louie with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. It has also partnered with Markus Groh to perform Schumann’s Piano Quintet in Belgium and The Netherlands; with cellist David Watkin for Schubert’s String Quintet in Birmingham and London’s Wigmore Hall; and with Naoko Shimizu for Brahms’ String Quintets in Germany. Much of its summer is devoted to the prestigious Norfolk Chamber Music Festival, and the group returned to Japan earlier this year for the annual string-quartet seminar at the Toho Gakuen Graduate School of Music.

In 2008, the Tokyo String Quartet joined violinist Midori in a week-long residency at the University of Southern California. Collaborating with the USC Athletics, the Brain and Creativity Institute and the Annenberg School for Communication, the Quartet provided a musical perspective for explorations into various aspects of music and athletic performances, memory and the qualities of a ‘creative brain’, and the interpretive responsibilities of musicians and journalists.

Martin Beaver joined the ensemble as first violinist in 2002. A former pupil of Victor Danchenko, Josef Gingold and Henryk Szeryng, he was a founding member of the Toronto String Quartet and Triskelion.

Violinist Kikuei Ikeda studied at the Toho Academy of Music with Saburo Sumi, Josef Gingold and Hideo Saito. In 1971 he moved to the United States, where he studied with Dorothy DeLay and members of the Juilliard String Quartet.

Kazuhide Isomura, violist, studied with Jeanne Isnard, Kenji Kobayashi and Hideo Saito at the Toho Academy before attending the Juilliard School, where he studied violin with Ivan Galamian and Paul Mekanowitsky, chamber music with Robert Mann and Raphael Hillyer, and viola with Walter Trampler. Kikuei Ikeda and Kazuhide Isomura are founding members of the Tokyo String Quartet.

Cellist Clive Greensmith joined the Quartet in June 1999. A graduate of the Royal Northern College of Music and the Musikhochschule in Cologne, his principal teachers were Donald McCall and Boris Pergamenschikow.

The Tokyo String Quartet performs on ‘The Paganini Quartet’, a group of renowned Stradivarius instruments named after the legendary virtuoso Niccolò Paganini, who acquired and played them during the 19th century. Since 1995 the instruments have been loaned to the Quartet by the Nippon Music Foundation.

Joseph Haydn

Born Rohrau, Lower Austria, 31 March 1732

Died Vienna, 31 May 1809

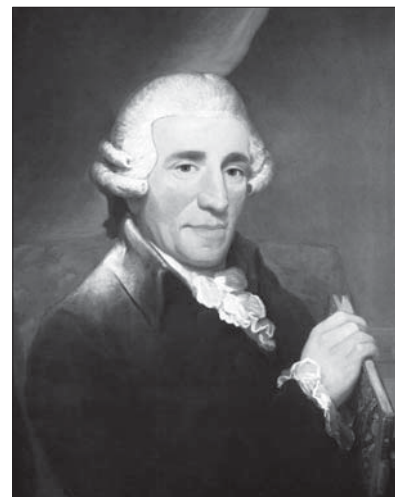
String Quartet in D Opus 76 No 5

Allegretto – Allegro

Largo: Cantabile e mesto

Menuetto: Allegro

Finale: Presto



FREEDOM AND DIVERSITY

Although he was contracted to the Esterházy court, Haydn's public reputation grew steadily during the 1780s. During this period, restrictions that the court had placed on the publication of his music were relaxed so that he was able to accept a number of commissions from publishers and individuals all over Europe. In 1790, after the death of Prince Nikolaus, Haydn was finally given permission to live and travel away from the court. Entries in his notebooks record how impressed he was with the vibrant musical life of London, and the symphonies that he composed there were grand instrumental works. The diverse compositional techniques used in these works are also evident in his subsequent instrumental compositions, especially the late piano trios and string quartets.

“Had Haydn given us only the quartet, inspiring other genial artists to follow his example, it would already have been enough to make him a great benefactor of the whole world of music.”

J. F. Reichardt from 'Briefe' (1810)

The Opus 76 quartets were written after Haydn's second visit to London. They were commissioned in 1796 by Count Joseph Erdödy and first performed in 1797 on the occasion of a visit to Eisenstadt by the Viceroy of Hungary. As a group, the six quartets display characteristics of Haydn's mature instrumental style. He finds many ways to expand traditional formal structures while extracting from the four instruments sonorities that at times sound positively orchestral. Sudden dynamic contrasts, chromatic progressions, and shifts of tonality to remote keys give these quartets an intense, almost Romantic quality.

String Quartet Opus 76 No 5 in D

The Quartet in D conveys the impression that Haydn is exploring the concept of thematic alteration. The monothematic first movement, for example, takes a simple melody through a series of variations. As well as modulating to the tonic minor, the melodic material is heard against a variety of contrasting textures in the accompaniment.

The *Largo* second movement is the dramatic centerpiece of the Quartet. It begins in F sharp before modulating to the remote key of E, and once again Haydn builds the movement around a single theme. A series of dramatic pauses add emotional intensity to the music.

The formal structure of both the *Menuetto* and the *Finale* are quite traditional. Perhaps the third movement is not as playful as one might expect from Haydn, especially when the cross-accented chords are struck in the second part of the *Menuetto*. On the other hand, Haydn's wittiness seems to return in the trio when the cello plays its quirky passage of D minor scales against a transparent accompaniment.

The final movement incorporates several interesting effects that capture one's attention. After an introductory flourish of chords, repeated open fifths in second violin and viola pre-empt the theme in the first violin. This open fifth figure is used throughout the Quartet as a texture over which thematic material is presented. For dramatic effect, Haydn also contrasts pairs of instruments against the sonority of the full quartet.

Programme note by Richard Hardie

Programme One – Auckland

Leoš Janáček

Born Hukvaldy, Czechoslovakia, 3 July 1854

Died Ostrava, Czechoslovakia, 12 August 1928

String Quartet No 2 'Intimate Letters'

Andante

Adagio

Moderato

Allegro



A GREAT LOVE

The last eleven years of Janáček's life represent a period of remarkable creativity. During this time he produced four operas, a song cycle, the Glagolitic Mass and several chamber works, including two string quartets. Janáček himself acknowledged in 1926 that "although I am getting on in years, I have a feeling that a new vein is beginning to grow in my work ... a kind of new sprouting from the soul which has made its peace with the rest of the world and seeks only to be nearest to the ordinary Czech man."

Inspired by Tolstoy's story *The Kreutzer Sonata*, Janáček wrote his first string quartet in 1923 in a single week. For his second string quartet, 'Intimate Letters', written in his last year, the composer drew on events from his own life. In 1917 he had met and fallen in love with Kamila Stösslová, who was married and 38 years his junior. During their relationship Janáček wrote more than 600 letters to her – the 'intimate letters' of the work's title.

He began composing on 29 January 1928 and wrote to tell Kamila that "our life is going to be in it ... I composed the first number ... [with] my impression when I saw you for the first time." Three weeks later he had finished the quartet and, writing again to Kamila, said, "You know, feelings on their own are sometimes so strong that the notes hide, run away. A great love – a weak composition. But I want it to be a great love – a great composition". Sadly, Janáček did not live to hear the première, which took place on 11 September 1928, performed by the Moravian Quartet.

String Quartet No 2 'Intimate Letters'

Both of Janáček's string quartets are concerned with fateful passion and love. Unlike the first quartet, however, the second quartet finishes in an exuberant mood.

The first movement opens with a passionate theme in the two violin parts, supported by a trilled pedal note in the cello. In contrast, the viola enters *sul ponticello* with a motif both elusive and mysterious – "my impression when I saw you for the first time". All the material for the first movement derives from variations of these two themes.

The *Adagio* is dominated by an ardent melody introduced by the viola at the start of the movement. This melody appears in many different guises, growing in intensity before a pianissimo *flautato* passage interrupts it, bridging the way for the introduction of a new playful motif in first violin. After its initial rousing rendition, a variant appears *espressivo* before the return of the main second movement melody, now combined with the other themes of the first two movements.

A lilting motif which begins the *Moderato* forms a background for the reintroduction of melodic ideas from earlier movements. Underpinning this whole movement are blocks of contrasting harmonies, typical of Janáček's style.

The *Allegro* is an extended rondo form with a dance-like theme, concluding this work of intense emotional outpouring.

Programme note by Ondine Godtschalk

Programme One – Auckland

Johannes Brahms

Born Hamburg, 7 May 1833

Died Vienna, 3 April 1897

String Quartet No 3 in B flat Opus 67

Vivace

Andante

Agitato (allegretto non troppo) – Trio

Poco allegretto con variazioni

PROFITING FROM PROCRASTINATION

In 1875, Brahms spent a happy summer at Ziegelhausen, near Heidelberg, surrounded by magnificent scenery and good friends. He was determinedly, and successfully, procrastinating over his first symphony – a challenge he had yet to face up to, for the shadow of Beethoven and the early expectations of Schumann weighed heavily upon him.

There were several by-products of his procrastination that summer: the Piano Quartet in C minor, some vocal duets, and the String Quartet in B flat. After the dark austerity of Brahms's two earlier string quartets, this new one came as a breath of fresh air, and was immediately seen by his friends as proof that he had finally overcome his anxiety over this exacting medium and had actually managed to have fun with it. His life-long friend Clara Schumann commented particularly on the fourth movement, describing it as “too fascinating for words, with its delightful, mocking conclusion.”

**“You listen to four sensible persons
conversing, you profit from their discourse,
and you get to know the peculiar properties
of their instruments.”**

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, writing about quartets,
letter quoted in Barzun's *Pleasures of Music* (1977)

Brahms himself certainly seemed pleased with the work, admitting to Joachim years later that it was certainly his favourite of the three. And the waspish critic Eduard Hanslick preferred the third quartet too, finding it “more cheerful, clearer; more human.”

String Quartet No 3 in B flat Opus 67

The relaxed and sunny mood of Brahms's String Quartet in B flat is evident from the opening bars of the *Vivace* first movement, as the viola and second violin announce a hunting call in thirds – a reference, perhaps, to Mozart's 'Hunt' Quartet (K458) of the same key. The simple charm of the two bar hunt motif in 6/8 time is infectious, and it is soon echoed by the other members of the quartet and decorated with running scales and expanded outwards. By way of a lively and striking contrast, Brahms introduces a colourful melodic fragment in the rhythm of a Czech dance in 2/4 time. The reflective development section cleverly alternates the two metres 6/8 and 2/4 in an elaborate musical game.

The *Andante* second movement features a long sweeping melody in the key of F major, played on the first violin. After two bars of introduction, the theme pours forth in three successive balancing eight bar phrases. But the reverie is soon interrupted by an unexpectedly restless central section, which ranges widely in mood and key.

The *Agitato* third movement has been described as a technical tour de force of composition – offering a rare showpiece for the viola. Brahms overcomes the challenges of setting the viola as the solo voice of the quartet by asking the other players to play with mutes. In practice, this allows the mellow, mid-range voice of the viola to project through the halo of the other strings, and to take the lead with a theme in D minor. Although Brahms has not called this movement a Scherzo or Minuet he does, nevertheless, call the middle section a Trio (in A minor), and maintains the prominence of the viola throughout.

For the finale, Brahms offers an easygoing theme and set of variations – a characteristic device for this composer. After modulating widely through a range of keys, Brahms returns rather suddenly to the home key of B flat, and the hunting call motif of the first movement. This is then effortlessly woven together with the theme of the variations, to bring the movement – and the Quartet – to a close with a satisfying feel of cyclical unity.

Programme note by Roger Smith

Programme One – Auckland

Ludwig van Beethoven

Born Bonn, 17 December 1770

Died Vienna, 26 March 1827

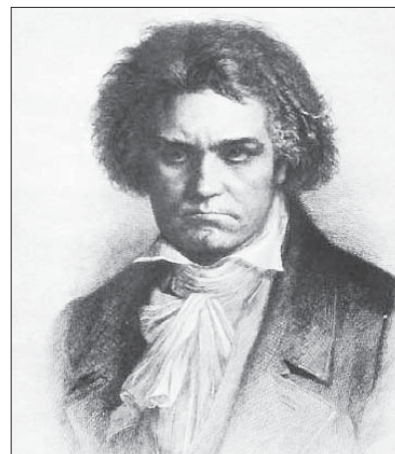
String Quartet in F minor Opus 95 'Serioso'

Allegro con brio

Allegretto ma non troppo – attacca:

Allegro assai vivace ma serioso

Larghetto espressivo – Allegretto agitato



A CONCENTRATED WORK

Beethoven's eleventh quartet, expressly termed 'quartetto serioso' was composed in 1809. It was a period of severe personal crisis for the composer, and a "broken project for marriage" haunted him during this time. Few facts are known for sure, and the reticence of his contemporaries in writing about his relationships is tantalizing; associations are noted but details are sketchy.

It is a particularly private work, a point emphasised by its dedication to a close personal friend rather than some high-ranking dignitary, and also by the delay in its publication until 1816 - in fact, Beethoven originally did not plan to publish it at all. He dedicated it to his lifelong friend Count Nicholas Zmeskall, secretary in the Hungarian Embassy in Vienna. Zmeskall was an able cellist, composed string quartets and owned a vineyard. He is credited with having more influence for good upon Beethoven than any other of his friends, and he kept every scrap of paper Beethoven ever sent him, including requests for fresh supplies of quills, for a full-length mirror, and a recipe for boot polish. Letters to Zmeskall at this time reflect Beethoven's deep sense of loss and rejection when the woman with whom he was in love turned him down.

The Quartet in F minor displays a concentrated unfolding frenzy from beginning to end, revealing the lessons in economy that Beethoven learned from Haydn. It is one of the most rigorous compositions that any composer ever devoted to the string quartet medium and totally dominates all Beethoven's other quartets in terms of pure energy and vigour. The composition goes straight to its goal, and only Béla Bartók (in his Third Quartet), Arnold Schoenberg (String Trio) or Jean Sibelius (Seventh Symphony) succeeded in creating - each in his own style - such a compressed and imperious work in a minimum of space. Small wonder that it caught and held the attention of Schoenberg, who later orchestrated it.

String Quartet in F minor Opus 95 'Serioso'

The opening *Allegro con brio* distils a movement of symphonic proportions and tragedy into less than five minutes. Its emotional range declares itself in the first ten bars, and the movement ends with a bare octave F.

The *Allegretto* begins with the first six notes of the descending scale of D major, played by cello alone. The first note bridges the gap between two very remote keys and transforms the musical landscape, with the four introductory bars of the cello being followed by the main theme. The form of the movement (A – B – A – coda) has a spacious feel. The *Allegro assai vivace* follows without a break, and is in the form of a declamatory and insistent scherzo, which contrasts with an assured, sustained Trio.

The agitated finale, in rondo form, is preceded by a short *Larghetto*. The work concludes with a brilliant coda, which is both unexpected and exhilarating. As the American composer Randall Thompson said: "No bottle of champagne was ever uncorked at a better time".

Programme note from Chamber Music NZ files

Programme Two – Wellington

Carl Vine

Born Perth, Western Australia, 8 October 1954



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String Quartet No 5

MUSICAL LEADER

Carl Vine is one of the best-known composers in Australia today, with his major symphonies and concertos performed internationally as well as around Australia. He has twice received Australian Guild of Screen Composers Awards, and in 2005 was awarded the prestigious Don Banks Music Award by the Australia Council for the Arts, for an outstanding and sustained contribution to Australian music. Since 2000 he has been Artistic Director of Musica Viva, Australia's national chamber music organisation, and in 2006 was additionally appointed Artistic Director of the Huntington Estate Music Festival, an annual chamber music event.

After early studies in piano and composition at the University of Western Australia, Vine moved in 1975 to Sydney, where he worked as a freelance musician with a wide range of ensembles, theatres and dance companies. He received his first professional commission from the Sydney Dance Company in 1977, and the following year became their resident composer. He was one of the founders, in 1979, of the ground-breaking contemporary music ensemble Flederman.

From 1984 he spent two years lecturing in Electronic Music Composition at the Queensland Conservatorium, and then was appointed both Musical Director of the Australia/New Zealand Choreographic School in Melbourne and Resident Composer for the New South Wales State Conservatorium.

Vine's catalogue of compositions includes seven symphonies, seven concertos, music for film, television and theatre, electronic music and numerous chamber works, including four string quartets. Much of his chamber music has been recorded on the Tall Poppies label.

The String Quartet No 5 was premièred by the Goldner Quartet, at the Huntington Estate Music Festival in Australia in November 2007.

String Quartet No 5

The composer writes:

The fifth string quartet contains six clear sections but like much of my music is cast in one continuous movement. There is some repetition and development of material throughout the work but this is less important to its structure than dramatic and musical contrast across the complete arc. The architecture is consciously informal, and the work may be viewed as a single-movement fantasia. There might be a narrative hidden within the music, but I'm certain there is no story.

Biographical note by Jane Dawson

Programme Two – Wellington

“In Vine’s new fifth quartet it is possible to hear the moment when metaphorical windows open on the sinister corridors of the opening section, letting in a breeze of lyrical and rhythmic contrasts and culminating in a final section in which gentle syncopations and mildly astringent chording provide an attractive, deftly managed close to a work that invites many re-hearings.”

Roger Covell
The Sydney Morning Herald
5 December 2007

Felix Mendelssohn

Born Hamburg, 3 February 1809

Died Leipzig, 4 November 1847

String Quartet No 2 in A minor Opus 13

Adagio; Allegro vivace

Adagio non lento

Intermezzo; Allegro con moto

Presto

PRODIGIOUS START

Born into a distinguished intellectual and artistic family, Felix Mendelssohn was the third child of Leah Salomon and wealthy banker Abraham Mendelssohn, and the grandson of rabbi and philosopher Moses Mendelssohn. While Moses Mendelssohn frowned upon German Jews converting to Christianity in the hopes of gaining social acceptance, that did not stop Felix Mendelssohn's parents from baptising their four children in the Lutheran Church, nor from converting to the Lutheran faith themselves in 1816, when they moved from French occupied Hamburg to Berlin. It was at this point that they added the extra surname 'Bartholdy', which is sometimes seen attached to the composer's name.

The move proved to be beneficial for young Felix, who had already been receiving musical instruction from his sister Fanny. In Berlin he studied the piano under Ludwig Berger and composition with Karl F Zelter. Friends of the family were also a positive influence on the Mendelssohn children, since most of them were intellectuals who were involved in the arts and other cultural activities. From a young age, Felix Mendelssohn showed the true talent of a prodigy, playing both the piano and the violin, as well as painting and being gifted in languages. Besides family travels (during which he experienced the works of JS Bach) and contact with eminent visitors to his parents' salon (such as Humboldt, Hegel, Klingemann, AB Marx, and Devrient), other early influences included the poetry of Goethe (a man he knew from 1821) and the Schlegel translations of Shakespeare.

From 1826 to 1829, Mendelssohn studied at Berlin University. He produced his first work in 1820 and the subsequent profusion of sonatas, concertos, string symphonies, piano quartets and Singspiele reveal his increasing mastery of counterpoint and form. In addition to composing, his work as a conductor led to a renewed interest in Bach's music when, in 1829, he directed a pioneering performance of Bach's St Matthew Passion at the Berlin Singakademie.

“By God, I play better here than in Berlin, and that is because the people listen better. Don't take that as a conceited comment, but it is exalting when you feel that you succeed and give others pleasure.”

Mendelssohn in a letter to his family from London, June 1829

String Quartet No 2 in A minor Opus 13

Mendelssohn composed his second string quartet in 1827 when he was eighteen. He was already an accomplished composer of chamber music by this time, having written his famous Octet - an innovative work for two string quartets - two years earlier, and his first string quartet, which was influenced by Beethoven's 'Harp' Quartet, in 1823. The A minor Quartet is also indebted to Beethoven, whose death that year had deeply affected the eighteen-year-old Mendelssohn, even though they had never met.

Although moments of the Quartet feature some quite direct references to the late quartets of Beethoven, the influence remains essentially on the surface of the music and many aspects of Mendelssohn's work are quite novel. The entire work actually begins and ends in A major, not minor, with a slow introduction and – unusually – a slow conclusion. Fiery sections in the minor key emerge from and retreat into these pillars of calm.

The opening *Adagio* of the Quartet refers to one of Mendelssohn's early love songs, which has the text “Is it true that you are waiting for me in the arbour by the vine-clad wall?”. The repeated notes from this theme feature prominently as the first movement progresses.

A slow introduction to the second movement recalls the Quartet's opening, then weaves those melodic references into fugal writing. The following *Intermezzo* features a pizzicato accompaniment and a flitting scherzo middle section, which makes a surprise reappearance at the end of the movement. The charm and simplicity of the movement's melody provides some light relief, before the Quartet's final movement, an intense and urgent *Presto* in sonata form, which looks back to themes from the first and second movements.

Programme note by Rachel Clement

Programme Two – Wellington

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