

## **Antipodes Trio**

### **Trio for violin, viola and cello      Larry Pruden (1925 – 82)**

- I Overture: Allegro energico
- II Serenade: Poco lento
- III Vivace
- IV Lento tranquillo

Larry Pruden was born in New Plymouth and brought up there. He began learning the piano at about age 8, became church organist at 13, and joined the music staff of New Plymouth Boy's High School in 1940 as a piano teacher. His first known composition dates from 1938; at this stage his musical mentor was the well-known blind organist and composer Joseph Papaesch, his uncle. Apart from contact with Douglas Lilburn at Cambridge Music Schools, he was self-taught in composition until he was granted a bursary for study at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London, where he studied conducting, percussion and composition in the class of Benjamin Frankel – the same class as David Farquhar, Edwin Carr and Robert Burch. Returning to New Zealand he settled in Wellington in 1955 and was employed in various capacities by NZ Broadcasting until 1975, when he went to Dunedin as Mozart Fellow at Otago University. During all of this time he was also involved in tutoring composition at summer music schools, conducting, writing programme notes and introducing radio programmes, and freelanced as composer and conductor in Wellington until his death.

The string trio dates from 1953, towards the end of his study in London. Influenced by Bartók, it is marked by rhythmic energy, an Eastern-European tinged harmonic language, and a great richness of expression.

### **Trio in G minor**

**Sibelius (1865 – 1957)**

- Lento
- I Lento
- II Allegro (fragment) (Manuscript HUL 0622/1)
- III [No tempo marking] (fragment) (Manuscript HUL 0622/1)

The G Minor String Trio dates from 1894, the year after the famous Lemminkäinen Suite, when Sibelius was 29. It marks the end of his first, early period of chamber music: he himself was a violinist, and he formed a trio with his siblings in which Linda played the piano and his brother Christian the cello. Their mother joined in on harmonium. Linda Sibelius later recollected: "We played together; Janne played the violin, Kitti the cello, mother the piano or the harmonium. Janne composed for piano and violin at a fairly early age, and I had to accompany him from the notes he had written down, which was not easy..."

In 1882 there was a rapid increase in the musicians who took part. At the beginning of the summer Sibelius wrote to his Uncle Pehr that he was playing Kayser's études and duets with Anna Tigerstedt, the daughter of Theodor Tigerstedt, the municipal Officer of Health. In the autumn of 1882 Sibelius joined a string quartet whose repertoire included quartets by Haydn, and the first mention of a composition can be found in a letter Sibelius wrote from Kalalahti,

25th August 1883. He disclosed that he had composed one trio and was working on another.

"They are rather poor, but it is nice to have something to do on rainy days."

He never finished it – probably for the reason that he was increasingly occupied with orchestral work – and this Lento is the only completed movement, followed by fragments of an allegro and finale. However, it shows a striking originality and traces an almost symphonic span.

### **Divertimento in Eb**

### **Mozart (1756 – 91)**

I Allegro

II Adagio

III Minuet

IV Andante (theme and four variations)

V Minuet

VI Allegro

Mozart wrote his Divertimento in Eb in gratitude to a friend, fellow freemason Michael Puchberg, who had lent him money. It dates from 1788, the year in which he completed his last three symphonies and his "Coronation" Piano Concerto; it was a bad time for musicians in Vienna, owing to the war with Turkey that began the previous year, and there was also the reputed financial imprudency of the Mozart household – and Mozart wrote Puchberg a whole series of "begging letters" from 1788 to 1790 of an increasingly desperate tone. They worked. Puchberg was extremely generous to the Mozarts and "lent" them a total of about 1400 florins.

*The resulting Divertimento in Eb is Mozart's only completed string trio, and was premiered in Dresden on April 13, 1789, at the beginning of Mozart's famous "Berlin journey" around the cities of Germany. Mozart played viola: Anton Teyber took the violin part, and Antonín Kraft cello. It is widely regarded as separate from his other divertimenti, despite the usual six-movement divertimento structure, as it doesn't share the lighthearted nature inherent in the form. Alfred Einstein called it "one of his noblest works":*

The **Antipodes String Trio** was founded by two of New Zealand's leading young string players, Amalia Hall and Nicholas Hancox. Formed through connections between the Curtis Institute of Music, University of Michigan and the New Zealand music scene, they undertook an extremely successful tour for Chamber Music New Zealand in March 2011, and are back with a new cellist to aim to perform the masterworks of the string trio repertoire.

"With Antipodes, it was always my intention to create a relevant, performing relationships between young New Zealand and international musicians. Our generation is so privileged these days to have the opportunity to spend time overseas, but this is rarely converted into something that touches New Zealand audiences and other aspiring musicians. It is a great pleasure to work with Sarah Rommel, alumnus of the Curtis Institute.

The other joy is the opportunity to explore the little heard string trio repertoire - it is always exciting selecting programmes as every major composer has contributed something to the genre, including our own composition tradition. Our programme features the artistic expression of every Zeitgeist, each epoch, from Mozart's Age of Enlightenment, the post-war brutality an

angst of Penderecki, to the clarity and fledgling exuberance of NZer Larry Pruden, writing at a time of New Zealand's coming-of-age and search for self-identity." *Nicholas Hancox*

**Amalia Hall, violin**

Amalia Hall is widely recognised as one of the foremost young violinists to emerge from New Zealand, having won first prize at the Postacchini International Violin Competition in Italy and the major competitions in New Zealand. She is also a laureate of the International Tchaikovsky Competition for Young Musicians and the Kloster Schöntal International Violin Competition. Amalia has performed internationally as well as extensively throughout New Zealand, and is a graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music and the University of Auckland.

**Nicholas Hancox, viola**

Violist **Nicholas Hancox**, now based in Germany as Principal Viola of the Lübeck Philharmonic Orchestra, completed his studies at the Hochschule für Musik und Theatre in Munich with Hariolf Schlichtig. Originally from Wellington, he held the position of principal viola in the NZSO National Youth Orchestra for three seasons, and has worked professionally with every major orchestra in New Zealand. Initial study was at Victoria University, where his chamber group The Antipodes Four (NZSM graduate quartet in residence) was awarded the inaugural Royal Overseas League international study award in 2007; he went on to complete his Master of Music at the University of Michigan.

**Sarah Rommel, cello**

Twenty-four-year-old cellist **SARAH ROMMEL** has featured on American public radio NPR's 'From the Top' programme, and is the recipient of numerous American grants and awards including silver medal in the 2007 Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition as a member of the Newman Quartet. An enthusiastic chamber musician, she is a recent graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music, and currently studies with Ralph Kirschbaum at USC Thornton School of Music.