

## The Akoka Quartet

### Sarah Masters - Clarinet

New Zealand clarinetist Sarah has lived in the UK since 2002 and performs extensively as a solo, chamber and orchestral musician. Playing regularly with the UK's top professional orchestras including the Hallé Orchestra, and the BBC Philharmonic.

From 2002-2004 Sarah studied at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, graduating with a Masters of Music as well as a Postgraduate Diploma.

Whilst studying at the RNCM Sarah was awarded First Prize in the Granada Chamber Music Competition. Before moving to England Sarah gained a BMus at the University of Canterbury, studying clarinet with Gretchen Dunsmore, as well as a BA in Classics.

### Simeon Broom - Violin

Simeon grew up in Auckland where he completed Performance Violin studies at Auckland University with Mary O'Brien and whilst a student there he won the inaugural University Concerto Competition.

Moving to Germany he studied at the Hochschule für Musik, Düsseldorf. Simeon has been a performer for 'Live Music Now', an organisation founded by Yehudi Menuhin, and played in the Gürzenich Orchestra in Cologne and the Kammerphilharmonie Amadé. In 2006, Simeon moved to London where he completed his Masters and Post-Graduate Diploma at the Guildhall. He currently freelances with various top orchestras in the UK.

### Victoria Simonsen - Cello

From Auckland, Victoria has lived in England since 2002. Her studies at the University of Auckland were followed by postgraduate degrees at the Royal Northern College of Music where in 2004 she graduated with a Masters degree, gaining distinctions in both performance and composition, and in 2006 was awarded the Gold Medal, the highest award bestowed by the college, and at the same competition was voted winner of the Audience Prize. During her time at the RNCM Victoria won numerous other prizes, including the Granada Prize for the performance of Messiaen's Quatuor pour la Fin du Temps for which she collaborated with New Zealand clarinetist Sarah Masters

Victoria was winner of the 2008 Royal Over-Seas League Strings Competition, adding to her extensive and impressive competition accolades and successes. Whilst still a student, Victoria was appointed Section Principal Cellist of the Orchestra of Opera North (2005- 2007) and since 2008 has held a job-share position with the Philharmonia and is regularly asked to be Guest Principal Cellist with orchestras such as Scottish Opera, and the Irish Chamber Orchestra.

### Rachel Church - Piano

Originally from Wellington, Rachel completed piano studies with Bryan Sayer and Katherine Austin at the Universities of Auckland and Waikato where she was awarded numerous prizes and scholarships, including 'Performance Academy Scholar' and 'Cultural Person of the Year'.

Rachel completed her Masters at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in 2008. Prior to this Rachel studied at the Hochschule für Musik in Cologne, where she received top honours in her final examinations. Now based in London Rachel currently performs in the Marzocco Piano Quartet and the Schalkkammer Ensemble. She was also recently awarded First Prize in the Duo-Sonata Competition in the North London Music Festival with duo partner, violinist Simeon Broom. This violin-piano duo was established 10 years ago in New Zealand and now performs regularly throughout Europe.

PROGRAMME



TAURANGA MUSICA  
**2012**  
concert series



In association with Chamber Music New Zealand

present

# Akoka Quartet



**WHERE:** MILLS REEF WINERY & RESTAURANT

**WHEN:** SUNDAY 29TH APRIL  
AT 7.00PM

**TICKETS:** ADULTS \$32  
YOUTHS \$10

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## Suite for Violin, Clarinet and Piano Opus 157b

Darius Milhaud (1892 – 1974)

Overture

Divertissement

Jeu

Introduction et final

Drawn from music that Milhaud wrote for Anouilh's play *Le Voyageur sans bagages*, the *Suite for Violin, Clarinet and Piano Opus 157b* was premiered in 1937. The first movement, *Overture*, opens with a buoyant theme with a distinctly Latin feel. A more lyrical second central section gives way to a syncopated melody in a similar style to the beginning. *Divertissement* contains a duet between the violin and clarinet, followed by a second theme on the clarinet. *Jeu*, meaning play, is a boisterous folk dance featuring the violin and clarinet that recalls the lively character of the first movement. The piano is introduced in the final movement again, containing a melodramatic theme which soon gives way to a bright melody, featuring elements of jazz and polytonality for which Milhaud was famed.

Programme note by Anna Sedcole, courtesy of Chamber Music New Zealand.

## Piano Trio in D minor Opus 120

Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)

*Allegro, ma non troppo*

*Andantino*

*Allegro vivo*

The overall mood of the Piano Trio in D minor is joyful and optimistic. The top line of the trio was initially scored for clarinet but eventually Fauré opted for violin, although the trio is sometimes performed with a clarinet.

The *Allegro* begins with a simple piano ostinato which floats above the movement's long, arching first theme. In contrast, the second theme is succinct, covering a narrow melodic range.

The beautiful F major *Andantino* is the most substantial movement of the trio. The opening dialogue between the violin and cello over gently pulsating piano chords evokes a wonderful sense of serenity. The intrusion of harmonic and melodic chromaticisms in two subsequent themes gradually builds towards a climax. The final return to F major and the combination of the first and third themes is accompanied by a great sense of release.

Scored in 3/8, the *Allegro vivo* is lively and extrovert and moves from D minor to D major part way through the movement. Unison strings contrast with a dance-like motive as the movement finishes resolutely in D major.

Programme note by Ondine Godtschalk, courtesy of Chamber Music New Zealand.

INTERVAL

## Quartet for the End of Time

Olivier Messiaen (1908 – 1992)

*Liturgie de cristal*

*Vocalise, pour l'Ange qui annonce la fin du Temps*

*Abîme des oiseaux*

*Intermède*

*Louange à l'Éternité de Jésus*

*Danse de la fureur, pour les sept trompettes*

*Fouillis d'arcs-en-ciel, pour l'Ange qui annonce la fin du Temps*

*Louange à l'Immortalité de Jésus*

"The quartet consists of eight movements. Why? Seven is the perfect number: the six days of Creation, sanctified by the divine Sabbath.

The seventh day of rest extends into eternity and becomes the eighth of the inextinguishable light, of everlasting peace."

Olivier Messiaen, preface to the score of *Quartet for the End of Time*, 1942.

## Visions of the Apocalypse

Olivier Messiaen's *Quartet for the End of Time* was inspired by Chapter 10 of the 'Revelation of St John' in which the end of time is announced by the Angel of the Apocalypse. The quartet is based on apocalyptic imagery and a study of time - themes which must have been reinforced by Messiaen's personal situation at the time of its composition. In 1940 he had been captured as a soldier in the French army and interned in a German prisoner of war camp at Görlitz in Silesia.

The quartet was composed - out of necessity - for the unusual combination of violin, cello, piano and clarinet. The first performance was given in the camp on 15 January 1941, with a piano whose keys stuck and a cello with only three strings. The audience on that freezing winter's day comprised some 5000 French, Belgian and Polish prisoners. "Never", Messiaen later recalled, "have I been heard with as much attention and understanding."

## Quartet for the End of Time

1. *Liturgie of crystal*. Described by Messiaen as "the harmonious silence of heaven", evoking early morning birdsong (sung by the clarinet and violin). "A blackbird or a nightingale, surrounded by musical pollen and a halo of trills lost high up in the tree-tops."

2. *Vocalise for the angel who announces the end of time*. The outer sections evoke the "mighty angel, his head crowned with a rainbow and dressed in a cloud." Softly cascading piano chords underscore the central angel's song - sung by the violin and cello.

3. *Abbyss of the birds*. For solo clarinet. The abyss is "time itself with all its sadness and weariness. The birds are the opposite of time: they are our desire for light, for stars and rainbows and songs of rejoicing!"

4. *Interlude*. Messiaen composed this brief scherzo movement for his three fellow musicians in the prison camp prior to embarking on the full *Quartet*.

5. *In praise of the eternity of Jesus*. The cello presents a lengthy song of praise to Jesus - here representing the Word of the Lord. Piano chords support the cello phrases, and the tempo marking is "infinitely slow, ecstatic."

6. *Furious dance for the seven trumpets*. The four instruments play in unison, imitating the sounds of gongs and the six trumpets of the Apocalypse, each heralding a new catastrophe, "and the trumpet of the seventh angel, announcing the consummation of the mystery of the Lord".

7. *Tangle of rainbows for the angel who announces the end of time*. The rainbow symbolises peace and wisdom, "and of every vibration of sound and light". Messiaen quotes from the second movement, before evoking a vision of superhuman sounds and colours: "swords of fire", and "sudden stars - the tangled maze of the rainbow!"

8. *In praise of the immortality of Jesus*. An expansive violin melody floats ever upwards over static piano chords. This song "specifically addresses the human aspect of Jesus, the Word that has become flesh."

Programme note by Roger Smith, courtesy of Chamber Music New Zealand.



TAURANGA MUSICA  
2012  
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## The New Zealand Guitar Quartet

Sunday 27 May, Mills Reef, 7.00pm

## ALTO

Sunday 24 June, Tauranga Park Auditorium, 3.00pm

## The Leonari Trio

Sunday 19 August, Mills Reef, 7.00pm

## John Chen - piano

Saturday 1 September, Baycourt, 7.00pm

## Love's Nature

Saturday 8 September, Tauranga Park Auditorium, 3.00pm