



**Chamber Music
New Zealand**

“This concert is presented in association with Chamber Music New Zealand”

Piano Quartet in E-flat Major Op. 16

Beethoven (1770-1827)

Grave – Allegro ma non troppo

Andante cantabile

Rondo: Allegro, ma non troppo

In 1796, Beethoven composed a Quintet for piano, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, and horn, a decision motivated by Mozart's 1784 Quintet (K.452) for the same combination. Beethoven had lived in Vienna for three years by this time; he had already established a network of aristocratic patrons, and he made a living through performing as a pianist. His improvisations, especially, achieved recognition for their profound expression; Carl Czerny wrote that these improvisations had 'such an effect upon every hearer that frequently ... many would break into loud sobs; for there was something wonderful in his expression in addition to the beauty and originality of his ideas and his spirited style of rendering them.' Beethoven, unfortunately, found these salon performances trying. His friend Wegeler remembered that they made him 'gloomy and out of sorts': his audiences made him play until 'his fingers ached and the blood under his nails burned.' Nevertheless, Beethoven capitalized on his reputation by composing many chamber works involving the piano during his first five years in Vienna, and the Op. 16 Quintet was published in 1801, was noted for being 'brilliant, serious, full of deep meaning and character.'

Beethoven also arranged the Quintet as a Quartet for piano, violin, viola, and cello. The structure remained the same, although Beethoven's alteration to the parts made them idiomatic for string instruments. In his Quartet version, the piano still dominates, with frequent virtuosic interjections, and writing akin to that of Beethoven's solo sonatas.

Piano Quartet No. 1

Andrew Leathwick

Lento – Larghetto

Freely

Con moto

The arrival of the commission for Andrew Leathwick's Piano Quartet resulted from a chance encounter between the composer and Wilma Smith at a Melbourne tram stop in 2015. Wilma had just adjudicated a competition at the Australian National Academy of Music, where Andrew was studying. He invited Wilma to a performance that included some of his own compositions, and a while later, he received a commission for the Quartet. When composing the Quartet, Leathwick noticed that 'as many of the melodies are from whistling a tune while toast is on its way, as are from sitting at the piano trying to play a little melody to fit the mood at hand. Both are really one and the same activity, and seem foundational to my compositional process.'

In three movements (although conceived, initially, in four movements) the Quartet draws on diverse influences, two of the clearest being 'strong dashes of Greek folk music', and the expansive sounds of the Russian pianist-composers – Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninov, and Prokofiev.

Piano Quartet No.2 in E-flat Major, op. 87, B162

Dvořák (1841-1904)

Allegro con fuoco

Lento

Allegro moderato, grazioso

Finale: Allegro ma non troppo

The premiere of Dvořák's second Piano Quartet took place on 17 October 1890 in Frankfurt. Hugo Heermann, a professor of violin at Frankfurt's Hoch Conservatoire, led the musicians. His colleagues were Ernst Welcker (violin), Hugo Becker (cello) and Martin Wallenstein (piano). The request for a new piano quartet by Dvořák (his first, the Quartet in D, Op. 23, dated from 1875) had come from his Berlin publisher, Simrock: after several pointed hints about composing a new quartet, Simrock wrote to Dvořák in the summer of 1888, saying 'I have always wanted to have a Piano Quartet from you – and you promised it to me a long time ago! How goes it?' Finally, the Quartet emerged in the summer of 1889: Dvořák wrote it quickly, between 10 July and 19 August, noting to his friend Alois Göble on 10 August, 'As I expected, it came easily, and the melodies just surged upon me. Thank God!'

The magnificent melodic richness of the Piano Quartet shows Dvořák did not exaggerate the surge of melody. Like so much of Dvořák's music, the Quartet evokes a unique Central European spirit and landscape; despite Dvořák's use of conventional Austro-Germanic structures, his music declares independence through its melodies and rhythms.

Wilma Smith, former Concertmaster of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and the NZSO, was born in Fiji and raised in New Zealand. She studied in Auckland and then in Boston at the New England Conservatory with the legendary Dorothy DeLay and Louis Krasner before becoming first violinist of the Lydian String Quartet, winners of the Naumburg Award for Chamber Music and multiple prizes at the Evian, Banff and Portsmouth International String Quartet Competitions. While the quartet was her professional focus in Boston, she also worked regularly with the Boston Symphony Orchestra and was Concertmaster of the Harvard Chamber Orchestra and Handel and Haydn Society. Invited to return home to form the New Zealand String Quartet, Wilma was first violinist of the group for five years before the NZSO appointed her Concertmaster. She has appeared as Guest Concertmaster with all of the major Australian symphony orchestras as well as the Auckland Philharmonic. Wilma currently teaches violin at The University of Melbourne and Monash University.

Born in England, **Caroline Henbest** studied at the Yehudi Menuhin School and the Guildhall School of Music with Robert Masters and David Takeno. Following several years as violist in the Mistry String Quartet, she moved to Australia to take up the position of Principal Viola with the Australian Chamber Orchestra. Since 2010, Caroline has transitioned to a part-time position with the ACO, playing equally with ACO, ACO2 and an ACO quartet with Zoe Black, Daniel Yeadon and Veronique Serret. She is based in Melbourne where she is the viola teacher at the Australian National Academy of Music. Caroline has performed as guest principal viola with many orchestras, including the Sydney Symphony, Hong Kong Philharmonic, Philharmonia, City of London Sinfonia Glyndebourne on Tour and the Scottish Chamber Orchestra.

Born in Wellington, **Alexandra Partridge** holds a Masters of Musical Arts from the New Zealand School of Music. During her time there, she was the recipient of numerous scholarships and awards including the Barbara Finlayson Trust Scholarship, the Freemasons Lankhuyzen/Whetu-Kairangi Award and the NZ School of Music Director's Scholarship. She is currently studying under Howard Penny at the Australian National Academy of Music in Melbourne. Alexandra was selected as an Australian Chamber Orchestra Emerging Artist and toured with the Mahler Chamber Orchestra in Germany after having successfully auditioned for their 2016 Academy Residency program. Alexandra, has been principal cellist of the NZSO National Youth Orchestra.

Andrew Leathwick is a pianist and composer. He teaches piano at the University of Waikato, as a teaching fellow. He completed a Master of Music with First Class Honours in 2014 studying piano with Katherine Austin at the University of Waikato. While at the University of Waikato, Andrew was the winner of many awards and competitions, including the University of Waikato Cultural and Arts Person of the Year Award, the University of Waikato Concerto Competition, the University of Waikato Lilburn Trust Composition Awards, and the Sir Edmund Hillary Medal. In 2013, Andrew won the New Zealand National Concerto Competition, also receiving the Junior Jury Prize and Audience Choice Award. In 2015 and 2016, Andrew studied piano at the Australian National Academy of Music (ANAM) in Melbourne with Timothy Young. There he performed with artists including Kathryn Stott and Anthony Marwood, and received the Ursula Hoff Institute Prize for outstanding performance in an ANAM recital.