

## **NEW ZEALAND CHAMBER SOLOISTS**

### **Dark Bright Night**

**Jenny McLeod (1941 – Wellington)**

Studied in the 1960s with Douglas Lilburn at Victoria University of Wellington, then in Paris with Messiaen and in Cologne with Stockhausen. An early avant-garde chamber work, *For Seven*, had some success over the years in Europe, Britain, the United States and New Zealand. Formerly Professor of Music at Victoria University, Jenny McLeod has composed piano, vocal, choral, chamber and orchestral works, film, and television scores, as well as three large music-theatre 'spectaculars' for schools and amateurs—*Earth and Sky* (1968), *Under the Sun* (1970), and the *Wellington Sun Festival* (1983)—an 'outdoor harbour extravaganza'. McLeod has had a long association with the New Zealand Maori people (a number of her texts are wholly or partly in Maori) and was a pioneer mover in the nation's burgeoning biculturalism. ***Dark Bright Night was commissioned for the New Zealand Chamber Soloists as part of their 7 x 7 project by Ian Graham and Agi Lehár-Graham to celebrate the birth of their granddaughter Clara.***

### **Piano Trio in E flat**

**Rebecca Clarke (1886 – 1979)**

Moderato, ma appassionato

Andante, molto semplice

Allegro vigoroso

Born of a German mother and American father she helped to create an international perspective to her traditional music study where she was one of the most celebrated violists of her time. It is within the chamber music genre that she found her strongest expression.

## **INTERVAL**

### **Piano Quartet in C Minor Op.60**

**Johannes Brahms (1833 -97)**

*Allegro ma non troppo*

*Scherzo*

*Andante*

*Finale: Allegro*

In 1855 the young 22-year-old Johannes Brahms was living in the household of Robert and Clara Schumann and found himself in the role of 'man of the house' when Robert, who had musically 'discovered' and mentored him, put himself into a sanatorium after a failed suicide attempt. In the house he was in close contact with Clara, who had just given birth to her seventh child and was continuing to maintain her very successful concert career. Brahms was smitten with Clara and this was reciprocated in words that Clara wrote at that time," It

is not his youth that attracts me....no it's his fresh mind, the glorious, gifted nature, the noble heart that I love him for." During these intense months it became clear that she had decided to resist Brahms romantic desires which caused him great anguish and saw him move out of the house.

In April of 1856, still hurting from the rejection, Brahms started writing a piano quartet in c minor, completing a three-movement version. This version was put away for many years until Brahms retrieved the score and commenced rewriting the work in the 1870's. In the final published version the original first and final movements were maintained and new third and fourth movements added. Around the time Brahms was rewriting the piano quartet he was composing many works in c minor.

### **NEW ZEALAND CHAMBER SOLOISTS**

Formed in 2006 by core members **Katherine Austin (piano)**, **Lara Hall (violin)**, and **James Tennant (cello)**, they perform regularly within New Zealand and abroad whilst retaining a close association with the Conservatorium of Music at the University of Waikato. For this concert they are joined by violinist **Dimitri Atanassov**, born in Sofia, Bulgaria in 1970 and who started learning the violin at the age of 6. After studying with Professor Anna Ivanova, Dimitri studied at the Prague Academy of Arts under the guidance of Professor Vaclav Smitil where he excelled as a musician, completing his Master's degree in 1994. As a chamber musician and also in his former role as Concertmaster of the Auckland Philharmonia orchestra, he has worked and performed with many leading international artists. Inspired by the works of the old Cremonese masters Guarneri and Stradivari, Dimitri took up violin making in 2002. He also learned violin making and restoration in the USA, France and Italy. His instruments have become popular for their superb quality of sound and playability. In 2013 he opened his workshop in Cremona, Italy, situated on Corso Garibaldi, about 200m away from Casa nuziale di Stradivari.

### **About 7 x 7**

Seven New Zealand females will to each compose a seven-minute piano trio. The composers who are being commissioned (subject to contractual agreement) are Jenny McLeod, Helen Bowater, Janet Jennings, Claire Cowan, Salina Fisher, Gillian Whitehead, and Eve de Castro-Robinson. This body of work will be built up over three years and then be prepared as a commercial recording. Over time, the works will also be toured throughout New Zealand as well as internationally to showcase New Zealand composers.

The works will be individually premiered as part of the New Zealand Chamber Soloists' Auckland Concert Series, at the Auckland Town Hall, Concert

Chamber. Presenting a regular concert series in Auckland is a welcome addition to the New Zealand Chamber Soloist's performance calendar, alongside the ensemble's other work – performing regularly in Hamilton, in regional centres throughout the Waikato and other engagements throughout New Zealand and overseas.