

Darroch/Cowan Duo



Music of the Americas

Tauranga Park Auditorium
383 Pyes Pa Rd

Sunday 8th May 2022, 4.00pm

Presented by
Tauranga Musica

in association with

**music
up
close**
Chamber Music
New Zealand

Oswaldo GOLIJOV (1960—) | *Fish Tale* (1998)

Oswaldo Golijov is a celebrated Argentine composer, mostly known for his vocal and orchestral works. His influences include classical chamber music, klezmer music, and the *nuevo tango* of Astor Piazzolla. His ability to blend genres is on clear display in *Fish Tale*, which is a fluid, colourful, and unpredictable piece of programmatic music.

The dedicatee of the work, American guitarist David Leisner, describes it as a "surrealistic tale of the journey of a fish that begins in the ocean, stops to contemplate the sounds of an African thumb piano, continues on, propelled by the wind, which then becomes a tornado, leading to a waterfall, then is suddenly contained in a little fishbowl, and scurrying on to a long swim in a 'rainbow brook', stops to contemplate the passage of time, gets caught by a fisherman who fervently promises to return him to the water, dances a bit of samba, considers anew the passage of time with a sigh, and finally meets the love of his life at the bottom of the sea, dancing a slow waltz to the Brazilian folk music of a 'marine music box', which, like an oyster, opens and closes, to music and to silence."

Jason NOBLE (1980—) | *Folk Suite* (2020)

1. Overture 2. Air 3. Céilidh 4. Ballad 5. Jig 6. Reel

Canadian composer Jason Noble has been described as "a master at translating feeling and imparting emotion through music," and his compositions have been called "a remarkable achievement, indeed brilliant, colourful, astounding, challenging." Both Jason and Steve are natives of the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, which is an isolated region off the east coast of Canada with a rich folk music tradition.

This *Folk Suite* is a collection of six miniatures that each attempt to capture a different aspect of these traditions, emulating both folk singing and instrumental music. It also seeks to incorporate the vast range of tones and timbres, the nuances of narrative delivery, the intricate ornamentation, and the push and pull of time that are enshrined in the oral tradition of how this music is performed.

Katherine HOOVER (1937–2018) | *Canyon Echoes* (1991)

1. Dance 2. She Mourns 3. He Returns

Celebrated composer and flutist Katherine Hoover's obituary in *The New York Times* stated "[she] began writing music in earnest in the early 1970s, at a time when few women were having success in the male-dominated world of classical composing." She went on to have her work performed by countless professional ensembles across North America, and even started her own publishing company, *Papagena Press*.

Many of her works were inspired by American Indian music and culture, with those for flute often emulating the sounds and timbres of native American flutes. This work, *Canyon Echoes*, was written in 1991, and was inspired by a recently-published book at the time, *The Flute Player*, which was an illustrated re-telling of an Apache folktale.

INTERVAL

Astor PIAZZOLLA (1921–1992)

Tango Etude No 4 for solo flute (1987)

“Campero” from *Cinco Piezas* for solo guitar (1983)

Tango Etude No 6 for solo flute (1987)

“Café 1930” from *Histoire du Tango* for flute and guitar (1985)

We have created a Piazzolla set for this programme – a selection of tango-inspired works written for each of our instruments alone, and a movement intended for this duo of flute and guitar, all written within a five-year span.

The music of Astor Piazzolla revolutionized the traditional tango into a new style termed *nuevo tango*, incorporating elements from jazz and classical music. *Campero* is the first of his set of five pieces for solo guitar. Piazzolla wrote his six *Tango Etudes for solo flute* at the end of his career – a career which succeeded in reintroducing the flute to the tango genre. *Café 1930* is the third movement of *Histoire du Tango*, a piece that attempts to convey the history and development of the tango throughout the 20th century. Piazzolla's music is often characterized by a strong rhythmic vitality contrasting with sections of a loose and free lyricism.

Joan TOWER (1938—) | *Snow Dreams* (1983)

Grammy Award-winning composer Joan Tower is one of the United States' most important composers, lauded by *The New Yorker* as “one of the most successful woman composers of all time.” *Snow Dreams* was commissioned by American performers Carol Wincenc and Sharon Isbin. Tower says of the work:

“There are many different images of snow, its forms and its movements: light snow flakes, pockets of swirls of snow, rounded drifts, long white plains of blankets of snow, light and heavy snowfalls, etc. Many of these images can be found in the piece, if in fact, they need to be found at all. The listener will determine that choice.”

Robert BEASER (1954—) | *Selections from Mountain Songs* (1985)

1. *Barbara Allen* 2. *The House Carpenter* 3. *He's Gone Away* 4. *Cindy*

Robert Beaser is a prolific American composer, however not widely known here in New Zealand. His prestigious fellowships include a Guggenheim, Fulbright, and a National Endowment for the Arts Award. *Gramophone Magazine* described his work as “dazzlingly colourful, fearless of gesture.”

Mountain Songs is a cycle of eight songs based on tunes from American folk music – many are lyric ballads from the southern mountains of Appalachia, with the exception of *Cindy*, a minstrel fiddle song. We are performing four of the songs in this set – a set which was nominated for a Grammy Award in 1985, in the Best Contemporary Composition category.

– Hannah Darroch and Steve Cowan

Hannah Darroch is the Principal Flute of the Christchurch Symphony Orchestra. Her varied career as a flutist has included work in a range of genres—recent appearances include a concerto at the International Conference on Mixed Music Pedagogy in Montreal, a free improvisation clinic at the 2020 Jazz Education Network conference in New Orleans, and a residency with the International Contemporary Ensemble at the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity. She collaborated frequently with six-time Grammy-nominated American percussionist and composer John Hollenbeck during her years in Montreal, and was recently awarded a grant from Creative NZ to commission and record four new works for flute and piano by NZ women composers.

Hannah can be heard on a number of New Zealand Symphony Orchestra recordings on the Naxos, EMI, and Universal labels, including the soundtrack to *The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies*. She also features on the premiere recording of Frank Ticheli's Pulitzer Prize-nominated work *Songs of Love and Life* recorded in the United States, and on *Les Oiseaux*, a new album by French indie-pop band Les Passagers.

In-demand as a teacher, Hannah has given guest masterclasses in a range of locations across Canada, the United States, South America, and Australia. She was awarded a McGill University Teaching Award in 2020 for her commitment to innovation and collaboration in her work on the teaching staff at McGill, and is currently teaching at the University of Canterbury.

Prior to her doctorate, Hannah gained a Master of Music from the University of Colorado Boulder in the United States, a Bachelor of Music with First-Class Honours from the New Zealand School of Music, and an Executive Graduate Certificate from the Global Leaders Program, curated by a range of institutions including Harvard, Duke, NYU, Georgetown Business School, and the League of American Orchestras.

Canadian guitarist **Steve Cowan** has performed as a soloist and in ensemble throughout Canada, the United States and Europe. His debut album of Canadian music, *Pour guitare* (McGill Records, 2016), helped to establish him as 'one of Canada's top contemporary classical guitarists' (*Classical Guitar Magazine*). In 2018–2019, Steve Cowan made his concerto debut with Ensemble del Arte in Germany, his New York solo recital debut, and released his second solo recording *Arctic Sonata* (EMEC discos).

As a chamber musician, Steve Cowan performs regularly with Forestare, a Montréal-based string ensemble; in 2022, he will be a Chamber Music New Zealand touring artist with flutist Hannah Darroch, as well as a Prairie Debut touring artist with guitarist Adam Cicchillitti. The Cowan–Cicchillitti duo has premiered 15 new works and released an album of Canadian music titled *FOCUS* (Analekta, 2019); their latest recording, *Impressions intimes* (Analekta, 2021), features original arrangements of Debussy, Ravel, Mompou and Tailleferre.

Steve Cowan has won awards at ten national and international competitions, eight of which are first prizes. Most recently, he won First Prize at the Tallinn Guitar Competition in Estonia, making him a EuroStrings touring artist for the 2021 season. Originally from St. John's, Newfoundland, Steve Cowan holds degrees from Memorial University, the Manhattan School of Music and McGill University. His teachers include Sylvie Proulx, David Leisner and Jérôme Ducharme. Since 2019, Steve Cowan has been a guitar instructor at Schulich School of Music of McGill University in Montréal.