



NEW ZEALAND
STRING QUARTET

TE RŌPŪ TŪRŪ O AOTEAROA

FIRST LIGHT

REFLECTION, REGENERATION, RELEASE

JUNE - JULY 2022



A journey through life, loss and rebirth,
reflecting on our collective place in this world.

REFLECTION PROGRAMME ONE

Martinborough, Auckland (Devonport), Akaroa, Tauranga,
Blenheim, Wellington (Hunter Council Chamber)

Meditations on our collective place in this world.

NATALIE HUNT	<i>Matariki</i>
ANTON WEBERN	Quartet 1905
JOSEPH HAYDN	String Quartet in D Major Op. 20, No. 4
BENJAMIN BRITTEN	Three Divertimenti

REGENERATION PROGRAMME TWO

Auckland (Parnell), Dunedin, Christchurch, Wellington (Public Trust Hall), Nelson

From darkness and loss come new beginnings.

LYELL CRESSWELL	Capricci: <i>Bergamasca, Galop & Courante</i>
GRAŻYNA BACEWICZ	String Quartet No.5
ROBERT SCHUMANN	String Quartet in a minor, Op. 41, No. 1

Programme Two is dedicated to the memory of Lyell Cresswell, cherished collaborator and friend.

RELEASE PROGRAMME THREE

Timaru, Napier, Blenheim, Hamilton, Wellington (Hunter Council Chamber)

Looking to the first light of a new dawn.

W.A. MOZART	Quartet in B Flat Major K 458 "The Hunt"
WILLIAM WALTON	String Quartet in A minor
DAVID FLYNN	'Slip' from Quartet, No. 2 "The Cranning"

A MESSAGE FROM OUR NATIONAL TOUR PRINCIPAL SPONSOR - THE TURNOVSKY ENDOWMENT TRUST



FRED TURNOVSKY

Welcome to this concert in the New Zealand String Quartet's First Light National Tour series, where together we celebrate the 35th anniversary of this truly wonderful ensemble. Fred Turnovsky, founder of the Turnovsky Endowment Trust, was an early advocate for the formation of a national string quartet and enjoyed a close relationship with the ensemble from its earliest days in 1987.

Fred wrote in his autobiography "And then there appeared the young string quartet of exceptional quality... whose playing captivated me from first hearing... every time I hear them I preen myself for having done something useful in my fifty years of living in New Zealand."

The Turnovsky Endowment Trust is proud to have been associated with the Quartet since its inception, and indeed to have sponsored the Quartet's annual tour of New Zealand for 21 years. Fred's vision was to bring the music of great European composers to audiences here in his adopted country and I know he would have been thrilled to hear such a tantalising mix of the familiar and fresh - European and New Zealand works side-by-side - in this thoughtfully curated trio of programmes. I do hope you enjoy.

*Helen Philpott
Trustee, Turnovsky Endowment Trust*



Kia ora,

You'll notice that our logo has evolved, and we're pleased to be celebrating our new ingoa Māori – Te Rōpū Tūrū O Aotearoa – with you.

We are at the beginning of our journey to bring depth and breadth to our role of serving the music and people of Aotearoa. We want to reflect the bicultural evolution of our national culture through the use of te reo Māori and Māori composition, something that is uniquely ours in the world.

Together with our Māori Advisor, Buddy Mikaere, and our growing Māori networks we celebrate our new name: Rōpū is a word for group or ensemble, Tūrū for strings – representing that the performance strength of our ensemble and our shared values are at the heart of our mahi and the connections we build.

THE NEW ZEALAND STRING QUARTET

Celebrating its 35th season in 2022, the New Zealand String Quartet has an established international reputation for its insightful interpretations, compelling communication, and dynamic performing style. The Quartet is known for its imaginative programming and for its powerful connection with audiences of all kinds.

Helene Pohl
(violin I)

Monique Lapins
(violin II)

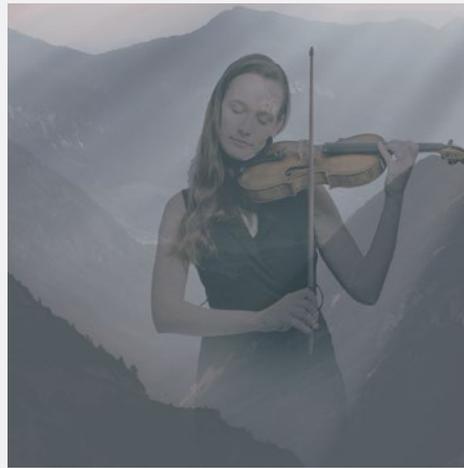
Gillian Ansell
(viola)

Rolf Gjelsten
(cello)

Over the decades the Quartet has cultivated a rich repertoire and discography, including a wide variety of New Zealand music, composers' cycles from Beethoven to Bartok, Mozart to Berg, in addition to theatrical presentations encompassing spoken word and dance, from Haydn's Seven Last Words to Schoenberg's Transfigured Night.

Devoted teachers as well as performers, all members of the NZSQ teach at the New Zealand School of Music – Te Kōkī where the NZSQ is Quartet-in-Residence, as well as running the Adam Chamber Music School in Nelson and mentoring ākonga and rangatahi from Sistema projects across Aotearoa.





Helene Pohl violin I

Helene Pohl studied at the Musikhochschule in Cologne, with members of the Cleveland Quartet at the Eastman School of Music and at Indiana University with Josef Gingold. She was first violinist of the prize-winning San Francisco-based Fidelio String Quartet before joining the NZSQ in 1994. In 2001 she became Artistic Director, with Gillian Ansell, of the Adam Chamber Music Festival.

Helene plays a 1730 violin made by Pietro Guarneri in Venice.

Monique Lapins violin II

Monique studied at the Australian National Academy of Music and at the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music in Singapore. She has twice been a finalist in the Asia Pacific Chamber Music Competition and has participated in chamber music programmes and festivals in Europe, Asia and Australia.

Monique plays a 1784 Lorenzo Storioni violin kindly on loan from David Duncan Craig and the Lily Duncan Trust.

Gillian Ansell viola

Following studies at the Royal College of Music in London and at the Musikhochschule in Cologne, Gillian worked as a professional player in London before becoming a founder member of the New Zealand String Quartet in 1987. She was second violinist for two years before taking up the position of violist with the group. In 2001 she became Artistic Director, with Helene Pohl, of the Adam Chamber Music Festival.

Gillian plays the 1619 Nicolò Amati viola kindly loaned by The Adam Foundation.

Rolf Gjelsten Cello

Rolf studied cello in North America with James Hunter and Janos Starker, as well as chamber music with the LaSalle, Hungarian, Vermeer, Cleveland and Emerson string quartets. He played professionally with the Berlin Symphony, the Laurentian Quartet and New York Trio before coming to New Zealand. He has a doctorate from Rutgers University and has played with the New Zealand String Quartet from 1994.

Rolf plays a 1705 Francesco Gofriller cello made in Venice.



NZSQ AKO / EDUCATION

The Quartet are proud to work with tamariki, ākonga and whānau from all walks of life through our education and community engagement programmes each year.

Alongside our annual Adam Summer School and Queen’s Birthday Weekend chamber music coaching, we connect with young people from all ages and abilities through our workshops and mentoring with Sistema Aotearoa, Virtuoso Strings, Tironui Music Trust, Arohanui Strings and the Rauhi Project throughout Aotearoa.

If you’re interested in finding out more about our education activity, or would like to help us connect with even more New Zealanders please visit nzsq.org.nz/education or get in touch at nzsq@nzsq.org.nz

NATALIE HUNT (1985—)

Matariki

Matariki is the name both of a cluster of around 500 stars – of which seven are visible to the naked eye – that appear on our eastern horizon every year in June and July, and of an individual star within that cluster.

According to the *kōrero tuku iho* (stories of the past) of different *iwi*, each of the nine named stars has its own significance and associations. *Matariki* signifies health, reflection, connection to the environment and connection between people. The pieces in today's concert also explore musical connection and reflection.

Natalie Hunt's quartet *Matariki* was commissioned by the NZSQ to form part of their 'Travelling Portmanteau' Series and performed at Wellington's Museum of City and Sea as part of the *Te Ao Mārama* concert to mark *Matariki* in June 2014. As Hunt explained, her inspiration came from 'volunteering at an eco-retreat – going out on the beach by myself and looking up at the stars and just thinking. When I came to actually writing the piece it was winter and around the time we celebrate *Matariki* ... because it was so cold and rainy I didn't end up seeing *Matariki*. In a sense, that cyclical pattern of knowing every morning I could try and see it the next morning translated itself into the piece.'

Hunt built *Matariki* upon an *ostinato*, the repeated figuration with which the cello begins the quartet. The silvery harmonics in the cello part, joined by the harmonics and portamenti of the violins and viola, suggest the 'ethereal essence of the stars and heavens.' As the music becomes more rhythmically defined we sense the anticipation and realisation of *Matariki*'s rising, echoing Pythagoras's words that 'there is geometry in the humming of the strings, there is music in the spacing of the spheres.'



ANTON WEBERN (1883–1945)

Quartet 1905

Anton Webern's single-movement Quartet of 1905 also explores notions of cyclicity and musical organicism in connection with nature.

Although he had been composing since he was a teenager, the beginning of his studies with Arnold Schoenberg in 1904 heralded a new epoch in Webern's development: Webern began producing work of extraordinary structural rigour and musical cohesion, uniting meticulous craft and profound emotional expression in a manner that synthesised classicism and Romanticism, in a modernist idiom.

In 1905 Webern noted a conversation with Gustav Mahler, in which the older composer told him:

'Nature is for us the model in this realm. Just as in nature the entire universe has developed from the primeval cell, from plants, animals, and men beyond to God, the Supreme Being, so also in music should a larger structure develop from a single motive in which is contained the ger of everything that is yet to be.'

This notion of a musical structure growing from a single cell is realised in Webern's *Quartet*, which opens with a three-note cell (C-sharp – C-natural – E-natural). Through a series of manipulations and elaborations this forms the basis for the first section of the *Quartet* and provides a footing for the entire piece. Although Webern conceived his *Quartet* as a single-movement work, it nonetheless contains three distinct sections, their inspiration in part coming from a painting by Giovanni Segantini (1859–1898), *Trittico della natura*, a triptych with panels titled *La vita*, *La natura*, and *La morte* that depicted the 'fundamental concerns' of human existence within the days and seasons. However, Webern's *Quartet* is not a musical allusion to, or representation of Segantini's images, but reflects the cycle *Werden – Sein – Vergehen*: Becoming – Being – Passing away.



JOSEPH HAYDN (1732–1809)

String Quartet in D Major, Op.20, No.4

I. Allegro di molto - II. Un poco Adagio affettuoso
- III. Allegretto alla zingarese - IV. Presto scherzando

Artistic realisation through autonomy and musical innovation are central to Haydn's String Quartet in D major, the fourth of six quartets in his Op. 20 set (1772).

At the time of the Quartet's composition, Haydn had been employed for just over a decade by the Esterházy family and was in residence at the Esterházy palace. Today we might like to think that the Esterházy family were aware of their excellent fortune in having such an exceptional composer as their Kapellmeister, and that while Haydn was a servant, his position was elevated by his creative genius. However, the conditions of his contract serve to reinforce that fundamentally one servant was the same as another: the Esterházy princes owned Haydn's music in the same way that they owned the bread made by their cooks. However, at some point after the succession of Prince Nicholas, an agreement was reached between the two men to relax these restrictions, and Haydn's music was disseminated through Europe by means of manuscript copies, resulting in the 1774 publication of Op. 20 in Paris.

The D major Quartet exemplifies the new complexity found throughout Haydn's Op. 20, alongside qualities of the *Emfindsamer Stil* ('style of sensibility'). According to J. G. Sulzer's *Allgemeine Theorie der schönen Künste* (1771–1774) musical *Emfindsamkeit* was characterised by 'profound and clever ideas, a somewhat free treatment of the parts ... an apparent disorder in the melody and harmony,' and 'sudden modulations and digressions from one key to another,' and 'expressive melody'. These traits infuse each of the four movements with a vigour in the lively sections, but also moments of icy unease in second movement's variations. The 'alla zingarese' minuet alludes in the most stylised manner to Hungarian Gypsy cimbalom music (an elaborate stringed instrument from the dulcimer family) before the Presto scherzando wittily concludes the Quartet.



BENJAMIN BRITTEN (1913–1976)

Three Divertimenti

Benjamin Britten's Divertimenti also represent a period of new beginnings, as the young composer sought to establish himself in Europe's musical firmament.



Upon graduation from the Royal College of Music in 1932, Britten received a bursary of £100. He wanted to study with Alban Berg in Vienna, but his parents and the Royal College dissuaded him, as they believed Berg's influence to be 'immoral'. Britten remained in England, where he made rapid progress towards professionalism through broadcasts and performances of his music and starting work with the GPO Film Unit. Still, when Berg died in 1935, Britten reflected on lost opportunities, writing: 'The real musicians are so few & far between Apart from the Bergs, Stravinskys, Schönbergs & Bridges one is a bit stumped for names, isn't one?'

Meanwhile, Britten had embarked in 1933 upon a series of musical portraits of friends, titled 'Alla Quartetto Serioso'. However, a performance of extracts from the work in December 1933 displeased Britten so much that he left the concert without speaking to the performers. In February of 1936 at Wigmore Hall, the Stratton Quartet performed the March, Waltz, and Burlesque in their new configuration as the Three Divertimenti. Unfortunately for Britten, the work received a frosty reception: 'sniggers and pretty cold silence.' The Divertimenti are acerbic, even facetious. The concision and contrast within each movement exhibit similarities with some of the music Britten wrote for the GPO Film Unit, and maybe it was the clash of musical worlds – the string quartet combined with the immediacy of film music – that disorientated Britten's initial audience.

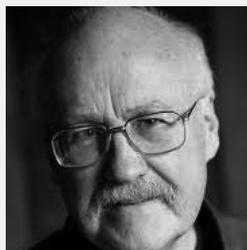
LYELL CRESSWELL (1944–2022)

Capricci: I. *Bergamasca* - V. *Galop* - X. *Courante*

Of the nine named stars in the Matariki cluster, Pōhutakawa, is the star associated with those who have passed on during the previous year.

Pōhutakawa's rising offers time to remember these friends. It is fitting, therefore, to perform three dances from Lyell Cresswell's *Capricci* in today's concert. Cresswell, who was born and educated in Wellington but lived and worked in Scotland for most of his life, maintained strong connections with musicians in Aotearoa, including the NZSQ. A highlight of this friendship was a performance of his Concerto for Orchestra and String Quartet in Edinburgh with the BBC Scottish Orchestra, and later recording the same work with the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra. Cresswell's death in March 2022 was a time of great sadness for all his musical collaborators and friends in New Zealand but there is no better work than *Capricci* with which to remember Cresswell's inimitable musical wit.

Capricci (2014) offers a collection of ten dances and evocations of deities of dance. *Bergamasca* opens with a drum-like repeated figuration in the cello part, above which the other instruments skitter and trill in a manner suggesting some clandestine nocturnal festivity. Then, the percussive syncopations of *Galop* gather momentum as they increase in complexity before fading into crystalline stillness. The *Courante* – a dance whose name derives from the French and Italian verbs 'to run' – does exactly that: the sinuous filigree of Cresswell's writing scurries in a manner both precipitous and precise.



GRAŻYNA BACEWICZ (1909–1969)

String Quartet No. 5

I. Moderato - II. Scherzo. Giocoso - III. Corale. Largo - IV. Variazioni. Allegro

The Polish composer Grażyna Bacewicz was born in Łódź on 5 February 1909 to musical parents: her father Vincas was a music teacher, and her mother Maria – the daughter of a wealthy landowner, who might have expected a more illustrious marriage – had worked as an administrator alongside performing in concerts.

Music, including domestic recitals and chamber music, formed an everyday part of the family's life, and Vincas ensured that his children followed a rigorous regime of instrumental practise and music theory. Bacewicz would study violin, piano, and composition at the Warsaw Conservatoire, and although she was a very capable violinist, her skill as a composer was remarkable and she later studied composition in Paris with the famed Nadia Boulanger at the École Normale de Musique.

Surviving World War II in Poland presented Bacewicz – who narrowly avoided being conscripted for forced labour by the invading German forces when detained in the infamous Pruszków transit camp – with many struggles. Following the end of the war, Bacewicz was offered a professorship at the Łódź Conservatory, and continued to give concerts but the new communist regime in Poland also posed restrictions and dangers for composers whose music did not comply with official expectations of socialist realism. In 1954, Bacewicz was badly injured in a car accident, and underwent lengthy rehabilitation. Emerging from this physically and emotionally painful time, she composed her String Quartet No. 5. The Quartet emerged as Bacewicz's expression of resistance to pain, to the temporary cessation of her career, and to 'instructions not to play the so-called formalistic music.' Musically, the Quartet shows Bacewicz's training in strict classical principles: the opening moderato grows from a tiny musical cell, the interval of a minor second/ semitone, which the other instruments invert. The Scherzo is an angular fugue, while the Corale sees the reprise of the Quartet's original generative semitone. With its frequent changes of metre, the Variazioni conclude the Quartet with exquisite pointillist vitality.



ROBERT SCHUMANN (1810–1856)

String Quartet in A minor, Op. 41, No.1

I. Introduzione. Andante - Allegro - II. Scherzo. Presto
- Intermezzo - III. Adagio - IV. Presto

In 1842 Robert Schumann found himself in a state of darkness and frustration. He and Clara Wieck Schumann had been married for less than two years, and Clara was determined to pursue her career as a pianist without opposition.



Social convention demanded that she did not travel alone, so Robert found himself in the position of chaperone during a tour of Bremen and Hamburg in February 1842. Although Clara championed his music, Robert was virtually ignored by the crowds who feted Clara, and eventually he returned alone – depressed and humiliated – to Leipzig while Clara travelled to Copenhagen for more concerts. Robert turned to intense study as a distraction from melancholia: he was determined to compose string quartets, but the monumental legacy left by the quartets of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven felt almost oppressive. Nonetheless Schumann persevered, encouraged that Mendelssohn had published three quartets in 1839.

By July 1842, Schumann had completed the three quartets comprising his Op. 41, and the pieces received their first performance on 13 September 1842, Clara's twenty-third birthday. In the Quartet in A minor – the key Schumann often associated with his wife – the legacy of Beethoven, and the influence of Mendelssohn are both present. A revenant of the fragmentary distillation in Beethoven's late quartets pervades the Scherzo particularly, while the bravado of the finale shows Schumann at his most musically fearless, announcing himself as a brilliant and accomplished composer of the string quartet, the form he believed most noble.

A journey through
life, loss and rebirth...
reflecting on our
collective place in
this world.

W.A. MOZART (1756–1791)

Quartet in B Flat Major K 458 "The Hunt"

I. Allegro vivace assai - II. Menuetto & Trio - III. Adagio
- IV. Allegro assai

The stars of Matariki appear on the eastern horizon in June and July, two of the coldest months in Aotearoa, but in looking to the east, we also look towards the dawn, and the new beginnings – literal and figurative – that sunrise brings.

The three pieces in today's performance all represent musical innovation realised through their string quartets.

Between 1770 and 1773, Mozart composed thirteen string quartets, but then abandoned the genre for nearly a decade. However, in the year after the appearance of Haydn's Op. 33, he embarked upon a quartet set of his own. Mozart referred to these quartets as 'Il frutto di una lunga e laboriosa fatica' (the fruits of long and laborious effort), and indeed, the autograph scores show evidence of crossing-out and redrafting, to an extent unusual for Mozart. In January 1785, K. 387, 428, and 421 received a private performance with Haydn present, and on a similar occasion on 12 February, K. 458, 465, and 446 were played. Leopold Mozart was present, and Haydn made his now famous statement to Leopold about Mozart's genius, concluding 'he has taste, and moreover the greatest possible knowledge of the science of composition.' In Mozart's own dedication to Haydn, he called the quartets 'his sons' and sending them out into the world entrusted them to the 'protection and guidance of a very celebrated Man...at the same time his best Friend.'

The B-flat major Quartet's nickname 'The Hunt' has nothing to do with Mozart, or his publisher: the nickname emerged later, probably connected with the presence of certain musical 'tropes' in the first movement: simple harmonic movement, and rhythmic motifs evoking hunting horns and stately cantering across the autumn landscape certainly emerge in Quartet's first movement. In contrast with that bucolic idyll, the *Menuetto* is initially languorous before becoming flirtatious and enticing in the Trio section. The move to E-flat major in the *Adagio* creates an atmosphere of indescribable beauty and unearthly anguish that transcends time, before Mozart spins back into the earthly realm for a finale of irrepressible wit.



WILLIAM WALTON (1902–1983)

String Quartet in A minor

I. Allegro - II. Presto - III. Lento - IV. Allegro molto

Of all the music in today's programme, Walton's Quartet in A minor best exemplifies looking towards a new musical dawn.

Having achieved phenomenal success as a young composer with works as diverse as his collaboration with Edith Sitwell on the 'entertainment' *Façade* (1922), the *Viola Concerto* (1929), *Belshazzar's Feast* (1931), and *Violin Concerto* (1939), the years of World War II were paradoxical: productive yet almost stifling, as Walton turned his attention to composing scores for patriotic films. His London home was bombed by the Luftwaffe in 1941, and by 1944 Walton – like all Europeans – was exhausted by the years of cataclysmic devastation. Aware that he must compose something significant and serious to signal a new beginning after these dark years, Walton embarked upon the *String Quartet in A minor*. In fact, the BBC had commissioned the work in 1939, but circumstances intervened, and only five years later did Walton set to work.

In the hands of the Blech String Quartet, the premiere took place in May 1947 as part of a BBC broadcast, followed the next day by a concert performance. The tight 'classical' structure of Walton's *Quartet* in combination with its often-rapturous modes of expression granted the piece a warm reception, by critics and musicians who agreed that it rivalled Ravel's *String Quartet* for brilliance and significance, while elevating the status of the twentieth-century British string quartet to new heights.



DAVID FLYNN (1977–)

'Slip' from Quartet, No. 2 "The Cranning"

For David Flynn, 'Slip' – which would later become the first movement of his second String Quartet – heralded a new chapter in his career as a composer.

In 2005 'Slip' won the Composer's Award at the internationally prestigious Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival, and the Festival offered Flynn a commission to write a full string quartet around 'Slip'. Later, the Quartet would be performed at New York's Museum of Modern Art by the New Juilliard Ensemble and in Moscow by the Vanbrugh Quartet at the Kremlin Armory Chamber. Flynn, whose musical education began in childhood with the piano, tin whistle, and rock guitar, later studied classical guitar and composition with a focus on bringing Irish traditional music into the 'art music' world and encouraging classically-trained Irish musicians to engage more closely with traditional Irish music. 'Slip' exemplifies Flynn's approach to synthesising the classical ensemble with 'techniques, modes, rhythms, and feelings common to traditional Irish music' but avoids the quotation of traditional melodies, or any element of pastiche. The distinctive techniques used by Donegal fiddlers, especially the vehement, almost aggressive, bowing style, is apparent throughout 'Slip'. Repeated figurations and frequent metre changes suggest the influence of late-twentieth-century musical minimalism but infused with warmth and wit.



“Throughout the concert, the NZ String Quartet played with animated conviction and style, demonstrating it is indeed one of the world’s finest quartets.”

Canberra City News, 2022

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The New Zealand String Quartet Trust gratefully acknowledges the use of a Storioni violin, kindly loaned by Mr David Duncan Craig, as trustee of the Lily Duncan Trust, and the use of an Amati viola, kindly loaned by the Adam Foundation.

The 1619 Amati viola played by Gillian Ansell, courtesy of the Adam Foundation. Photo: Mark Robinson

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Monique Lapins, Lecturer (violin)

Gillian Ansell, Associate Professor (viola)

Rolf Gjelsten, Associate Professor (cello)

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