

Programme Notes

Horomono Horo – Call
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Horomono Horo – Call
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Horomona Horo – Call
Jeremy Mayall – Ahakoa he iti he pounamu
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Victoria Kelly in collaboration with
Horomona Horo, Tim Worrall & NZTrio – Toi Huarewa

Dame Gillian Karawe Whitehead (Ngāi Te Rangī) (NZ; b. 1941) *Te Waka o te rangi*

Dame Gillian writes “Te waka o te rangi is a waka in the sky, whose prow is the constellation Matariki, and whose stern is Tauroru, the belt of Orion. Every night the captain, the star Taramainuku, trawls with his net to collect the souls of the people who had died that day, and, when Matariki sets in May, takes them to the underworld. When Matariki rises again, the souls are released to the heavens as stars.

This is one of the stories that was in my mind when I was writing this piece, but there are others. For instance, Tawhirimatea, the god of winds, was so upset by the separation of his parents, Ranginui and Papatuanuku, that he tore out his eyes and threw them into the sky where they became the constellation Matariki, while Tawhirimatea thrashed blindly round the sky, unable to see.

The clarity or otherwise of the nine stars of Matariki predicts the quality of the forthcoming harvest. My piece responds to Horomona Horo’s waiata, for koauau ponga iho [gourd nose flute] which precedes it, and I have also quoted the refrain of a piece for solo voice [Matariki] which I wrote some time ago. The text roughly translates as ‘People gather to prepare the land, preparing mounds for kumara planting. It’s winter, the rainy season, pools lie everywhere. The small eyes of Matariki.’”

Te Waka o te rangi was commissioned by NZTrio in 2019.

Martin Lodge (NZ; 1954) *Nga Whetu Hou*

Martin writes “The title Nga Whetu Hou, New Stars, reflects how the annual reappearance of the Matariki [Pleiades] constellation may be taken to signal new beginnings. But as we gaze upwards and outwards beyond ourselves, sometimes new stars are discovered, as well as familiar ones being welcomed back. We are living in a time when it is becoming imperative for us all to find new ways living if the familiar world is to endure. It is time to re-evaluate familiar things. Musically, Nga Whetu Hou was created as a response to gestures on the pukaea [wooden trumpet] and putatara [conch trumpet] by my composer/performer colleague and friend Horomona Horo. Some key qualities signalled were vitality, challenge and optimism.”

Nga Whetu Hou was commissioned by NZTrio in 2019.
Support of the University of Waikato is gratefully acknowledged.

Jeremy Mayall (NZ; b. 1983)
Ahakoā he iti he pounamu

Ahakoā he iti he pounamu - Although it is small, it is greenstone. This whakataukī refers to the gift of something small, but precious. Something given from the heart. This little piece is exploring the relationship between the western musical traditions and the world of taonga pūoro. This combination of sound worlds is a gift to me, and it is a space where it is an honour and privilege to create work that contributes to this growing legacy. Particularly in collaboration with Horomona. In this piece, the trio echoes some of the sounds of the taonga pūoro - mainly that of the tumutumu and the pukaea. The title is also a reference to the use of the pahu pounamu - a treasure with a beautiful sound that rings twice throughout the piece.

Ahakoā he iti he pounamu was commissioned by NZTrio in 2019

Gareth Farr (NZ; b. 1968) and Richard Nunns (NZ; b. 1945)
Nga Kete e Toru

Nga Kete e Toru was commissioned by NZTrio in 2009, and is a conversation between the instruments of Māori and Pākehā cultures. The composition, for piano trio and taonga pūoro player, features a group of traditional Māori instruments called the Pūmotomoto - instruments characterised by having only one finger hole resulting in a pitch range that is much more limited than other Māori wind instruments such as the Koauau and Pūtorino. The Pūmotomoto playing technique includes manipulation of embouchure (mouth position) to create edge tones, high harmonics, and bending of pitches.

The seven sections of Nga Kete e Toru are inspired by various aspects of the story of Tane and his ascent to the heavens to acquire the three baskets of knowledge - Nga Kete e Toru. The Pūmotomoto is mentioned many times in the story, and as such it becomes a key character in the narrative of this epic journey.

Victoria Kelly (NZ; b.1973) in collaboration with Horomona Horo, Tim Worrall & NZTrio
Toi Huarewa

Victoria writes "A way to reach the highest level of heaven - sometimes described as a web that hangs down from the heavens, sometimes described as a whirlwind path.

When I began writing this piece, I wanted to create a musical world where Māori and Western musical tradition could communicate in the same language.

The taonga pūoro are an aural tradition, deeply entwined with Māori culture and absolutely unique to Aotearoa and the Māori people. Western music, on the other hand, is a written tradition that encompasses the collision and intersection of many places and cultures.

I thought about the tangible things that these different traditions have in common and decided to create a myth to act as a musical form for the piece. Because Māori mythology is fundamental to the art of the taonga pūoro - and because many mythologies exist at the ancient heart of Western art - this felt like a familiar place for everyone.

In Te Ao Māori, there is a state that exists between life and death, earth and sky, light and dark. It's the point where the spiritual and physical worlds intersect. As I've composed and my mind has wandered, I've drawn my own, personal comparisons between this idea and some of the beautiful

theories about parallel universes and multiple dimensions that occupy the minds of physicists (and which have long fascinated me). This is a part of my own cultural heritage and it gives me chills to realise that many deep Māori concepts - derived centuries ago in geographical isolation - run parallel to Western thought, even if they are articulated quite differently on the surface.

These kinds of intersections - the doorways that connect us, the places where Te Arai (the veil that separates us from our ancestors) is permeable - are where I imagine the mythical Toi Huarewa to manifest. These doorways lead to places full of mystery and wonder that all of us, regardless of our culture, can seek, access and perceive, if we choose to open them.”

To read the myth of Puiaki and Tawhiti, view the film and discover more about this piece, please visit www.victoriakellymusic.com

Toi Huarewa was commissioned by NZTrio in 2013 with funding from Creative New Zealand

About the Artists

Horomona Horo

Composer, practitioner and cross genre collaborator, Horomona Horo has fused the traditional instruments of the Māori, taonga pūoro (singing treasures), within a diverse range of cultural and musical forms.

Mentored by tohunga [experts] of taonga puoro, the late Dr Hirini Melbourne and Richard Nunns, in 2001, Horo won the inaugural Dynasty Heritage Concerto Competition and in the intervening years has become the international Māori face of taonga pūoro. Performances including orchestral work with the Weimarer Staatskapelle Orchestra, hip-hop with Pao Pao Pao, Opera in the Park with Kiri Te Kanawa, guest artist at the 90th Commemorations of the Battle of Passchendaele, and international tours with Moana and the Tribe, Canti Māori, Irish collaboration - Green Fire Islands and the Voices NZ Choir have enabled Horomona to extend his knowledge and skills across diverse genres whilst remaining a cultural and musical educator in his own right.

Horo continues to emerge himself in the unique sounds, techniques and intrinsic significance and practises of taonga pūoro. Not only of musical significance, the instruments are part of the holistic culture of all life, birth, death and nature, to which he was born. Each instrument has a specific use within rights of passage, storytelling and daily life of the Māori peoples. This daily life-breathing of the instruments is the distinguishing mark of his work and recent compositions and collaborations with Nga Tae, NZTrio, UK Composer Paul Lewis and Italian flautist, Luca Manghi, bear witness to this fact in a strong, audible manner, combined with a sound knowledge of contemporary musical techniques.

NZTrio: Amalia Hall (violin); Ashley Brown (cello); Somi Kim (piano)

Described as a “national treasure” and “New Zealand’s most indispensable ensemble” (William Dart, NZ Herald), NZTrio is renowned for its eclectic repertoire, outstanding talent and warm kiwi stage presence. The trio smashes outmoded preconceptions of classical music being stuffy or intimidating by presenting a fresh and approachable style that appeals to listeners from all walks of life. NZTrio is a respected ambassador of contemporary New Zealand music. As a sector-leading ensemble, NZTrio holds a remarkable track record of over 50 new commissions to date (more than 2/3 from New Zealand composers). In 2017 NZTrio was awarded its first Tui – the Vodafone Music Award for Classical Artist of the Year. Touring widely around the country and internationally, as well as regular album recordings, the trio deftly showcases its commissions alongside other skilfully matched contemporary and classical master works, proudly featuring at least one New Zealand composition in every NZTrio concert.