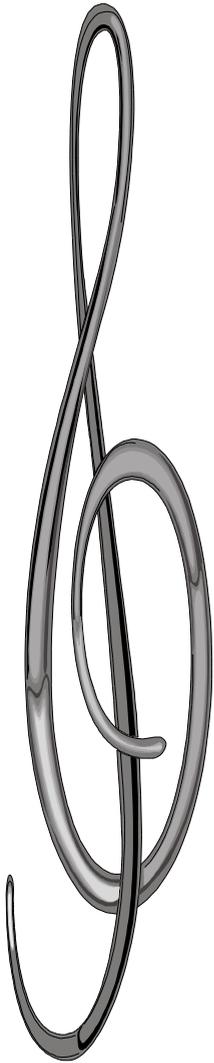


---

Christopher's Classics - Series XXIII 2018  
presents

---

# THE VILLANI PIANO QUARTET



Presented by  
Sunday Classics Inc



Chamber Music  
New Zealand

*Performing:*  
***Beethoven, Brahms and Vasks***

---

Thursday, April 19th, 2018, 7.30pm  
**The Piano, 156 Armagh St, Christchurch**

---

The busiest lives deserve beautiful music.

---

## Programme

---

### **Beethoven *Piano Quartet in E-flat Major Op. 16***

*I. Grave - Allegro ma non troppo II. Andante Cantabile  
III. Rondo: Allegro ma non troppo*

### **Vasks - *Quartet for Violin, Viola, Violoncello And Piano***

*I. Preludio II. Danze*

----- INTERVAL : 15 minutes no bell -----

### **Brahms - *Piano Quartet No. 1 in Gm***

*I. Allegro II. Intermezzo III. Andante con moto IV. Rondo alla Zingarese*

---

## Biographies

---

**The Villani Piano Quartet** was formed at the end of 2015, and has already built a reputation for being an acclaimed and dynamic new ensemble in the New Zealand chamber music scene. With both local and international experience, the team has come together with a drive to present the unique richness of the piano quartet experience to audiences of all ages.

**VIOLINIST - Marko Pop Ristov** graduated from the Royal College of Music (London) with a BMus in 2009. He attained his Masters in Chamber Music from the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London, during which time he also performed his Barbican debut in 2012. At 16 he was invited and awarded a scholarship to study with Prof. Pavel Vernikov at the "Scuola di Musica di Fiesole". Marko has been awarded first prize in several international competitions including "Performing Australian Music" (London, 2008), "Giovanni Batista Pergolesi" (Italy, 2003) and "Peter Konjovich" (Yougoslavia, 2001).

He has appeared as a soloist with "Kensington Sinfonia" (UK), "Orchestra dei Ragazzi" (Italy), "Bitola Chamber Orchestra" and "National Symphony Orchestra" (Macedonia).

Whilst in London, Marko received coaching from eminent musicians and artists such as the: "Bedke Quartet", "Chilingarina Quartet", "Domus Quartet", "Belcea Quartet", "Florestan Trio" and many more.

With his ensemble, the 'Ristov Piano Quartet', Marko performed in festivals across the UK, France, Swizerland, Macedonia, Kosovo and Serbia. In 2010 the quartet was invited to perform the "Rombach" piano trio by P. Dusapin for the BBC Proms.

Since his arrival in New Zealand in 2013 Marko is a regular player with the APO and ACO as well as section leader of 'Bach Musica'.

*VIOLIST* - **Emma Dann** graduated from the University of Auckland with a Bachelor of Music (Honours) with a Major in Performance and a Minor in Early Music in 2007.

Following this she spent three years in Sydney where she completed a Masters of Music studying under Roger Benedict. Emma worked with Sydney Symphony Orchestra and Sydney Sinfonia during this time.

After a brief period in her home town, which included a contract with the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra, Emma moved to London to study a Master of Performance in Orchestral Studies under the tutelage of Andriy Vytovych at the Royal College of Music. Over her two years in London Emma played with the London Symphony Orchestra, the BBC Symphony Orchestra, and was a member of the Aldeburgh World Orchestra.

Since her return to Auckland in 2012, Emma has freelanced as a violist with the APO, Auckland Chamber Orchestra, Bach Musica and Piper's Sinfonia. Emma is a trained Suzuki Method violin teacher and has a private studio of 40 students.

*CELLIST* - **Sarah Spence** has a Bachelor of Music Honours Degree from the Royal Northern College of Music and a German Masters of Chamber Music from the Robert Schumann Musik Hochschule.

In Manchester, she studied with the solo cellist of the Royal Danish Orchestra, Kim Bak Dinitzen and Baroque Cellist, Susan Shepherd as well as partake in masterclasses with renowned cellists: Emma Ferrand; Eduardo Vassallo; Jo Cole; Karine Georgian and Ralph Kirshbaum.

During her masters in Germany, studying under Professor Gregor Horsch (solo cello of the Royal Concertgebouw Symphony), Sarah divided her time between chamber music studies at the Robert Schumann Musik Hochschule and orchestral studies at the Orchesterzentrum NRW in Dortmund. During this time, Sarah received masterclasses from: Solo Cellist of the Duisburg Philharmonic, Friedemann Pardall; Solo Cellist of the Berlin Philharmonic, Ludwig Quantz and Solo Cellist of Germany's leading Contemporary Music Ensemble, Dirk Wietheger. Sarah went on to perform with Musik Fabrik at the finale of the Acht Bruecken Fest for Pierre Boulez.

As a founding member of the Eris Ensemble, Sarah recorded a CD of contemporary Scottish music, 'From Nothing', by composer Gemma McGregor and also premiered 'Black Tent on the Plains' by award winning composer, Charlie Usher. As a Baroque Cellist, Sarah performed as soloist and continuo with the Palm Concertino in Germany, as well as in various projects across Scotland with Eris Baroque.

In New Zealand, Sarah is a freelance performer with ACO, Piper's Sinfonia, Bach Musica, APO and section leader in Wairua Sinfonietta as well as a string tutor at Sistema Aotearoa.

*PIANIST* - **Flavio Villani** completed a Bachelor of Piano Performance with Matteo Napoli at the Conservatory "G.Martucci" in Salerno in 2007. In 2012 he

completed a Master in Piano Performance at the University of Auckland with first class honours under the guidance of pianist Stephen De Pledge. He is absolute winner of the Northland Society Piano Competition in 2008 as well as first prize for the Llewelyn Piano Competition in both 2011 and 2012.

After performing in different recitals between New Zealand and Italy, at the end of 2014 he performed Rachmaninoff Concerto n.2 with the Orchestra Filarmonica of Calabria in Italy and subsequently with the Orchestra of CalArts in Los Angeles.

The recording of that performance led to the creation of a bio-documentary "*Crossing Rachmaninoff*" which premiered at the NZ International Film Festival in 2015 and then was shown in the USA, China and Europe the following year.

Flavio played with Mark Menzies (violin), Gretchen La Roche (clarinet) on 12th August 2015 for Christopher's Classics at St Michael and All Angels.

He also performed with New Plymouth Orchestra and Auckland Symphony Orchestra.

Finally he is the Director of the Villani Music School in St Heliers under the St Heliers Community Centre where he organises concerts, master classes and leads a busy activity between the local and the musical community.

[www.quartet.flaviovillani.com](http://www.quartet.flaviovillani.com)

[www.facebook.com/villanipianoquartet](https://www.facebook.com/villanipianoquartet)

---

## Notes

---

### **Beethoven** ~ *Piano Quartet in E-flat Major Op. 16*

*I. Grave - Allegro ma non troppo II. Andante Cantabile III. Rondo: Allegro ma non troppo*

This work is a reimagining by the composer of his previously written wind quintet, that had itself, been inspired by Mozart's Quintet for Piano and Winds. Beethoven made no secret of being a great admirer of Mozart and used the same compositional form for his Wind Quintet that Mozart had used in his work 13 years earlier. Arguably, Beethoven was in fact writing Piano Quartets of this nature before Mozart published his, although evidence is thin. Similar to Mozart's Piano Quartet writing, the keyboard part has been written with the composer himself in mind as the performer, the part is demanding and virtuosic. There are claims that at the premiere, where Beethoven was indeed the performer, he took great liberties in the cadenza, much to the chagrin of the string players.

### **Vasks** ~ *Quartet for Violin, Viola, Violoncello and Piano*

*I. Preludio II. Danze*

*"Speaking Latvian in one's music might be the most important and essential message we should carry to the world ... telling everything in our language ... even if people had no contact with Latvian music - if they see some peculiar colour, some flavour that is not to be found anywhere else we have been on the right track - we have been communicating in Latvian."*

**- Peteris Vasks**

Vasks is well known in his native Latvia for his love and pride of his home country. Much of his music reflects the struggle and turmoil of Latvia's past, as well as the natural environment and the history of its people. In our programme, we present the first two movements of Vasks' six movement Piano Quartet. These movements in particular have a firm footing in Latvia's folk music tradition, from the opening medieval-like harmonies, to the 7/8 dance rhythms of the second movement. The Quartet was composed in 2001 and to date, Vasks lives in Latvia and continues to compose.

## **Brahms ~ Piano Quartet No. 1 in Gm**

*I. Allegro II. Intermezzo III. Andante con moto IV. Rondo alla Zingarese*

At the age of 27 years, Brahms published his first Piano Quartet. Clara Schumann played piano for its first performance where it received a lukewarm reception. However, its first official public premiere, where Brahms performed it with members of the Hellmesberger Quartet, was met with a more enthusiastic response. It has remained popular in the chamber music repertoire ever since.

Schoenberg liked it so much and was so tired of attending unsatisfactory performances, that he felt he had to do something to make sure that the complexity of the textures and interweaving lines could be appreciated in their entirety, so he wrote an orchestral arrangement, *"It is always very badly played, because the better the pianist, the louder he plays and you hear nothing from the strings. I wanted once to hear everything, and this I achieved"*

As with all of Brahms' writing, the difficulties of performance lie in achieving the long phrases and negotiating the dense textures. In the Gm Piano Quartet, these challenges are faced head on in the 1st movement.

From the very beginning, an opening comment from the piano is carried through every instrument before finally reaching the first full stop 10 bars into the movement. Rich, thick textures are quick to follow, with extreme, forceful dynamics making an appearance very early on.

At nearly 40 minutes in length, it is important as a performer to 'leave something in the tank' for later, as in a typical Brahms fashion, there aren't many opportunities for a pitstop. Rather than assuming the light hearted feel of a Scherzo, the second movement's lyrical lines are trapped by the constrictions of constant, repetitive quavers that threaten to bubble up to the surface throughout. The third movement takes the form of an operatic aria with a pomp and circumstance middle section.

The Finale, however, is what has secured this quartet in the chamber music repertoire over the centuries. Brahms toured Europe with Ede Remenyi, an Hungarian Violinist. During this tour, Brahms picked up a thing or two about the so-called 'Gypsy' style and it is in the fourth movement where Brahms seems to shed his serious demeanour and let his hair down. The textures invoke the calamity of the Hungarian *Cimbalom* and the hard accents are reminiscent of the Hungarian language. After no less than six different themes have joined party, Brahms finally brings the Quartet to a close with a foot stomping coda that any fiddle player out there would be itching to jump in on.

Our "Six of the Best" XXIII Season continues with:



# Behn String Quartet

*Tuesday May 1st, 7.30pm*

Led by Kate Oswin of Christchurch but now in England with this exciting new Quartet playing:

**Dvorak** - *The American*

**Ravel** - *Quartet*

**Jack Body** - *Transcriptions*

**Tickets: Door Sales:** Subject to availability, by Cash or Eftpos.

**On-line Sales:** [www.eventfinda.co.nz](http://www.eventfinda.co.nz)  
(all charges to purchaser).

Presented in association  
with **Chamber Music  
New Zealand (CMNZ)**.



Chamber Music  
New Zealand

---

## The "Six of the Best" XXIII Season resumes in Spring with:

---

*August 23 NZSQ* with **Serenity Thurlow** - Quartets by Beethoven and Bartok, the Mozart *C Major Quintet*

*September 13* **Richard Mapp** - piano recital

*October 16 NZ Barok* with **James Bush** (cello) - *The Splendour of Venice*

## Your contact to Christopher's Classics

For addition and alterations to the mailing list phone Helen Webby on (03) 331 7112 or 021 664 344 or email: [helenwebby@gmail.com](mailto:helenwebby@gmail.com)

For general concert information and subscription queries email:

**[christophersclassicsnz@gmail.com](mailto:christophersclassicsnz@gmail.com)** or visit our website:

**[christophersclassics.nz](http://christophersclassics.nz)** or Facebook Page: [www.facebook.com/christophersclassics/](http://www.facebook.com/christophersclassics/)

**Acknowledgements : Elizabeth Ball Trust, Rata Foundation, The Piano, Antonio Strings, Gloria Streat, The Philip Carter Family Concert Hall at The Piano and private donors - thank you all.**