

Nikolai Kapustin: Trio for Flute, Cello, and Piano (1998)

Nikolai Kapustin's music has a wonderful double identity: it sounds as if it belongs in a jazz club, yet it is built with the careful architecture of classical chamber music.

Kapustin trained as a pianist in the Soviet conservatoire tradition and worked extensively with jazz and big-band style ensembles in Moscow, including the famous Oleg Lundstrem big band.

The Trio for Flute, Cello and Piano, Op. 86 (written in 1998) is one of his best-known chamber works. Kapustin himself recorded the piece with flautist Alexander Korneev and cellist Alexander Zagorinsky, underlining how close this music is to the composer's own pianistic voice and rhythmic feel.

Kapustin often uses the outward features we associate with jazz—off-beat accents, layered rhythms, and harmony that slips deliciously between brightness and bite—while keeping the musical argument tight and clearly paced. Kapustin gives the three instruments notably equal status, constantly passing material between them.

Kapustin's Trio is sometimes called “crossover”, but that can understate what's special about it. The piece isn't classical music with jazz decoration, or jazz in classical clothing. It's Kapustin's own solution to a compositional puzzle: how to capture the thrill of jazz-like spontaneity inside fully composed, classically shaped chamber music—and to do it with enough charm and craft that it feels natural from the first bar to the last.

Te Moana Trio

Flute: Anthony Ferner. Born in New Zealand, Anthony is the Principal Flute Emeritus of the Christchurch Symphony Orchestra and a flute instructor at the University of Canterbury. After winning the 1972 New Zealand Concerto Competition, he studied at the Guildhall School of Music in London. He spent 17 years as a member of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra before joining the Australian Opera and Ballet Orchestra. During this time, he also conducted and performed chamber music. In 1996, he was appointed Principal Flute of the Christchurch Symphony Orchestra. Alongside his performing career, he taught flute at the University of Canterbury for 25 years.

Cello: James Donaldson. James is a New Zealand-born cellist, educator, conductor, and arts administrator. He studied at the University of Canterbury and the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, and went on to hold orchestral chairs in New Zealand and the UK. He has founded and worked with chamber music ensembles in Australasia, Europe, and the UK and has held several prestigious teaching and arts management positions in NZ and the UK. James served most recently as Director of the Nelson Centre of Musical Arts, and now lives and works in Hawaii.

Piano: Kyoko Takashima. Kyoko graduated with a degree in Piano Performance from Osaka College of Music. She also attended the Salzburg Mozarteum International Summer Academy. Throughout her career, she has performed as a soloist with the Osaka Century Symphony Orchestra, the Kansai Philharmonic Orchestra, the Telemann Chamber Orchestra, and many other ensembles. She has given numerous solo and chamber music recitals across Japan.

Her international performance activities include concert tours in the United States (including Carnegie Recital Hall), Brazil, Argentina, and Australia. Until the spring of 2021, she served as a lecturer at the Graduate School of Osaka College of Music and Osaka Aoyama University.

In 2021, she relocated to Nelson, New Zealand. Prior to her move, she organised charity concerts in Auckland in 2010 and 2014 to support the recovery efforts following the Christchurch earthquakes. She is currently active throughout New Zealand as a soloist, concerto performer, chamber musician, choral accompanist, and orchestral pianist, collaborating with musicians from many countries.

Te Moana Trio



Shuji Takashima

At the Nut Point Gallery
18 July, 2026

Tony Ferner, flute
James Donaldson, cello
Kyoko Takashima, piano

Welcome

Founded in 2024, Te Moana Trio are firm friends who gather together from New Zealand's South Island, the United States and Japan, whenever opportunity presents, to explore and share their love of chamber music and art.

Our programme this evening navigates the turbulent waters of the twentieth century, from 1960 America, and through wartime and post-war France. We visit the Greek Isles with a child of Greek immigrants to New Zealand, and find ourselves set ashore amongst the jazz clubs of Soviet Russia and the Ukraine.

Our thanks to John Allen and the Nut Point Gallery for hosting this performance, and to the Neates, the Ando-Ferners, and the Okada, Saito and Coté families for hosting us as we travelled to work on this programme together.

Programme

Ned Rorem: Trio for Flute, Cello and Piano (1960)

- I. Largo misterioso - Allegro
- II. Largo
- III. Andante
- IV. Allegro molto

Jean-Michel Damase: Sonate en Concert (1952)

- I. Prelude
- II. Rigaudon
- III. Aria
- IV. Intermezzo
- V. Aria
- VI. Sicilienne
- VII. Gigue

John Psathas: Island Songs (1995)

- I. Fast and Spirited
- II. Zeibekiko
- III. Sirto

Interval and supper

Philippe Gaubert: Trois Aquarelles (1915)

- I. Par un clair matin (On a clear morning)
- II. Soir d'automne (Autumn evening)
- III. Sérénade

Nikolai Kapustin: Trio for Flute, Cello, and Piano, Op. 86 (1998)

- I. Allegro Molto
- II. Andante
- III. Allegro Giocoso

Inspired by vastly different traditions, these five works represent a contemporary striving for new forms of musical expression and meaning, while remaining respectful of their origins in valued cultural taonga.

Ned Rorem: Trio for Flute, Cello and Piano (1960)

If contrast is the essence of all musical meaning, Ned Rorem's mid-twentieth century chimeral chamber music is built on contradiction. Masterfully structured, but fundamentally chaotic; unambiguously diatonic, but technically atonal. Torturous to the point of exquisite beauty. Unapproachable and unpredictable, yet you'll find your foot tapping along.

Spanning four distinct movements, the work embodies Rorem's defining lyricism, combining traditional melodic shapes with fluid chromatic harmonies.

The first movement centers on the flute, an instrument Rorem once described as "song with the voice removed." It opens with a sensuous flute solo built on a six-note motif, which transitions into a dynamic, rhythmically quirky, and buoyant Allegro featuring a soaring cadenza. The Largo highlights the ensemble's dramatic interplay. It features a forlorn, hushed duet between the flute and the cello, juxtaposed with interruptions of crushingly loud, dissonant chords from the piano. Belonging largely to the cello, the third movement acts as a reflective and somber introduction that builds into a pulsating, expressive centerpiece.

The finale is a showcase of pianistic fireworks and instrumental virtuosity. It brings the trio to a close with an energetic, and twitchy theme that scampers quickly across the ensemble.

Jean-Michel Damase: Sonate en Concert Op. 17 (1952)

Drawing on almost every corner of western classical tradition from Thomas Tallis to Charlie Parker, Damase's *Sonate* feels almost imbecilic in its simplicity after the Rorem avalanche. But don't be fooled by his easy charm. Damase's harmonic and stylistic twists rapidly become relentless curve-balls that had the Trio in stitches in rehearsal.

John Psathas: Island Songs (1995)

By contrast, the complexity and physical intensity of Psathas rhythmic writing very nearly had the Trio in need of literal medical intervention!

Island Songs draws deep inspiration from Psathas's Hellenic heritage without attempting to literally recreate traditional Greek Folk Music. Instead, the music acts as a visceral response to the emotional power of traditional dance.

The opening movement draws from multiple dance styles. The composer describes a "latent energy," represented in unexpected bursts of propulsion and incessant, shifting rhythmic motion. The slow movement draws inspiration from the traditional, slow and introspective 'Zeibekiko' dance. Psathas abandons a strict metre for the "uncertainty of the downbeat," relying on sparest writing to emphasize the intense, focused emotional weight of the dance. Based on the lively and highly contagious energy of the sirto dance, the finale is exuberant and rhythmically infectious.

Philippe Gaubert: Trois Aquarelles (1915)

Philippe Gaubert's Trois Aquarelles are watercolours in sound: three quicksilver panels where line dissolves into wash, and harmony blooms like pigment in wet paper. Yet these pieces are no pastel trifles. Beneath their shimmer lies wartime Paris, a culture clinging to grace.

Gaubert, principal flutist at the Paris Opéra and later its music director, understood the voice and vanity of each instrument. The trio's alchemy lies in transparency, the flute's overtones riding the piano's resonance, the cello binding the texture as chiaroscuro—shape through shade.

The artist's careful brushwork manifests in Gaubert's articulation: In Par un clair matin, buoyant, speech-like tonguing that keeps the line airborne; in Sérénade, crisp consonants and elastic phrasing give the wit its edge. The pianist's subtle pedal-work is the painter's water; short washes illuminating passing harmonies without obscuring colourful detail.