



THE MUSIC

Hailed as “bold and stylistically varied” (The Modernist, PBS FM), Ben Wilcock’s latest album *The River Tethys* includes a harmonious mix of contemporary takes on jazz standards and original melodies. Audiences can expect to hear impressive improvisations and refreshing arrangements of classics such as 1930s show tune *Star Eyes* and Dizzy Gillespie’s *Groovin’ High*.

The concept of this concert is based on interconnecting old and new worlds, both musically and through the lens of science fiction. The programme includes original compositions as well as reworked traditional pieces which fit the narrative. The original compositions are based on recorded collective improvisations which were recorded in November 2020 and then workshopped and given structure. The result is a journey including early 20th century traditional forms and contemporary harmonic devices.

The title derives from a fictional river in the award-winning sci fi novel series 'Hyperion'. *The River Tethys* connects worlds, old and new, as does the music in this suite. Each original tune has been named after one of the worlds traversed by protagonists in 'Hyperion', and the traditional pieces were chosen to fit the theme.

THE ARTISTS

Pianist and composer **Ben Wilcock** began his career as ‘on-stage pianist’ in the acclaimed show ‘The Pickle King’ (Indian Ink) which won multiple awards including a Fringe First at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. After playing in the UK, Ben returned to NZ to perform and record with soul singer Bella Kalolo. He also toured with Aaradhna, Louis Baker, and American Blues legend Chris Cain. His trio The Jelly Rolls have performed at several jazz festivals notably in Edinburgh, Wellington, and Tauranga. Ben released his debut solo piano album ‘Goodnight TV’ in 2020 and ‘The River Tethys’ in October 2021. He is currently a senior tutor of music at Toi Ohomai in Rotorua.

Composer, violinist, and improviser **Tristan Carter** holds a Bachelor in Violin Performance and a Master of Musical Arts in Composition from the New Zealand School of Music where he studied with Jack Body, John Psathas, Michael Norris and Dugal McKinnon. He is a member of jazz outfits The Troubles and The Noveltones, Balkan band Bazurka, Greek Rembetika trio Hypnos, Indian and jazz inspired Shades of Shakti and Balinese ensemble Gamelan Taniwha Jaya. Since 2015 he has worked as a composer and performer with Java Dance Theatre Company. His playing can be heard on a number of soundtracks, including the recently released BBC and TVNZ series The Luminaries.

Dan Yeabsley is a multi-instrumentalist specialising on saxophones, tuba, and double bass. He is a member of long-standing Wellington groups Twinset and The Troubles, and has performed with cinematic folk band Nikita The Spooky and a Circus of Men, Shogun Orchestra and the Wellington International Ukulele Orchestra. Dan has also recorded with many notable Aotearoa musical acts such as Fat Freddy’s Drop, Rhombus, Trinity Roots, and Lawrence Arabia.

John Rae is a jazz drummer and award-winning composer. John recorded his first album at the age of 16 with saxophonist Tommy Smith and has subsequently recorded over 70 albums, including two BBC Jazz Albums of the Year. He was the drummer for the Scottish National Jazz Orchestra and in 2005, awarded a ‘Herald Angel’ at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. John has performed and recorded with many world-renowned jazz musicians including Ethan Iverson, Vijay Iyer, and Mike Nock. He leads New Zealand jazz group The Troubles and in 2009, became the first jazz Composer-in-Residence at Victoria University in Wellington.