

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Patron: Gillian Whitehead NZOM, Arts Laureate 2000
Artistic Directors: Martin Lodge and Michael Williams

Okta is the specialist contemporary music ensemble of the University of Waikato Music Programme. It was founded in 2001 by composers Martin Lodge and Michael Williams, with the inaugural concert taking place in May 2002. Okta's home is the Gallagher Concert Chamber in the WEL Academy of Performing Arts.

Okta takes its name from an old transliteration of the Greek word for eight. In traditional numerology, the number seven signifies completeness, including the four elements plus the three spiritual essences. Number eight – Okta - consequently signifies a new beginning but also an embracing of the past.

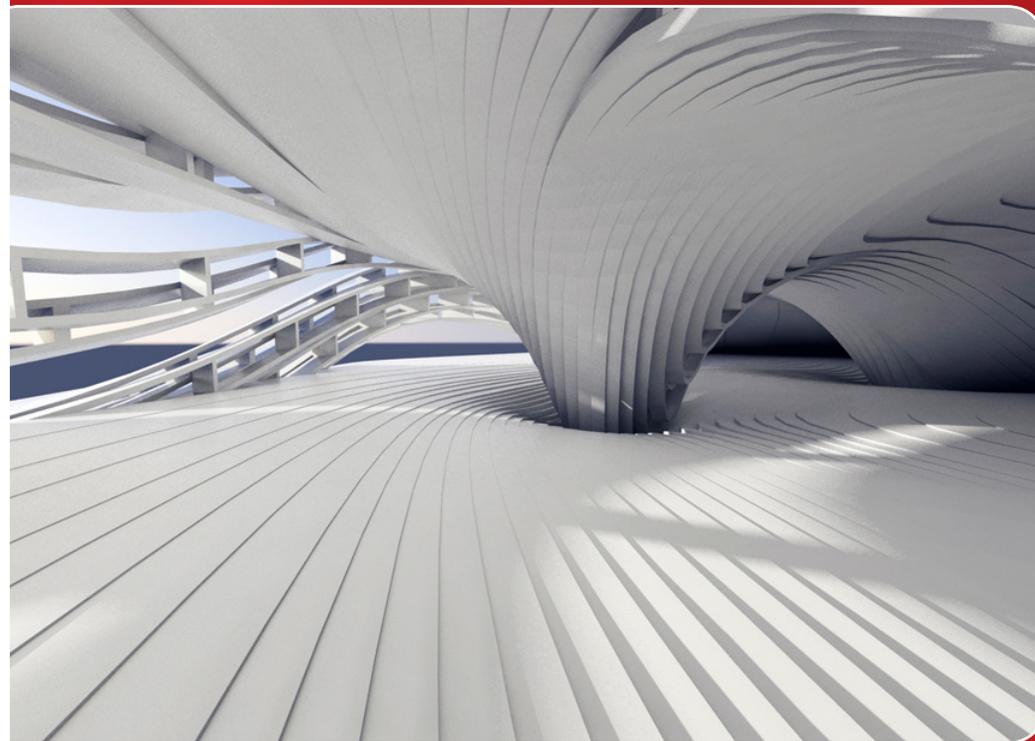
Okta presents a wide spectrum of artistic styles and approaches in its concert events and its programming deliberately encompasses divergent aesthetic positions. Repertoire performed ranges from established twentieth century classics to very recent work, with a special emphasis on the inclusion of multimedia pieces and work involving computer technology.



Music at Waikato: New Zealand's No.1 Tertiary Music Education Provider
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presents



DANCES MERCURIAL

Friday 20th May 2011
7.30pm

Gallagher Concert Chamber
WEL Academy of Performing Arts

Arts & Social Sciences
Te Kura Kete Aronui



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

PROGRAMME

Dances Mercurial for string quartet

Michael Williams

Lara Hall – 1st violin
Emily Campbell 2nd violin
Sebastian Lowe –viola
James Tennant - cello

This short quartet was written in 2010 but receives its premier performance tonight. For me this is one of the rare times that the title of the piece was conceived first and provided the impetus for the character of this work. This work should be perceived as a collection of constantly changing dance-like themes, which is (hopefully) suggested in the title.

There are strong Indian and Spanish influences in this piece in terms of the rhythms and pitch organisation. These two ethnicities are a major part of my own ancestry and often find their way into my compositions. (A fine excuse to plunder and pillage...)

I think perhaps the contrasts in this piece need to be exaggerated to some degree as if revelling in them. The rhythms should be played with as much drive as possible and the contrasts between soft and loud should be sharply defined. Also, if I may say, a sense of joie de vivre should pervade the whole work.

- note by composer

Sonata for solo cello Op. 8

Zoltán Kodály (1882–1967)

Santiago Canon Valencia - cello

i. Allegro maestoso ma appassionato

Kodály's Sonata for solo cello of 1915 is perhaps the first major work for unaccompanied cello after Bach's six great suites of almost 200 years earlier. The sounds and inflections of Hungarian folk music play a prominent role; Kodály was passionately interested in the folk music of his native land and several years earlier had started taking regular trips around the country, many with Béla Bartók, collecting, recording, and transcribing folk songs and dances.

Kodály's use of scordatura (the cello's two lower strings are tuned down a half-step, to B and F-sharp, respectively) skews traditional tonal relationships, while darkening the sound of the instrument appreciably. In addition to finger-twisting chords of two, three, and four notes, the performer is called upon to produce a panoply of special sound effects, from ponticello (playing close to the bridge) to the high repeated trills that lead to the movements climax.

Dance Preludes

Witold Lutoslawski (1913-1994)

Nathaniel Smori - clarinet
Katherine Austin - piano

Allegro molto – Andantino – Allegro giocoso – Andante – Allegro molto

Witold Lutoslawski was the greatest Polish composer since Chopin. In his music a superlative artistic craftsmanship is allied to striking imagination. His output covers most traditional genres, apart from opera. His four symphonies, along with the concertos for piano and for cello, are among the peaks of twentieth orchestral repertoire.

The Dance Preludes are a set of five short pieces written in 1954. Each Prelude is a miniature based on Polish folk music, inventively treated with striking rhythms and harmonies. The Dance Preludes have proved so popular that several different arrangements and orchestrations of it exist. Tonight's version for clarinet and piano is the original.

- note by Martin Lodge

Passacaglia for piano trio

Michael Williams

Katherine Austin - piano
Lara Hall - violin
James Tennant - cello

This is a somewhat truncated arrangement/ transcription of the 2nd movement from the triple concerto "Convergence" written in 2008 written for the New Zealand Chamber soloists and the Opus Chamber Orchestra. The form of the original version is Prelude, Passacaglia and Violin Cadenza. In this iteration only the Passacaglia is performed. The Passacaglia theme is 16 bars in length and although the piece is polystylistic, wandering through a number of different tonal centres, rhythmic changes and indeed stylistic changes, the notes of the theme remain constant as does the 3/4 time signature (just like a well behaved Passacaglia should!).

- note by composer

Sonata for cello and piano Op. 49

Alberto Ginastera (1916-1983)

Santiago Canon Valencia – cello
Rafaella Garlick-Grice – piano

Allegro con Fuoco

Alberto Ginastera was an Argentinean composer who is considered one of the most important composers in Latin America. This final movement shows the sounds of the South American carnival with very strong rhythms and wild dynamics. In the middle of the Finale comes a very expressive melody played on the high register of the cello against a vividly percussive piano part, all of this leading to a manic ending.