

Welcome return as quartet show expertise

■ Chamber Music New
Zealand Kaleidoscope Series
— Goldner String Quartet with
pianist Piers Lane
Music by Mendelssohn, Gareth
Farr and Cesar Franck
Century Theatre, Napier,
Saturday, September 28
Reviewed by Peter Williams

It was a pleasure to welcome back the Goldner String Quartet from Australia — violinists Dene Olding and Dimity Hall, violist Irina Morozova and cellist Julian Smiles — in the first concert in the Century Theatre after an absence of three years.

This fine ensemble have delighted audiences here on a number of occasions and have lost nothing of their musical expertise.

The *Quartet in A minor Opus 13* by Mendelssohn immediately showed the performers' skill, and fully captured the audience's attention in playing that enhanced this youthful work of genius, composed when Mendelssohn was aged just 17.

The deeply expressive slow section, which opened the work and was reprised at the end, was played with impeccable balance, while the remainder of the first movement portrayed the gossamer lightness of the style for which Mendelssohn is

renowned. The playing of the third movement *Intermezzo* was particularly attractive, with its clarity of texture and expert juxtaposition of the violin melodies and the pizzicato lower strings. The *Finale*, with its impressive onward impulse and dramatic points of climax, made a vivid contrast.

New Zealand composer Gareth Farr's compositions, despite their newness, almost always have instant appeal to an audience. So too his latest commission, *Te Tai O Rehua — The Tasman Sea*, unpredictable, ever moving, a host of contrasted music ideas combined with passages of pizzicato, tremolo, harmonics and the like, to produce a fascinating soundscape.

This was the sixth performance of the work on this tour, so the playing was honed to perfection in a captivating and committed performance, fully projecting the dark brooding

quality by which the composer described the piece.

Pianist Piers Lane joined the quartet for the performance of the *Piano Quintet in F Minor* by Cesar Franck, a brilliantly extrovert work played in an astonishingly expansive style which suited the composition perfectly. The dark-hued, slow introduction was followed by playing in the *Allegro* that skilfully dovetailed the strings and piano part in an impressive partnership of seemingly orchestral proportions.

Some beautifully played solo piano passages, underpinned by sensitively played string chords and a magical ending, were features of the *Lento* movement, while the sense of progression and anticipation, combined with hugely impressive points of climax, made the *Finale* a splendid close to a memorable concert.