Conservatorium to Coast: Contemporary quintet tours to inspire music-makers

A contemporary quintet from the University of Tasmania’s Conservatorium of Music is heading from Hobart to Tasmania’s North-West, for an engaging tour designed to inspire music makers of all ages.

Comprised entirely of teaching staff who are performers in their own right, The Glen Hodges Quintet will connect with communities in Ulverstone, Stanley and Queenstown to deliver free composition forums and concerts.

The group is fronted by Dr Glen Hodges, the Conservatorium’s Deputy Head of Music and Coordinator of Contemporary Guitar, who said the events were open to aspiring composers, musicians or anyone interested in an evening of contemporary tunes.

“The tour came about because we were very interested in connecting with people writing music in the popular arena which incorporates genres such as folk, blues, jazz, country and songwriters, to not only encourage them, but be encouraged ourselves. As composers, we don’t draw inspiration from a vacuum,” Dr Hodges said.

“So many of these communities have hidden musical skills so we wanted to be that point of crystallisation, a catalyst which brings these artists together and inspires them to share their talent.

“The evening is also an opportunity for us to share the diversity of programs offered at Tasmania’s premier musical institution the Conservatorium of Music, because what we do there is much broader than most people might realise, particularly in the contemporary space.”

The quintet also comprises of Alistair Dobson (saxophone), Randal Muir (piano), Nick Haywood (double bass) and Steve Marskell (drums), with the group also inviting teachers and students in the region to attend.
“The tour will also encourage students to explore and develop their expertise in this discipline, and dispel some of the myths they might have about studying at the Conservatorium,” Dr Hodges said.

“We also hope it encourages them to realise that the Conservatorium of Music is open to anyone with potential and talent.”

Each evening will commence with a workshop at 5pm, presenting compositional devices, methods and concepts. Concerts will kick off at 8pm, followed by an informal discussion at 9pm, allowing the Quintet to expand upon the musical pieces they perform.

The quintet will perform at The Gnomon Pavilion at Ulverstone’s Wharf on Thursday, 20 April, the Stanley Town Hall on Friday, 21 April, and the Paragon Theatre in Queenstown on Saturday, 22 April. An initial performance will take place in Launceston on Wednesday, 19 April, at the Annex Theatre, Inveresk.

The tour has been supported by a University of Tasmania Community Engagement grant.

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