



August 2019

DiscussionGroups NEWSLETTER

Hello Members

Where did August go?

Even though the month has gone by very quickly our groups continue to increase both in numbers and options.

This last week saw the start of the Mahjong group lessons.

I went along as I have long wanted to learn how to play this game and I have to admit I thoroughly enjoyed the whole experience.

It is shaping up to be a very interesting game.

Our Book group has seen a change in the membership with some members pulling out but we have four new members and a new facilitator!! Really amazing. Thanks so much to everyone for making this happen. It is a great group.

We are still looking for one or two members for another film group if you are interested.

We also wish to put our feelers out for a new group on Gardening.

If you are interested in either of these two ideas please get in touch with Ngaire.

Warmer days are nearly here.
Have a great month.

Ngaire

Friday Book Club - (full)

Facilitator: Clare Hamel
T 425 8394, Cell 021 1764883

Monday Current Affairs

Facilitator: Joy Hayward
T 454 4996 E: joyhayward@hotmail.co.nz

Book Club 2

Facilitator: Angela Vickers
E: angela.nz@e3.net.nz

Tuesday Current Affairs - (full)

Facilitator: Gretchen Kivell
T: 4730031 E: gretchen.kivell@xtra.co.nz

Dining group

Facilitator: Nanette Linklater
E: nanettelinklater@gmail.com

Expanding Musical Horizons(full)

Facilitator: Paul Wheeler
T 476 0462 E: wheeler@outlook.co.nz

Film Group (full)

Facilitator: Bill Stanford
T 027 461 5343 E: billstanford9@gmail.com

Gallery group

Facilitator: Tash Hurst
T 467 9747 E: tash.hurst@xtra.co.nz

Local History

Facilitator: Stuart Strachan
T 482 2339 E: sistrachanz@gmail.com

Walking Group

Facilitator: John Hogue,
E: hoguetimaru@xtra.co.nz

Invisible Art History

Facilitator: Moya Smith
T 476 1416
E: moya.smith@xtra.co.nz

Expanding Musical Horizons

Our August session was on the theme of “Getting Around”, taking a look at a wide range of transport as depicted by composers over the centuries. There were sleigh rides, lots of trains, boats, horses, donkeys and even a bus and a sports car. There was music from over two centuries, from Mozart to John Adams and from countries all around the world. Each piece was put into the context of its time and the circumstances of its composition. There was discussion about the techniques used and how successfully each composition conveyed the picture it was trying to depict. In the picture are some of the composers whose work we listened to. From left: Villa-Lobos, Schubert, Lumbye, Adams, Prokofiev, Copland, Reich and Honegger.



In our previous session (back in July), we had an “Own Choice” day. People brought along music that they chose because it was a favourite of theirs, or because it had special significance or meaning in their lives. From Elgar to Eagles, and Rutter to Ronstadt, we listened to jazz, music theatre, oratorio, art songs and rock. There was plenty of discussion about the background of every piece we listened to.

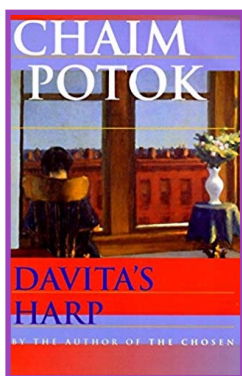
Paul Wheeler

Friday Book Club

The August meeting of the Number 1 Dunedin U3A Book Group, threw up another pile of very interesting and very different books, and included our first 'Kindle' book review.

Accompanying its owner recently to a remote part of Africa, we were subsequently introduced to **'APICIUS'** - a Roman gourmand (and glutton) who lived sometime in the 1st C AD during the reign of Tiberius and after whom a collection of Roman recipes was named. This work provides an insight into the culinary habits of the wealthy citizens of Ancient Rome; those who could afford expensive spices and exotic ingredients (such as flamingo tongues). The text has undergone many translations from the Latin over decades, nay, centuries!, but the first into English was made by Dommus Vehling in 1936. The whole work is freely available online by Googling 'Project Gutenberg' and includes wonderful illustrations and strange recipes.

'SAPIENS' by a young Israeli academic was mentioned as a book we all should read but which, it was decided, was too difficult to review, being the history of mankind.



DAVITAS HARP' by Chaim Potok, (published 1985) is the story of a young girl growing up in New York in the 1930's. Her mother Anne, is a Polish Jewish migrant; her father Michael, a journalist, from a wealthy New England family. He goes to Spain to write for his paper about the Spanish Civil War and is killed in Guernica, trying to save a nun during a bomb raid by Germany. A serious read to be sure in which the central character, Davita, tries to make sense of the world around her. The title refers to a harp that hung on the door of every apartment her parents lived in. Each opening and closing of the door is accompanied by a gentle sound from the harp.

'THE CHILDREN ACT' by Ian McEwan is a story in which religious beliefs and medicine are in conflict and a judge is called upon to make a very difficult decision. A young 17 year old boy with all his life ahead of him, is diagnosed with leukemia. His parents are Jehova's Witnesses. No more should be said, except to say, some people will identify with this at a very personal level. I certainly did. A film of the same name starring Emma Thompson was released in 2017.

I wish I could describe every book presented at our book club but space prevents me from doing so. Perhaps I can squeeze in one more to lighten the tone.

'OUR SOULS AT NIGHT' by Kent Haruf is a gentle and beautiful story about 2 lonely neighbours, a man and woman of advanced years who decide to sleep together at night because they are both lonely. Set in a small town in Colorado. Holt. This is a gentle and beautiful story written while the author was dying - a book I definitely want to read.

A note to all members of the group: if the books you presented are not mentioned here, it's simply because space does not allow it. You are wonderful readers who constantly inspire the rest of us with your choices and descriptions of books you have or are currently reading.

Clare Hamel, Convenor



Gallery Group

On Wed. Aug.14th, 10 of us visited the Fe29 Gallery in St. Clair to see the current exhibition of prints. Cecilia entertained and informed the group about prints and print making which was a completely new world to the majority of us.

We were fortunate to see some extremely rare european prints from their collection, some dating back to the 18th. century.

One or two of the group were able to contribute with their experience and knowledge of printing.

The Gallery itself is marvellous with wonderful display space and a sculpture-filled garden.



Above is a photo of the group with Cecilia holding a print by Robert MacDonald.

Tash Hurst

Monday Current Affairs

The current affairs group talked about **legalising marijuana** since we will need to vote on this in a referendum at the next election. The fact that it has not been legal has made research very difficult in NZ so we needed to look at the experience of other countries. There are clearly very useful medicinal uses for marijuana particularly regarding pain relief, people who suffer from fits and PTSD. We had some concern that legalisation will be decided by referendum fearing that people may vote on their prejudices rather than on the facts. Its banning in the USA a hundred years ago was not based on facts either. It came about following a spurious campaign by Harry Anslinger. When challenged he was quoted as saying ,
“ I’ve made up my mind. Don’t try to confuse me with the facts. “

The key questions are:

Can supporting a legal trade end the global war over drugs ?

What is the health and social potential of cannabis?

What can we do about the 10% of people who are harmed ?

In Portugal where all drugs have been decriminalised, the emphasis instead is on supporting addicts and drug use, of all kinds, has diminished dramatically.

Joy suggested listening to a Ted talk by Johan Hari.

At our next meeting we will discuss the local body elections.

Joy Hayward

Film Group

In July & August the Film Group has viewed *Pan's Labyrinth* (Guillermo del Toro) and the Studio Ghibli anime *Whisper of the Heart* (Yoshifumi Kondo).

Pan takes place in Spain during the summer of 1944, after the Spanish Civil War, during the early Francoist period. The narrative combines the real world with a mythical world centered on an overgrown, abandoned labyrinth and a mysterious faun creature, with whom the main character, Ofelia, interacts.



Ofelia's stepfather hunts the Spanish Maquis who fight against the Francoist regime, while Ofelia's pregnant mother Carmen grows increasingly ill. Ofelia meets several strange and magical creatures who become central to her story.... The film touches two issues: efforts on the part of the Spanish to come to terms with the violence of the Franco years; and how fantasy enables a child to come to terms with the experiences of this horrible period.



By contrast, *Whisper of the Heart* comes from the a script by the great animator Hayao Miyazaki, which he gave to his protege, Yoshifumi Kondo. If we ask what *Whisper of the Heart* is about, it's hard to sum up quickly. Two teenagers living on the edge of Tokyo slowly form a close relationship: she wants to write, he wants to be apprenticed as a violin maker, meaning years in Italy. Alice in Wonderland like, she follows a large cat she meets taking a train ride — discovering ...”

It's a magical film, and yet very realistic — it captures some of the texture of Japanese city life. It opens with Olivia Newton-John; it features three charming amateur musicians playing viol di gamba, recorder & lute; and it sets puzzles, such as why the boy has read so many library books... And who is Moon? And what is the significance of the Baron?

Bill Stanford

Discussion Groups Convenor - **Ngaire Bates** .T 454 2170 E ngairemichael@gmail.com
Composition **Jill Geary** T 021 223 4332 E jillgeary067@gmail.com