



Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra

Phil News

Summer 2017 Vol.38 No.1
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MODERN SOUNDS

MAHAN ESFAHANI
AND THE NEW AGE OF
THE HARPSICHORD

THE RITE WAY
Stravinsky's
ground-
breaking work

**STARMAN'S
LEGACY**
Singers pay
tribute to Bowie

**THE RISE
OF PUCCINI**
The breakthrough
success of
Manon Lescaut





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All that matters in
Entertainment

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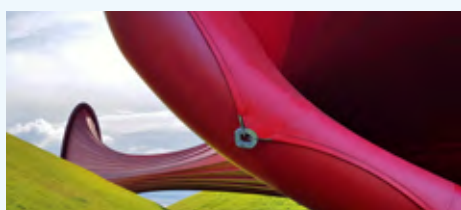
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Phil News Summer 2017

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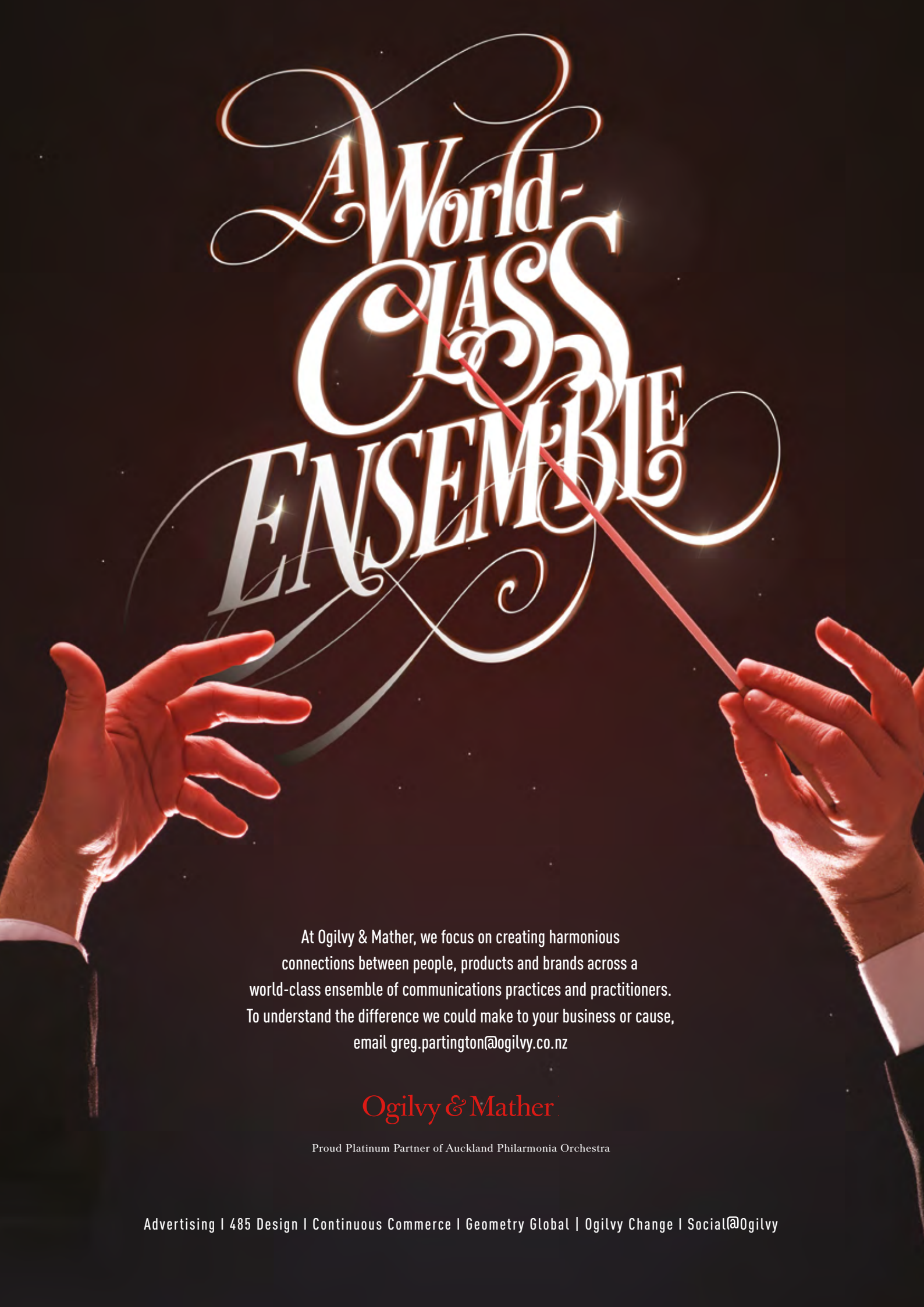
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From the Chief Executive

UPFRONT WITH BARBARA GLASER



Image: Adrian Malloch

As this issue of *Phil News* goes to print, we are busy making an extraordinary adjustment to our concert programme on 3 May: making space for the inclusion of Stravinsky's recently rediscovered piece *Funeral Song*. Until late last year, the work had not been heard since the score was lost following its first and only performance in 1909, and now the APO will have the privilege of performing the Australasian premiere of this work.

When 'old' music becomes 'new' again, it's an exciting time for orchestras. For a long time, *Funeral Song* was known solely through the mixed reviews of its lone performance, with one critic describing it as "the lament and moaning of a heart against the backdrop of a sombre landscape". But as we all now know, Stravinsky's music, revolutionary for its time, has matured into some of the most beloved pieces in the classical repertoire. *The Rite of Spring* has advanced from a riot at its premiere to a work that consistently thrills audiences today; and although *Funeral Song* may not be the earth-shattering masterwork *The Rite* has become, any time we can hear our greatest composers with new ears and open minds, it's a wonderful gift. You can read more about Stravinsky's legacy on page 12.

Speaking of musical legacies, January 2017 marked one year since the death of David Bowie. While Bowie's musical language and his impact on popular culture might seem at first glance to be foreign territory to an orchestra, this is music that can't be pigeonholed, and we're looking forward to taking audiences on a symphonic odyssey of this legendary musician. So too, are the Kiwi artists we've enlisted to help us present this concert; you can read more about their thoughts on the *Starman* on page 14.

Phil News is a wonderful place for our supporters to get closer to the orchestra, and you'll see we're increasingly highlighting

our own musicians throughout the magazine, whether it's upcoming solo performances, off-stage talents, or even behind the scenes. Late last year we commissioned long-time APO photographer Adrian Malloch to document life in an orchestra and everything that happens before the players take to the stage on concert night. It's a fascinating insight into the hard work and dedication to the craft that goes into every performance, and we're pleased to share some of our favourite images with you in this latest issue. You can also read more about a few of our featured musicians, Section Principal Oboe Bede Hanley on page 24, and Associate Principal Bass Bella Zilber on page 26.

Of course, one former APO musician that needs little introduction to readers is John Ure. He has been with the orchestra since it formed in 1980, and since then has touched every facet of the organisation, from the stage, to the board to the administration. After 36 years John retired from the APO in December, and while it's certainly a large adjustment for all of us without John firmly embedded in the APO woodwork, it's a well-earned rest and we wish him a happy retirement! If you missed your chance to pass on your well-wishes to John, we'll be bringing him back to formally say goodbye at our Bayleys Great Classics concert 'Hanslip Plays Mozart' on 23 February.

There are some wonderful concerts coming up this season, and we hope this issue also entices you to try something new – whether it's a harpsichord concerto, new compositions inspired by great New Zealand artworks, or a cross-cultural dance and music spectacle.

Have a great start to 2017; I look forward to seeing you in the concert hall throughout the year.

Barbara Glaser

APO NEWS



In December 2016, APO Director of Operations John Ure retired after 36 years with the APO. John was a founding musician of what was then known as the Auckland Regional Orchestra when it formed in 1980, serving as Principal Horn for 18 Years. He was also a founding member of both the board and the administration, and last year he was made a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit for services to music.

APO Players Society secretary and sub-principal horn player Carl Wells spoke to John ahead of his retirement.

As APO musicians come to terms with the retirement of our beloved Operations Manager John Ure, I took the opportunity to sit down with him for a chat. John's first loves were the horn and classic cars – interests which he actively maintains to this day.

As a young man in 1973, John sold his first race car (a '59 Mini Seven) to buy his first horn. In 1980 he was a founding member of the APO when a group of upstart musicians decided to form one of the world's few player-run orchestras. It was a radical move at the time; backlash from *The Listener* called them "reds under the bed". The new orchestra thrived and John was not only Principal Horn, but quickly took up the roles of Personnel Manager, Operations Manager, and Artistic Manager. Few people realized he played an important role in programming, earning him accolades from NZ Herald music critic William Dart as the "APO's secret weapon". John's most cherished memories with the APO include performing the Britten *Serenade* in the inaugural concert; Verbitsky inviting him to the podium for a solo bow after a masterful performance of Shostakovich 10; and his recording of David Hamilton's *Horn Concertino* being an Air New Zealand in-flight listening selection for over five years.

When pressed on what he'll miss most about his job, John gives his trademark grin. "The players of course – they are the chocolates at the chocolate factory – they are an orchestra's most important item!" True to his nature, John's planning on using his retirement to spend more time practising the horn, performing more regularly with orchestras such as Opus, and continuing his passionate involvement in the Thoroughbred and Classic Cars Owners Club and the Jaguar's Drivers Club.



BYO COMPANION

Introducing young people to the thrill of a live orchestra has never been easier, with the APO offering a Young Companion ticket for the first time in 2017.

Adults or seniors with a full price ticket to a main series concert can bring a guest under 16 years old for free. APO Chief Executive Barbara Glaser says it's a great development to APO's commitment to nurturing young music lovers. "We're very proud of our comprehensive APO Connecting programme which aims to engage young people with orchestral music. Giving them the opportunity to attend a mainstage concert for free is just one more way we can open up this wonderful world of music to them," she says.

Look out for the +1C icon listed in your season brochure for concert series that offer Young Companion tickets, or contact APO Ticketing for more information on **09 623 1052**.

APO POPS UP AT THE GLOBE

All the world's a stage for APO musicians performing at the Pop-up Globe in April.

The Pop-up Globe enjoyed sell-out success in its inaugural 2016 season, and returns in 2017 at a new

venue: Ellerslie Racecourse. APO has partnered with Pop-up Globe to present a celebration of music inspired by Shakespeare. To add to the occasion, the one-off concert also coincides with Shakespeare's birthday on 23 April.

An ensemble of APO musicians will perform a selection of works including music which Shakespeare himself might have heard in Elizabethan England, to later composers who were

inspired by the Bard. It will feature music by composers such as William Byrd, John Dowland, Henry Purcell, Thomas Arne, Ralph Vaughan Williams and William Walton.

Actors from Pop-up Globe Theatre Company will read excerpts from Shakespeare's writing to enhance the musical performance.

More information and tickets are available at popupglobe.co.nz

KIWI-BORN VIOLINIST IN MHIVC

From 140 applications from young violinists representing 32 different nationalities, 16 quarter-finalists have been selected to compete in the 2017 Michael Hill International Violin Competition (MHIVC), which takes place in Queenstown and Auckland in June.

The Michael Hill International Violin Competition is considered New Zealand's most prestigious music competition, and every two years it brings to New Zealand some of the world's celebrated classical musicians to judge the very best young violinists aged 18-28 years. The quarter-final round of the competition takes place in Queenstown from 2-5 June, with the semi-finals and final rounds in Auckland from 7-10 June. Three finalists are selected to perform in the Grand Finale with the APO at the Town Hall on Saturday 10 June, where the competition winner will then be announced.

This year's quarter-finalists includes Wellington-born Benjamin Baker. Late last year he was awarded a first prize at the 2016 Young Concert Artists International Auditions in New York, and APO concertgoers will recall he was also engaged by APO as a last-minute replacement to perform Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto, a performance which

was warmly received by the audience and concert reviewers.

Baker will be joined in the Queenstown quarter-finals by a group of returning MHIVC competitors – Ioana Goicea (Romania), Luke Hsu (USA), Jung Min Choi (South Korea), Natsumi Tsuboi (Japan) and Mari Lee (South Korea / Japan).

New competitors are Elizabeth Basoff-Darskaia (Russia / USA), So Young Choi (South Korea), Asako Fukuda (Japan), Jaeook Lee (Korea), Kunwha Lee (South Korea), Zeyu Victor Li (China), Yoo Min Seo (South Korea), Sumina Studer (Switzerland), Momoko Wong (Japan / USA) and Galiya Zharova (Kazakhstan).

The winner of the MHIVC receives NZ\$40,000, a recording contract with the Atoll label, an intensive performance tour across New Zealand and Australia, and a personalised professional development programme. The winner is also invited to perform on Sir Michael Hill's personal violin, a 1755 Guadagnini named 'The Southern Star', on their 2018 Winner's Tour.

A group of leading violinists made up the initial selection panel for the competition. It comprised APO Concertmaster Andrew Beer,



Benjamin Baker has been named as one of the 16 quarter-finalists in the Michael Hill International Violin Competition.

Justine Cormack (NZTrio), Vesa-Matti Leppänen (Concertmaster, New Zealand Symphony Orchestra), Dene Olding (Concertmaster, Sydney Symphony Orchestra and first violinist Goldner String Quartet and the Australia Ensemble) and Helene Pohl (NZ String Quartet, NZ School of Music).

All live rounds are open to the public. Tickets are available at apo.co.nz or by phoning **09 623 1052**. More information about the MHIVC is at violincompetition.co.nz

STRAVINSKY'S REDISCOVERED WORK PREMIERES IN AUCKLAND

Stravinsky's recently rediscovered *Funeral Song* will receive its Australasian premiere at the APO New Zealand Herald Premier Series concert From Russia With Love on 3 May at Auckland Town Hall.

The music of Stravinsky's *Funeral Song* (*Pogrebal'naya Pesnya*) Op.5, written by the young composer as an orchestral memorial tribute to his teacher Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, disappeared after its only performance in 1909, returning to light last year in the library of the St Petersburg Conservatoire. The

rediscovery has aroused immense interest around the musical world, offering a view on the young composer between his early works and his ballet *The Firebird*, which was to launch his international career with Sergei Diaghilev's Ballets Russes.

Orchestras around the world have swiftly added *Funeral Song* into their current seasons, adjusting their programmes to allow the work to be heard as soon as possible. Following the historic performance at the Mariinski Theatre on 2 December

2016 conducted by Valery Gergiev, the 12-minute orchestral score will receive over 30 performances in 2017 and beyond, travelling to 17 countries.

The APO performance, conducted by Rumon Gamba, replaces Kalinnikov's *Serenade for Strings* in the programme. It will also receive a second outing the following night at Bruce Mason Centre as part of APO's On the Shore Series.

For more information and to book tickets visit apo.co.nz/whats-on

MUSIC TO YOUR EARS

APO sponsor Phonak NZ is giving hearing-impaired concertgoers the opportunity to rediscover the enjoyment of hearing music, as part of a new trial offer.

Phonak is a global leader in hearing solution technology, and is looking for people to participate in a 10-day trial which would allow them to experience state-of-the-art hearing aids in the APO concert environment. As part of the trial, they would be tested for hearing loss and, if detected, fitted with Audéo B-R, Phonak's new rechargeable hearing aid which allows users to enjoy 24 hours of hearing with one charge, and technology which accurately classifies and adapts to different listening situations automatically. In addition, they would receive two tickets to an APO concert, to experience the full dynamic range of the hearing aid.

Phonak has developed a video which simulates the experience of hearing loss at an APO concert. Visit apo.co.nz/news to learn more.

Dr Stefan Launer, Global Head of Research and Technology at Phonak's parent

company Sonova, was recently in New Zealand to discuss the latest technological developments in hearing solutions. Listening to music is an entirely different experience from listening to speech, Dr Launer explains.

"Music has a much wider dynamic range, sounds go from very soft to very loud, compared to speech," he says. New technology in hearing aids means that users can select programmes that are specific to the listening environment, ensuring the dynamic range isn't compressed, and you receive a richer, more accurate and enjoyable music experience, he adds.

People who think they might be starting to experience hearing loss may notice that the higher pitched instruments – including violins, triangle and flutes – would be the first to disappear. But perhaps the very first noticeable change will occur before you even set foot in the concert hall, explains Bettina Turnbull, Sonova's Director for Audiology and Education in Asia-Pacific. "During the interval when you're having a drink, and there's people talking, you might notice that you're having difficulty following a conversation," she explains. "That might

be the first sign that your concert-going experience is impaired by hearing loss."

Technological advances in Phonak hearing aids mean that there are some excellent programmes out there that are optimised specifically for the purpose of listening to music, and even listening to different genres of music and complex musical performance environments. In the future, Dr Launer predicts that all hearing aids will be able to be connected to mobile devices as a standard offering, where users can appreciate music or telephone calls through their phone. "In the last three years we have made a significant step in the dynamic range and bandwidth available in hearing devices, so if they really are interested in music appreciation then they may wish to try these improved devices."

Phonak's 10-day trial is a no-obligation offer, but for those participants who go on to purchase hearing aids, Phonak will provide a device which allows people to stream music in stereo to their hearing aids, at no extra cost. Email nzapo@phonak.com for more information about this trial. Suitable candidates will then be connected with their local clinics for further testing.

DELOITTE SUMMER SALON BROADWAY

**6.30PM, TUESDAY 14 MARCH
SHED 10, QUEENS WHARF, AUCKLAND WATERFRONT**

Join the APO for our annual black-tie fundraising gala dinner to support APO Connecting, the orchestra's education, community and outreach programme.

Enjoy a sensational meal accompanied by award-winning wines, with APO musicians and special guests performing the show-stopping music of Broadway throughout the evening.

**TICKETS \$270
TABLE OF TEN \$2600**

For further information or to purchase tickets please contact **09 638 6266 ext 234** or development@apo.co.nz

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Sistema Aotearoa students Sefita Finau and de'Rdre Walker performed with APO Principal Percussionist Eric Renick at the APO's Wairua Harikoa Christmas concert.

SISTEMA KIDS SHINE

The children of Sistema Aotearoa ended 2016 in style with another successful Hui Taurima end of year concert.

Sistema Aotearoa now has four orchestras as well as the Rangatahi Philharmonia o Tara, the 60-strong flagship orchestra, and all the students were given a chance to shine at the Hui Taurima, including chamber ensembles and the programme's largest string group so far – 166 students all in tune!

As part of APO's partnership with Sistema Aotearoa, students have also been able to participate in exciting performance opportunities. In December, de'Rdre Walker and Sefita Finau were selected to perform as 'Little Drummers' in APO's free Christmas concert Wairua Harikoa at Vodafone Events Centre. Prior to their performance, de'Rdre and Sefita participated in a workshop with APO Principal Percussionist Eric Renick, and were selected to perform a drum solo for 'Jingle Bell Rock', backed by the full orchestra. Both de'Rdre and Sefita play violin and percussion with Sistema Aotearoa, and we look forward to enjoying more collaborative projects with the Sistema Aotearoa students in 2017.

APO GOES TO THE MOVIES

Muggles and movie buffs rejoice! APO is taking on some of the most well-known names in film music this year: Harry Potter and Hans Zimmer.

On 29 April, musicians from the APO join celebrated film score composer Hans Zimmer at Vector Arena for a concert featuring some of Zimmer's classic movie scores, including *Gladiator*, *The Lion King* and *Pirates of the Caribbean*. Zimmer will also conduct the orchestra alongside special guest musicians for re-imagined versions of scores from blockbuster films such as *The Dark Knight* and *Inception*.

Then in July, the APO gets the wizarding treatment in a special concert that relives the magic of Harry Potter. On 2 July muggles, wizards and Potter-heads can see *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* on the big screen at Vector Arena, while the APO performs the unforgettable John Williams score live in concert.



Tickets for Hans Zimmer Revealed are now available online from mjrresents.com or through Ticketmaster. The Harry Potter in Concert official presale will be on



1 February, with tickets going on sale to the general public from 9am on 3 February. Visit mjrresents.com or keep an eye on our Facebook page for more details about these announcements.



Hip

HARPSICHORD

CONSIDERED ONE OF THE HOTTEST PROPERTIES IN HARPSICHORD MUSIC TODAY, MAHAN ESFAHANI TALKS TO **TIANA LYES** ABOUT BREAKING DOWN MISCONCEPTIONS AND OPENING PEOPLE'S MINDS TO THE BEAUTY OF HIS INSTRUMENT.

When Mahan Esfahani hears he's going to be the cover star of the latest issue of *Phil News*, he admits he still has a hard time accepting that he's regarded as a 'poster boy' for the harpsichord today.

"It's a shame I've been losing my hair – some poster boy!" he exclaims, though he does acknowledge the responsibility he has for the future of the instrument. "Hopefully this exposure will set the path for other harpsichordists. There used to be a time, and I'm very ashamed to admit it, that I was probably very protective of my turf. Now I think all harpsichordists are trying to do something good. I think the only way this industry can go forward is if we stop arguing about ways to play the instrument, and if we say that everyone has something to bring to the table. Ultimately that opening up of the conversation could be something I can contribute, I hope."

At just 32 years old, Esfahani has worked tirelessly to bring new attention to the harpsichord since his London debut in 2009. In 2008 he was the first harpsichordist named as a BBC New Generation Artist, and in 2014 he received the *Gramophone* award for Baroque Instrumental Album of the Year. Born in Tehran, Esfahani left Iran for the United States with his family at the age of four, and he played piano before taking up the harpsichord in his teens. He says his ambition was clear, despite the opportunities to be a touring concert harpsichordist being practically non-existent at the time. "To be honest I wake up every morning and I'm amazed that it's happened," Esfahani admits. "When I would bring up the idea of becoming a touring solo harpsichordist there was essentially peals of laughter down the hallway. No one could have conceived of such an absurd concept. But of course people forget that there were a number of great solo harpsichordists in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s. So it was a thing, at least at one time, that for various reasons then fell off the radar."

Esfahani says he was determined not to fall into a life of being a continuo accompaniment or part of a chamber ensemble, and says no other instrument comes with so much "baggage". "The harpsichord has been expected for so long to be an objective instrument, that we use it as a stage prop," Esfahani says. "Earlier things are meant to be done with humility, and modern things can be ego-driven. And if you do something different with the harpsichord, then inevitably it's ego-driven and that's seen as a 'bad' thing. We're dealing with so many layers of misconceptions but also so many layers of expectations. It's a struggle."

The flip side is that Esfahani is a man on a mission, and believes that as long as there's still one person who doesn't "get" the

harpsichord then his work is unfinished. "When you're playing the harpsichord you're basically a walking target, to some extent. Even the smallest assumptions about the instrument can irk me. But I'm starting to find that more people are having an open mind, and it's never too late to change someone's mind. I have the attitude of an obsession of converting everyone," he adds.

Esfahani made headlines at the beginning of 2016 when a harpsichord recital he gave in Cologne dissolved into pandemonium, as jeers and catcalls erupted from the audience. The hostile reaction was in response to his attempt to perform Steve Reich's minimalist *Piano Phase* on the Baroque instrument. Despite the programme being pre-announced, Esfahani brushes it off as anger from a mostly conservative Cologne audience. He says he was ultimately pleased that this audience was actively participating in the music. "The truth is that most people passively listen to music," Esfahani says. Referring to composer and improviser Pauline Oliveros, who recently passed away, he notes that she spoke a lot about how people are passive receivers of music, whereas listening should be an active experience.

"Classical music in particular is typically passively received, because there are all sorts of social aspects of listening to it that we think legitimise us and make us better people, or if we give our kids Mozart then they somehow get smarter. We're always using music as an object and we forget to receive and participate with music itself. Particularly in the English-speaking world, there's this obsession with the idea of 'well, what's the point? What's the use?' The answer being, you don't use it for anything; life has more meaning with things like music," he says.

"Those people [in Cologne] were actively stating how they felt about the music. Now, I disagree with them, but they were being active. Sometimes I would prefer a little more of that activity than the shocking passivity that you sometimes see amongst audience members," he adds.

Esfahani acknowledges that people are intrigued with the concept of a young harpsichordist, but doesn't expect he'll lose his cachet if he succeeds in popularising the instrument. "Well the piano is mainstream and it hasn't really lost its acolytes," he adds.

Of the Poulenc concerto he is performing at his APO debut in March: "I love that piece. It's always been one of my warhorses that I do – it's one of the first great concertos for the harpsichord in the modern age," he says. "Poulenc has this way of seeming lighthearted but of course there's this great depth in his work as well. And I think that whatever people think of this piece they'll walk away having experienced something very different, I hope." ■

THE SORCERER'S APPRENTICE

8pm, Thur 30 March
Auckland Town Hall

Conductor

Hamish McKeich

Harpsichord

Mahan Esfahani

Ravel *Le Tombeau de Couperin*

Poulenc *Concert champêtre*

Bizet *L'Arlésienne*: Suites (selections)

Dukas *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*

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A WALK IN THE PARK

The APO heads out to the rolling hills of Kaipara Harbour for a special event at Gibbs Farm. **Christopher Johnstone** highlights some of the magnificent sculptures that will feature alongside the APO performances.

I visit Gibbs Farm daily, well, virtually; my PC screen saver is a wide view from above Richard Serra's *Te Tuhirangi Contour*, over Sol LeWitt's *Pyramid (Keystone NZ)* and a stretch of Daniel Buren's *Green and White Fence*, to Bernar Venet's *88.5° ARC x 8*, dancing along the top of the gently falling slope, its eight arcs billowing forward in a mechanical ballet. Cut to close up! The tips of the Corten steel arcs soar 27 metres above, dwarfing the earth-bound viewer below. From there, look back to *Te Tuhirangi Contour*, its 0.25km of six-metre high Corten steel plates snake through the green land, at a constant 11° angle, in vivid contrast. Two delicate drawings in and on the landscape in massive steel. To experience them first-hand is to understand and appreciate some of the mysteries of sculpture, especially sculpture in the landscape – Alan Gibbs style.

Decades ago, on my first visit to Gibbs Farm, on the shore of the Kaipara Harbour, it was just a network of muddy tracks carved out of acres of unloved ground by Gibbs's various ex-military all terrain and half-track vehicles. How developed was his vision for the farm, I no longer recall, but the germ of an idea was there. His inspiration was Storm King Art Centre, in New York State, which he had visited in the 1980s, so he was no stranger to the concept of a sculpture park. He was already devoted to contemporary art and especially sculpture and the first sculpture he commissioned was from George Rickey (*Two Rectangles, Vertical Gyration Up (V)*), before he embarked on his great and ongoing journey: The Farm.

Now it covers over 400 hectares and is recognised as one of the world's finest private sculpture parks, devoted to commissioned, site-specific sculptures. Public access is limited to the dryer months and because it is not only a working farm but a wildlife park too, with exotic animals freely roaming: zebra, yak, emu, Highland cattle, and, most famously, giraffes. It is also home to the Gibbs family as well as to Alan himself, when he takes a summer break from his business of developing and manufacturing his renowned amphibious vehicles.

The Rickey sculpture was not site-specific. However, the process Gibbs now uses is

that artists whose work interests him, visit the farm, often several times. They conceive their work with the actual landscape and terrain, sometimes the exact location, firmly in their mind. Gibbs and the artist explore options together and agree on the next stage. Often the sculptures are fabricated in New Zealand, using Kiwi engineering know-how and the now extensive project management skills of Gibbs's team.

The Farm now has 19 publicly-accessible sculptures by New Zealand and international artists. While not all of them are as massive as the Kapoor and Serra, one is even larger; *A Fold in the Field*, is US land artist Maya Lin's largest and most ambitious earthwork to date, its five folds of 105,000 cubic metres covering three hectares. One could say that this work is emblematic of The Farm itself, given the huge amount of earth that has been moved to sculpt the land itself, most recently the wetlands area, adjacent to the shore.

The Venet and the Serra are two of the four sculptures which will feature live music performed by APO players at the APO's Grand Day Out at Gibbs Farm. The other two works are by Anish Kapoor and Marijke de Goey.

A few years back I led a group of Elam students on a tour of The Farm when Kapoor, one of the world's leading sculptors, was visiting and working on what eventually became *Dismemberment, Site 1*. He generously discussed with us the options that he and Alan were exploring, including the eventual overall size of the work and what might be visible on completion, since the preliminary model showed a version that went through the hill.

Dutch sculptor Marijke de Goey is the only artist with two publicly accessible works at Gibbs Farm, her *Tango Dancers* being the latest sculpture to be installed (in 2014). Her *The Mermaid* (1999), one of the earlier commissions for The Farm, is the fourth performance site. Its tumbling open cubes in blue tubular steel, playfully and dramatically bridge one of the small lakes Gibbs created at The Farm. Since so many of the sculptures suggest musical structures and forms, what could be better than live al fresco music to heighten one's experience? ■

Anish Kapoor's
Dismemberment,
Site 1. 2009

A GRAND DAY OUT AT GIBBS FARM

10am – 2pm,
Sun 19 February
Gibbs Farm, Kaipara Coast

**Ticket holders can
book a picnic lunch by
phoning APO Ticketing
on (09) 623 1052.**

Tickets for this event have
now sold out.

BREAKING SACRED GROUND

Alien harmonies and jagged rhythms in Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* signalled the birth of modern music. **Alastair McKean** looks at some of the ground-breaking elements of this seminal work.

Toward the end of his life, Igor Stravinsky was interviewed for a BBC programme on the impresario Sergei Diaghilev. In 1909, more than 50 years earlier, Stravinsky had been an unknown student composer in St Petersburg. Having heard one of his pieces, Diaghilev

"sent round his card with a note, asking me to call... Of course I knew who he was, everyone did, so I went... There was a small entrance hall, I sat and waited... I grew restless. After 20 minutes I got up and moved to the street door. As I grasped the handle, a voice behind me said 'Stravinsky, *priiditse, priiditse*', come in... I've often wondered, if I'd opened that door, whether I would have written *The Rite of Spring*."

Almost certainly not. Within months, Diaghilev asked Stravinsky to compose a 45-minute ballet. The deadline was terrifyingly close and Stravinsky hadn't written anything remotely on that scale. But *The Firebird* made him famous overnight. It was a mark of Stravinsky's brilliance, then, but also of Diaghilev's uncanny genius for finding and shepherding great artists. So when Stravinsky suggested a ballet on pagan Russian rites, Diaghilev instantly saw its possibilities. Proceedings were delayed somewhat because Stravinsky decided to compose a small palate-cleanser first – which turned into another large ballet, *Petrushka* – but once that was done, late in 1911, he sat down to *The Rite*.

When he finished he knew he had done something extraordinary. He told a friend "It is as if twenty and not two years have passed since *The Firebird*", and he was right. The earlier ballet is dazzling but not especially groundbreaking, being firmly rooted in the Russian tradition of Rimsky-Korsakov and Borodin. *Petrushka*, the hinge, is more advanced. *The Rite* is simply unprecedented, almost frighteningly so.

Why? The orchestration, for a start. The very first note is a bassoon solo so high as to be almost unplayable. It remains one of the



Sergei Diaghilev (left) and Igor Stravinsky, pictured in 1921

bassoonist's great challenges. Similarly, no timpanist had ever been asked to play music so virtuosic or violent. There's great violence in the harmony, too. Stravinsky had written a famous passage in *Petrushka* where the trumpets play the same tune in two keys at the same time. And he did this throughout *The Rite*, smashing together chords that in normal practice have nothing whatsoever to do with each other. Nobody had ever written such nakedly dissonant music.

Such consistent dissonance can cause difficulties. Traditional harmonic grammar is built on a sense of motion, from one chord to a contrasting one. If chords make less sense in relation to each other, though, this sense of musical animation can break down. Stravinsky solved the problem with rhythm. This is the single most original feature of the piece, and it gave him great trouble. He could hear the passages, he could play them, but he took a long time to work out how to write them down.

Western art music hitherto had assumed that rhythm was fundamentally stable. The dependable one-two-three-four of a march might slow down or speed up, but the underlying pulse stayed the same. Stravinsky shattered this notion. In the final dance, the beat changes constantly (imagine a speedometer

switching between miles, kilometres or chains per hour). Even where the beat is stable, unpredictability reigns. Close to the start, the strings play a regular pattern of four chords to the bar. The chords are short; all the beats seem equally stressed. Except that every now and then, reinforced by the eight horns, some chords are casually smacked out with a slashing accent. Try marching to this:

1 2 3 4, 1 2 3 4, 1 **TWO** 3 **FOUR**, 1 2 3 4,
1 **TWO** 3 4, **ONE** 2 3 4, **ONE** 2 3 4,
1 **TWO** 3 4 ...

Stravinsky rewrote the rules of music in *The Rite*, but we don't listen to it because it's academically interesting: we listen to it because it is electrifying. It's one of the most exciting, viscerally overpowering experiences in music. Perhaps unsurprisingly, it was hugely controversial at first. The premiere notoriously sparked a riot in the hall. By 1929, however, Diaghilev could write with immense satisfaction that "The *Times* says that *The Rite* is for the twentieth century what Beethoven's Ninth was for the nineteenth!" And he knew *The Rite* hadn't make solely its composer immortal. There's something appropriate that when Stravinsky died, he was buried, in Venice, a few plots away from Diaghilev. ■

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8pm, Thur 11 May
Auckland Town Hall

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Stravinsky *The Rite
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SALUTE TO A STAR

FEW POP ICONS LOOM AS LARGE AS THE LATE DAVID BOWIE. **LYDIA JENKIN** JOINS KIWI SINGERS JULIA DEANS AND LAUGHTON KORA TO REFLECT ON THE STARMAN'S MUSICAL LEGACY AHEAD OF THEIR CONCERT WITH THE APO.



2016 was a rough year for music fans, with the passing of many musical giants leaving something of a hole in our hearts. Luminaries like Sharon Jones, Leon Russell, Leonard Cohen, Prince, Glen Frey, and right back at the beginning of the year on Sunday, January 10: David Bowie.

The Starman, Ziggy Stardust, Thin White Duke – Bowie had many different musical guises, but was consistent in his inventiveness, intensity, and endlessly impressive musicality.

And that's precisely what makes his work such rich material for an orchestral reimagining, with four of New Zealand's most vibrant and chameleonic singers out the front: Julia Deans, Laughton Kora, Jon Toogood, and Ladi6.

"He was a true pioneer," Deans smiles as we ponder what made Bowie great. "It's quite overwhelming when you look at the things that he did, and the breadth of ideas and things that he was experimenting with and new trends he was generating."



Image: Adrian Malloch

Jon Toogood and Julia Deans previously joined the APO on stage in *The Adults meet the APO*, in 2015

"He was really inspiring and really intimidating at the same time. He had no fear, and was willing to leap on in there, boots and all, and try things."

Kora heartily agrees: "He was so great at breaking boundaries. He went from folk, to rock 'n roll, to stuff that was really funky and Motown-y. He just breezed through all these genres and different periods, and kept it so fresh."

The concert is a big deal for both these seasoned professionals, but you can tell they're more thrilled than nervous to be given the opportunity to sing the songs of a man who's been an idol for most of their lives.

"I'll always remember my dad thrashing 'Space Oddity', and then my mum loved 'China Girl' and 'Let's Dance'. His music was definitely part of my family, part of growing up," Kora explains.

It wasn't just his music that made an impact either, but the idea of working outside convention, of ignoring the status quo, and widening horizons. "I remember seeing the video for 'Ashes to Ashes' quite vividly, on TV," says Deans. "You know how they used to play a music video to fill the gap between programmes in the afternoons, instead of ads, filling the gap with creativity and wonder? I remember it was around the time my parents were quite full on into the Evangelistic Church, and so we weren't really allowed to listen to secular music or secular radio."

"So those were the moments, or windows, those afternoon music videos, where I actually got to see something magical, and it was really powerful."

While both Deans and Kora are known foremost for writing their own songs, and their exceptional rock 'n roll skills in leading the award-winning bands Fur Patrol and Kora respectively, they've both also had more recent experience in performing and transforming the works of others.

They appeared together in Auckland Theatre Company's much-lauded production of *Jesus Christ Superstar* in 2015, and while Kora has appeared in productions like *The Lion King*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, and lately become an in demand musical director (his most recent work was on *Grease*), Deans has also been tackling the songs of other greats in shows about Jacques Brel, and Joni Mitchell.

That experience is giving both of them a little more confidence when it comes to

breathing new life into Bowie's work. "I've worked out I should never try to be [these other artists], because that won't work, but it's about reimagining their story as my own story," explains Deans. "The great thing about Bowie's songs is that I have my own stories attached to them, attachments to key points in my life, and they've got their own back-story for me."

"I think keeping the integrity is key for me, but also having fun with it," says Kora about his focus for these new interpretations. "It should be fun, because these are songs we love. In my mind, I'm already in a one-piece sequined outfit!"

As they talk about what the performance will be like, a kind of buzz creeps into their voices. The outfits, the band, their fellow vocalists Ladi6 and Jon Toogood – they're all exciting elements, but Deans and Kora are clearly very inspired by the idea of performing with the APO.

Standing in front of an orchestra is certainly a different ballgame to standing in front of a band.

"It's that wall of sound," explains Kora. "They can be even heavier than a band I think, which is something I love particularly. But I love orchestras, I really do. I would try and go and see them at least once a month when I was in Wellington, and I still try and go as often as I can now. I went to their recent concert where they played the music from *Final Fantasy*, because I'm a bit of a gamer and I love that stuff, and that was such a different concert experience, all the kids were so into it."

"I was sitting there thinking how incredible it is to hear an orchestra, how more people need to hear it."

It won't be the first time Deans has performed with the orchestra (she performed a glorious concert of her own music alongside Anika Moa with the APO in 2015, and also joined Jon Toogood's supergroup The Adults for an APO concert in 2014), and she's relishing these opportunities. "To be on stage, and be right there amongst them, that's quite a buzz. It's very cool, and it feels like a completely new way to hear a song. Being able to hear all the different parts, and hear how they all interlock, and weave together."

"The orchestra is truly cool," agrees Kora. "And David Bowie was a properly cool dude, so this seems like one of the coolest ways we could perform his music." ■

BOWIE. STARMAN

8pm, Thur 6 April
ASB Theatre, Aotea Centre

Conductor David Kay

Featuring Jon Toogood,
Julia Deans, Ladi6 and
Laughton Kora

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APO BEHIND THE SCENES





APO has a long-standing relationship with photographer Adrian Malloch, and you'll see his work throughout *Phil News* and our season brochures. In 2016 he was commissioned to capture life in the orchestra behind the scenes – here are some of our favourite images.





THE BREAKTHROUGH OPERA



Giacomo Puccini

The Trusts Community
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Opera in Concert

MANON LESCAUT

7.30pm, Friday 14 July
Auckland Town Hall

Conductor Giordano
Bellincampi

Cast includes:

Manon Lescaut Serena
Farnocchia

Des Grieux Massimo
Giordano

Lescaut Dalibor Jenis

Geronte Pelham Andrews

Also features:

Bianca Andrew
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THE STORY OF *MANON LESCAUT* HAD ALL THE INGREDIENTS OF A SMASH HIT OPERA. **TABATHA MCFADYEN** EXPLORES PUCCINI'S PATH TO SUCCESS.

By the spring of 1889, the Italian publishing magnate Giulio Ricordi must have been starting to wonder whether his faith in Giacomo Puccini had been misplaced. The talented boy from Lucca was now 32 years old, but his only notable achievements to date were two tepidly-received operas and a scandalous elopement with his married piano student.

Ricordi remained steadfast, however, continuing to encourage (and bankroll) him. But when Puccini came to him with the announcement that his next piece would be an adaptation of the Abbé Prévost's 1731 novel *Manon Lescaut*, Ricordi was less than enthused. Jules Massenet's operatic version had received its premiere only six years earlier and was adored by audiences the world over. To Ricordi, it seemed a fool's errand to tread the same territory, regardless of the composer's assurance that "a woman like Manon can have more than one lover".

Eventually, Ricordi deferred to his protégé's self-belief, but refused to capitulate to Puccini's demand that he write his own libretto so that "no fool of a librettist" could ruin it. Puccini's querulous opposition to several collaborators meant that the text was cobbled together by five librettists in all, until somehow, after three seemingly interminable years, the opera was finally put to stage.

1 February 1893 marked the premiere performance of *Manon Lescaut*, a triumph with

more than 30 curtain calls for cast and composer alike. This fiery, passionate interpretation of Prévost's novel had excursions across the continent; the investment made by the house of Ricordi had clearly been a shrewd one.

It was his first great success, but what is it about *Manon Lescaut* that marked Puccini's turning point from promising youngster to global phenomenon?

APO Music Director Giordano Bellincampi believes the answer has a few layers. "First of all, Puccini was intrigued by the story, but also, *Manon Lescaut* gave him the chance to write something very musically modern."

In his telling of Manon & Des Grieux's doomed affair, Puccini more or less turns his back on the segmented bel canto structures that had been the backbone of Italian opera for more than a century. As Bellincampi says, "They held little interest to him. Puccini was much, much more interested in the music of Richard Wagner."

Though the lush orchestration, densely chromatic harmonies and complete integration of music and drama owe much to the Wagnerian invasion, the piece is far from derivative. "This is truly original, personal Puccini," Bellincampi says. "I think Act I, for example, is one of the most sensual acts in all of music history. It is not perfect from a structure point of view, but it's very youthful; this is how a teenager sees life. Later on in his composing life he gets far more perfect, far more calculating, if you think about *La Bohème* but especially later in *Tosca* and *Madama Butterfly*. It is perfect in every way. *Manon Lescaut* is not perfect in that sense, but for me it is maybe even more interesting because of that."

July's performance of *Manon Lescaut* is presented in association with New Zealand Opera, and NZ Opera General Director Stuart Maunder also acknowledges that the piece, however glorious, is not without its issues. "It's undeniably dramaturgically flawed; most of the

action takes place off stage, we never get to see the couple when they're happy, and the final act is set in a desert, for God's sake!"

But in remembering his first experience of the work as a young stage manager watching from the wings, he can't help but acknowledge its power. "What I took away at the end of the night was this tidal wave of emotion; it's inescapable."

APO's opera in concert performance will incorporate stage direction from Maunders, who also staged the singers in 2016's *Otello*. Both Bellincampi and Maunders agree that the piece is a perfect candidate for an opera in concert performance. "It's a gorgeous score," says Bellincampi, "and it will be a treat for our audiences to really experience the interplay between the words and the vocal lines of the singers and the various instrumentations."

Aside from being relieved that he won't need to find sand for the last act, Maunders is delighted that Aucklanders will get to revel in this extraordinary music. "It hasn't been performed in Auckland since 1984, and to be doing it with these incredible singers and the APO in full flight will be something pretty special."

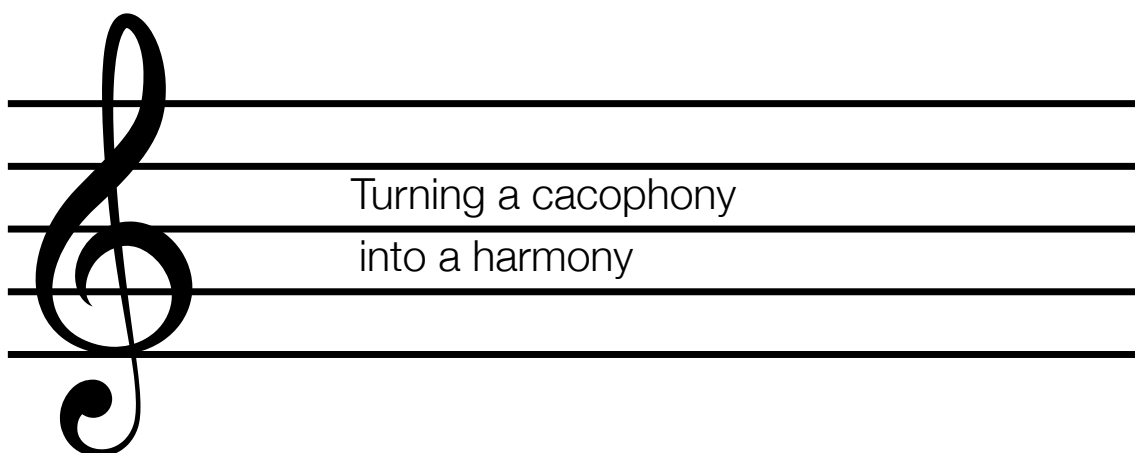
Puccini's first masterpiece remains timeless and compelling. The characters here aren't gods or kings, but normal, desperately flawed people.



A postcard commemorating the premiere of Manon Lescaut on 1 February 1893.

He puts his full operatic forces behind them not because they have territory to fight for or nobility to protect, but to give voice to the emotions that besiege us all.

After all, the purpose he believed his music needed to serve was simple: "To make the world weep – therein lies everything." ■



A Musical Paintbox

Image: Gretchen Albrecht, *Golden Cloud*, 1973 – Auckland Art Gallery
Toi o Tamaki, purchased 1974



Gretchen Albrecht's *Golden Cloud* provides the inspiration for Reuben Jelleyman's composition which will be performed at the APO Connecting concert 'Gallery of Sound'.

GALLERY OF SOUND

Presented in collaboration with the Auckland Art Gallery

6.30pm, Thur 27 April
Auckland Town Hall

Conductor
Hamish McKeich

Mussorgsky arr. Ravel
Pictures at an Exhibition

Featuring new compositions by:

Chris Adams
Sarah Ballard
Linda Dallimore
Glen Downie
Reuben Jelleyman

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Visual art has inspired composers for centuries. **Amber Read** meets the composers whose new works feature in an APO concert celebrating art and music.

"It's a bit like being a child and having a hundred coloured pencils instead of one," says composer Linda Dallimore about writing for orchestra. She's one of five New Zealand composers exploring the vivid sound world of the orchestra in APO Connecting's Gallery of Sound concert on 27 April, which showcases new music inspired by works in the Auckland Art Gallery.

"The idea of taking a visual medium as inspiration opened up some new avenues," says Glen Downie, who chose Jean Horsley's *Hot Coals* as his inspiration. "[The artwork] is so rhythmic in the way the strokes suggest motion... The way it's been structured, you can infer some figures dancing so there's that kind of dance, ritualistic, cyclical aspect."

"The title directs how you look at the picture," he continues. "It's called *Hot Coals*; how does a fire, or hot coals, sound? What are the rhythms that come out of that?" Glen constructed an erratic but cyclical percussion line as the core of the work, conjuring a mechanical, clanging energy. "The idea of a machine, a coal powered

machine was [in my mind], and the way the figures [in the painting] are laid out in a cog, they're doing this cyclical erratic churning."

Sarah Ballard was struck by the dualisms in James Chapman-Taylor's photograph *The Wind in a Frolic*: "You've got opacity and transparency, curvature and line.... There's a great sense of motion and at the same time staticism." Translating dualism into sonic form, Sarah explores intuition versus control in her piece. Some parts are extremely prescribed and others grant varying levels of improvisatory freedom to the musicians. "Intuition in real time," Sarah describes it. "I'm excited to have these two disparate things, control and non-control, coming together," she says, "creating something that's quite electrifying."

Painting techniques were inspirational for a number of the composers. The washes of colour in Gretchen Albrecht's *Golden Cloud* led Reuben Jelleyman to the hazy sounds of pitch clusters and the heavy feel resulting from blending of paint with other elements in Petrus van der Velden's *Otira Gorge* drew Chris Adams to the darker colours in the orchestra. "I use an alto flute, cor anglais, contrabassoon, bass clarinet – all of those darker auxiliary wind instruments," says Chris. In the same way that the *Otira Gorge* uses a number of different paint-mixing techniques, Chris was keen to "create something with the orchestra where I could use a whole range of different effects and draw them together in an overall cohesive piece". A huge range of effects is present – Chris even created his own percussion instrument, built of PVC pipes, for the work.

Linda Dallimore's preparation involved conversations with the artist. "I felt sure that I wanted to pick a work by a living artist so that I could connect with the person and have some dialogue around what the work was trying to do," she says. One of the elements that grew out of her discussions the artist of *Aotearoa – Cloud*, Gretchen Albrecht, was a quotation from Miles Davis' *Blue in Green*. "I wanted to conjure up the image of blue and green, being very Aotearoa colours to me.... [Gretchen] had seen Miles Davis perform and it seemed to resonate with her as an idea." Linda also looked for other ways to evoke the familiarity of Aotearoa in sound, including wind and bird sounds: "I wanted to conjure up the atmosphere of New Zealand, and for people to hear lots of movement and wind and be reminded of what it's like, aurally, to be here." ■

AUCKLAND ART GALLERY TOI O TĀMAKI

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FORCES OF NATURE

Rehearsals are underway for the annual Auckland Dance Project. **Tiana Lyes** speaks to Atamira Dance Company's Moss Patterson about the cross-cultural arts spectacle.

Two of the mightiest rivers in Māori and Chinese legend come together for the next spectacular Auckland Dance Project in March.

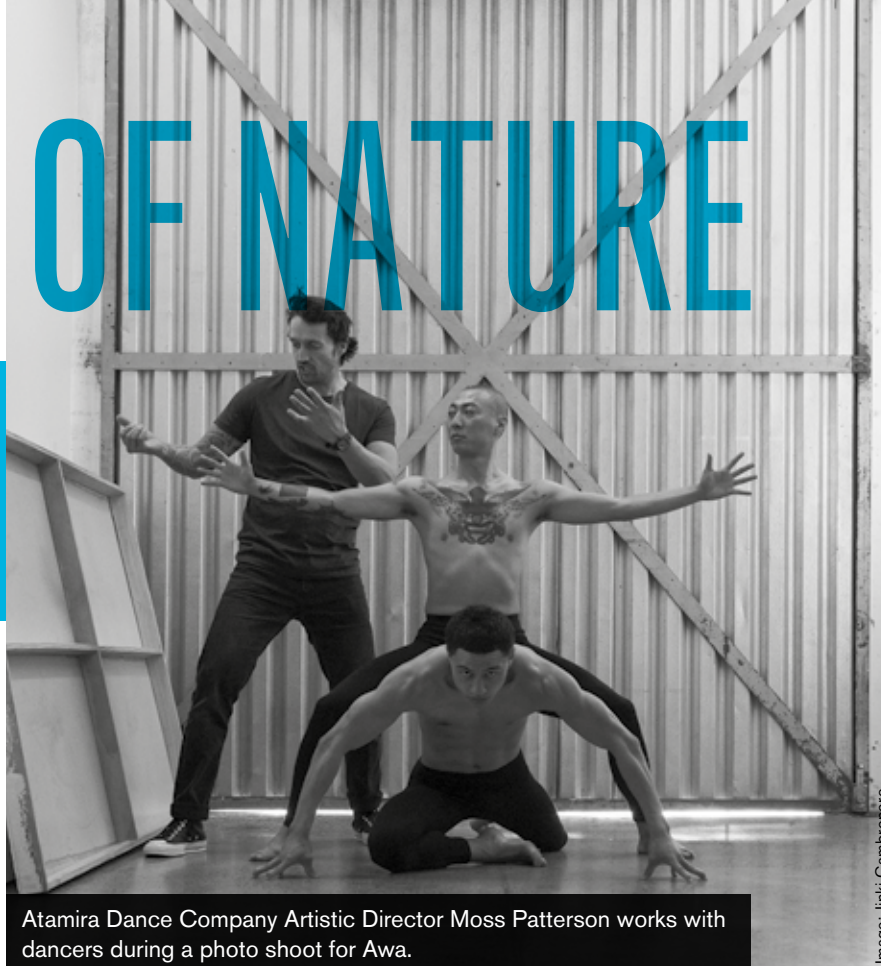
Awa is the seventh Auckland Dance Project, an annual performance that brings together dance and orchestra in a thrilling narrative. This year's Dance Project is again presented in collaboration with Atamira Dance Company (ADC), and is set to be one of the home-grown highlights of the 2017 Auckland Arts Festival.

Previous Dance Projects have often focused on large-scale dance performances of student dancers accompanied by the full orchestra, but ADC Artistic Director Moss Patterson says this year he was looking to pare down the experience. "I wanted to not focus so much on the 'huge sound' but more the intricate moments of interplay between the musicians and dancers. We've previously had these massive choreographies and huge volumes of sound, but here we're bringing everything in to explore these little moments of beauty, pain, the whole emotional rollercoaster."

Instead of the full orchestra of 70 musicians, Moss has called for a smaller string orchestra to perform a series of Bach's fugues arranged for strings. The fugue represents the movement of water, and the musicians and conductor are positioned on stage amongst the dancers, "triggering the movements", Moss explains.

Water is central to the narrative Moss has created for Awa. He has drawn upon personal experience to craft a story: "I returned to this connection that I had years ago with my Dad, who was an engineer. He worked on a lot of different damming projects in the North Island and Central Otago, including the hydro-electric power schemes in the central North Island, then ended up in Germany and then China. He passed away while he was working in China. I guess this project was a way for me to find a connection to my Dad's story, but also a story about finding hope in new places," Moss says.

Awa follows the journey of a young man descended from the Tongariro River, as he travels to to work on the great Yellow River in China. He becomes possessed with taming the spirit of the Yellow River without paying tribute to the guardians of the river, a transgression which is payable by death. The spiritual



Atamira Dance Company Artistic Director Moss Patterson works with dancers during a photo shoot for Awa.

Image: Jinki Cambrotero

guardian of the Tongariro River comes to his aid, and it's this raging torrent of spiritual forces that forms the climax of the narrative.

ADC has previously conducted two tours of China, and Moss says many of the ideas central to Chinese tradition have parallels in Māori tradition. "In China, there's this recurring idea of a nāga, which is not dissimilar to a taniwha in Māori culture, they are the guardian spirits, the protectors who cause great calamity if people disrespect whatever they are guarding."

To tell the story, Moss has brought together Chinese and Māori dancers, and the choreography combines the narratives of traditional Māori kapa haka and Tai Chi martial arts movement. In a nod to past Dance Projects, children from Auckland schools will form a youth choir on stage, and the music is a combination of the Western art form of the fugue, as well as incorporation of traditional Māori and Chinese musical instruments.

The performance area at the Auckland Town Hall will take place entirely within the view of the audience, Moss explains, with a set designed to be viewed in the round. "There's no hiding off-stage," he adds, which makes it challenging for the artists. "The young people involved in the choir are going to have to work extremely hard to watch all the elements unfold, from the dance, the musicians, following both the conductor and the movement, and I think that's a great next step for the young people and is an opportunity for them to learn more about this whole process than they have in past Dance Projects. They have to be invested in this work, and focused. It's going to be hard work, but very rewarding." ■

AWA WHEN TWO RIVERS COLLIDE

**The 2017 Auckland
Dance Project**

**Presented in
association with
Auckland Arts Festival**

5pm, Sat 25 March
Auckland Town Hall

Bookings

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Atamira Dance Company



ARTS COUNCIL OF NEW ZEALAND - TORI AOTEAROA



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My Great Listen

ONE ARTIST, THREE
PIECES OF MUSIC,
A LIFE CHANGED



Berlin Philharmonic Principal Horn Stefan Dohr joins the APO in May to perform Richard Strauss' Horn Concerto No.1. He selects three pieces of music that have left a lasting impression on him.

DVOŘÁK – SYMPHONY NO.9

A musical piece that really made a life-changing impression on me is Dvořák's Ninth Symphony. I still remember that it was the first recording of classical music I owned, one of those old vinyl records. It made me realise that classical music can somehow be 'cool'. It struck me a second time when I played it myself in a youth orchestra a couple of years later. It was the first big symphony I played, at that time still on the second horn. There is this fantastic opening of the symphony, the brass choral and the cor anglais melody in the slow movement, the joyful third and the rocking last movement which even today brings back this sheer feeling of excitement to me and makes this symphony one of my all-time favourites. I always try to play it whenever it is scheduled in a Philharmonic programme.

LIGETI – TRIO FOR HORN, VIOLIN AND PIANO

Mastering Ligeti's *Trio for Horn, Violin and Piano* is truly quite a challenge. It might even very well be considered one of the most demanding pieces of chamber music for the horn. It is so difficult that after you've finished the first movement you're convinced you won't survive three more. But then it is also among

the most colourful and virtuous contemporary masterpieces we have and certainly worth the effort. I still remember playing it – quite some years ago – for the first time with Ueli Wiget and Matthias Tacke, who were, back then, two members of the Ensemble Modern at the Alte Oper Frankfurt. Although it was certainly not easy listening, the audience took such a strong liking to the Ligeti piece which we had combined with Robert Schumann's *Adagio and Allegro*, the Brahms Horn Trio (another favourite, of course) and Arnold Schoenberg's *Fantasie for Violin and Piano*, that we were instantly asked by the Alte Oper to record it.

QUEEN – 'BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY'

Still as popular as it is spectacular; it's like a miniature pop opera. I must have been about 10 years old when I heard it for the first time on the radio and I remember that I went straight to a record shop for the first time in my life and bought the album *Night at the Opera*. Then I went home and played it night and day. It's possible that I gave my family a hard time because of me listening to that album about two million times. But the way the sound varies as the song goes on, and the voice of Freddie Mercury still gives me goose bumps. ■

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SOUND THE HORN

7:30pm, Thur 18 May
Auckland Town Hall

Conductor Tadaaki Otaka
Horn Stefan Dohr

Beethoven *The Creatures of Prometheus: Overture*

R. Strauss Horn Concerto No.1

Rachmaninov Symphony No.2

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OBOE BEDE HANLEY

**APO SECTION
PRINCIPAL
OBOE BEDE
HANLEY
TALKS TO
TIANA LYES
ABOUT HIS
INSTRUMENT.**

Bede Hanley is a regular at nearby Mojo café – they greet him with a cheery “your usual?” as we settle in to chat. But make no mistake; while many APO players are seeking caffeine during breaks in rehearsal, more often than not Bede is working on his reeds.

Reed-making, he explains, is intrinsic to oboe-playing – it’s impossible to separate the two crafts at a professional level. “Any time that I am playing the oboe I am considering how my reed is assisting me or not assisting me in what my musical intention is. The number of hours that I sit manipulating cane can be many – It’s a very fluid but continuous process.”

Bede grew up in a musical family in Saskatchewan, Canada. He says the province was a great place to learn a musical instrument. “There’s a wonderful programme in schools where any child at grade 7 in school could pick up a band instrument. Saskatchewan was small enough that I could quickly be involved in lots of different orchestras at the highest levels that were available there, which is kind of a magic combination when you’re starting out.”

He later attended the Cleveland Institute of Music, where he says he was fortunate to study under the late John Mack, considered one of

the great oboe pedagogues. Before settling in New Zealand, Bede was Principal Oboe at the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra in Canada, and was also a member of Orquesta Sinfonica de Galicia in Spain.

Of his instrument, Bede says an oboist is in a constant process of looking for their next oboe. “A string player will search for a wonderful instrument that has a good connection with them, and they’ll explore the limits of what’s available to them and what their finances can handle. Oboists use many different oboes over their careers. I can count easily eight over my professional career, maybe more,” he adds.

Because oboists are putting highly-condensed vibrations through a very small opening to make a very large and unique sound, after a while the instruments get tired and “lose some of their magic”, Bede says. “Looking for the next oboe is an evolving process, with your own concept of what you want it to sound like, with the way that your reed-making is, and with what your oboe is giving you. I’m never going to find an oboe that’s going to do everything I want – that search is going to evolve forever.”

Bede’s current oboe is made by Yamaha, and is very similar to a classic French oboe. “I’m

Learn more about Bede
and his instrument at
apo.co.nz/meet-bede

absolutely loving this instrument. It's sort of a state-of-the-art version of a classic oboe and is lined with a synthetic material that will make it last longer, which makes it less susceptible to humidity; dealing with oboes cracking and changing is a real issue especially here in the New Zealand climate – this oboe is much more stable. It has a sound that a little unusual but really speaks to me," Bede says.

Bede has modified his oboe with a different bell, made by French oboe maker Lorée. "It's at least 60, maybe 75 years old, and I found that this particular bell really brings the Yamaha to life," Bede explains.

It's this innate understanding of the mechanics and the production of the instrument that comes with the turf of being an oboist, Bede says. "The oboe is a very fickle instrument – the technology that is employed to make all the keys work is really old, basic technology – even though they're very beautifully made, we often have little things go wrong, so you have to have a basic knowledge of how an oboe works and how to make it function when it doesn't want to. It's fraught with challenges."

To help him troubleshoot any issues and to adjust to the acoustic environment, Bede

carries a bag of tricks on stage, including special reed-making knives, a ceramic stone for sharpening them, a chopping block to shorten the reed if it needs to have a different tone or pitch, and many other tools for reed-making and adjustments to the instrument.

Like many instruments in the orchestra, there are different "schools" of oboe playing – the North American and the European. Bede says it's based on the way that oboists make their reeds. The 'American scrape' style Bede uses was borne out of the need to establish a hybrid of the German style – a very dark tone, and thick, athletic approach – with the much lighter, more brilliant and reedy French style of playing. Reeds become something of a calling card for players, Bede says. "Listening to an orchestra, an oboist would know immediately the general background of a player, without knowing who they are."

Bede is now busy preparing for his March performance of Christopher Rouse's Oboe Concerto. With no commercial recordings of the concerto available, Bede says the intricate score is challenging, but he is looking forward to it. "It's incredibly emotional, expressive music," he says. ■

The New Zealand Herald Premier Series

SCOTTISH SYMPHONY

8pm, Thur 2 March
Auckland Town Hall

Conductor Giordano Bellincampi
Oboe Bede Hanley

Respighi *Ancient Airs and Dances*: Suite No.3
Christopher Rouse
Oboe Concerto

Bookings
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All images: Adrian Malloch

◀ OFF STAGE

REAPING WHAT SHE SEWS

Not only do our musicians impress us weekly with their musical prowess on the Town Hall stage, but many have interesting talents outside of the orchestra. Associate Principal Bass player Bella Zilber sews and makes all her own clothes, including the outfits you see her wearing on stage. **Helen Spoelstra** discovered how she fits her love of sewing around her day job in the APO.

"I love working with materials and making things with my hands," says Bella Zilber, who is not only a professional musician, but makes all her own clothes, knits and has just started jewellery classes. "Music is a very manual job in a lot of ways and it's a very physical job, and so that continues outside of work, except what I *really* like about making things is that there's a finished product that you can touch and hold, and lasts longer. And if it means that I can make pretty things to wear then that's great."

Bella lived in Japan as a child and credits her early years at a Montessori kindergarten with fuelling her interest in crafts. "They were heavily into origami, making things with yarn and lots of hands on activities and lots of learning through doing," she explains. And then, at age 13, Bella's mum bought her a sewing machine. "I didn't know how to use it, I never had a lesson... I've still never had a lesson – I just slowly figured it out over time. The internet has completely exploded the world of sewing and has shown what's possible, and it's through the internet that I've learned how to sew properly. Plus, the online sewing community is really supportive."

Bella makes all her own clothes from scratch, from researching and sourcing patterns online, shopping for fabric, to the final creation and execution of the garment. Although it's a hobby that takes up a lot of time, it slots in nicely around Bella's day job as a bass player, using her free evenings and making the most of any downtime in the rehearsal schedule. In fact, her two passions complement each other, and Bella



credits music with teaching her valuable lessons that she has been able to put into practice through sewing. "What I've learned through music is that, when you do something for the first time, you must be prepared for it not to work out. It's a valuable life lesson, and it means that I've not been afraid to try something and be bad at it, whereas I think a lot of adults are afraid of not doing something perfectly the first time."

Her skills at the sewing machine have allowed her to create performance wear that suits the demands and physicality of playing the double bass exactly. "You don't want anything that's going to slip off your right shoulder. It's important that I'm able to move my arms and I don't like anything that's tight around my waist. The biggest thing is that I can't wear any kind of restrictive skirt because I must be able to open my knees and play."

Bella has also amassed a large online following; posting her creations for her thousands of followers on her Instagram and blog. Despite her obvious talent, Bella isn't about to ditch the bass for a career in dressmaking. "It's just for fun. I've always been very clear that this is just a hobby and it's what I do to relax, so I can't imagine turning it into a money-making thing. I just want to make stuff that I think is pretty." ■



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CRESCENDO NEWS



Image: Adrian Malloch

The APO Horns take Crescendo members behind the scenes in April.



Crescendo celebrated the end of the 2016 season with another memorable Christmas get-together at Phil Hall. Members of Crescendo,

APO's membership programme, were treated to entertainment from APO's Young Achievers, and reflected on some of the highlights of the past year, including meeting visiting artists Michael Barenboim and Julian Steckel, attending orchestra rehearsals, and getting a behind the scenes insight into the APO's Trombone section.

The event also included the launch of the new Notes Fund, a fundraising initiative to help the APO hire and purchase scores. In 2017 the cost of buying and hiring scores and parts is estimated to be \$40,000, due in part to the cost of copyright restrictions. In addition, APO Music Director Giordano Bellincampi understands the importance of investment in new critical edition and urtext scores – which are

scores that are identified as being as close as possible to the composer's original intentions. Older parts can also become difficult for musicians to read after multiple performances because of previous markings like bowings being repeatedly erased and redone. The Notes Fund means that with a commitment to investing in the best possible editions and clean parts for the players, the orchestra can achieve the best possible performances.

Crescendo members were able to select a particular score to purchase, or make a general donation towards the Notes Fund. The launch of the Fund at the Crescendo Christmas party was a great success, raising almost \$4000 for new scores and parts. All APO supporters are able to contribute to the Notes Fund at any time by visiting apo.co.nz/support-donate.

Looking ahead to 2017, Crescendo members will be treated to a number of exciting events; meeting artists including Mahan Esfahani and Stefan Dohr, attending open rehearsals conducted by Maestro Bellincampi,

and a special behind the scenes presentation with the APO's exuberant Horn section in April.

For more information about joining Crescendo, visit apo.co.nz/crescendo or contact Caitlyn Westbrooke on (09) 638 6266.

CRESCENDO CALENDAR OF EVENTS To July 2017

1 March

Open Rehearsal –
Scottish Symphony
10am, Auckland Town Hall

30 March

Meet the Artist: Mahan Esfahani
Post-concert, Auckland Town Hall

3 April

Behind the Scenes: APO Horns
6.30pm, Phil Hall, Mt Eden

18 May

Meet the Artist: Stefan Dohr
Post-concert, Auckland Town Hall

Leave your mark in the music

You can help shape the future of the APO by leaving a gift in your will to the Auckland Philharmonia Foundation.

The Foundation is growing its endowment fund to help secure the orchestra's future and to support specific needs, such as scholarships for musicians.

Leaving a gift is one of the most potent and enduring ways you can help Auckland's orchestra.

Every gift, big or small, makes a difference. So once you have made provision for your loved ones, please consider leaving a gift in your will so the APO can thrive in years to come.

Ruskin Spear (1911-1990) *Rehearsal*
Private Collection / Courtesy of
Manya Igel Fine Arts, London / Bridgeman Images
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For more information visit the APO website
www.apo.co.nz/gifts-in-wills or call the
APO Development team on 09 623 5628

FRIENDS NEWS



The APO Friends continue to support the orchestra in many practical ways including stuffing envelopes to all Auckland pre-school centres promoting

the fabulous December 2016 APO 4 Kids concerts and delivering flyers for the In Your Neighbourhood concerts. Organising the rosters for orchestra suppers, programme selling and manning the information table at 2017 concerts is well underway.

This year we celebrate 35 years of Friends support for Auckland's professional orchestra which began with a committee formed to do the plethora of marketing and practical support tasks for the Regional Orchestra that grew into the metropolitan APO we have today. To mark this milestone we will have a special anniversary 'Meet The Artist' event on Friday 31 March at our usual

venue in Ellerslie. We will also recall five-year eras in following MTAs to give everyone an opportunity to celebrate. If you haven't been along for a while make this the year to pop along to the Friends again. Certainly the amazing work of Friends in the past provides inspiration for us all to continue to support the orchestra in every way we can.

Buses to concerts are becoming increasingly popular as more concertgoers see the advantages this transport provides. We are grateful that Wynne Eccles has volunteered and taken over convening the bus that originates in Howick and picks up at points through the Eastern Suburbs. We thank John and Jessica Pybus for their great work in fostering this service over the last four years.

Dates and guests for our Meet The Artist events through to July 2017 are listed here. All who attend agree that these are wonderful music events with unique interviews and amazing music from APO players and emerging talent

MEET THE ARTIST DATES

24 February 2017

Chloë Hanslip, violinist

31 March 2017

Friends celebrate 35 years

5 May 2017

Rumon Gamba, conductor

2 June 2017

Giordano Bellincampi,
APO Music Director

7 July 2017

Behzod Abduraimov, pianist (TBC)

from the University of Auckland. You will do yourself a favour by organising your diary to get to as many of these as you can.

There are so many practical ways that Friends support the APO family and we hope that you will see joining the Friends in 2017 as a way that you can support the APO even more. For further information about the APO Friends visit apo.co.nz/friends or contact Bryce Bartley, President (09 379 4446) or Anne Stewart, Membership Secretary (09 476 1353) or email apofriends@gmail.com.

FOUNDATION NEWS



The second half of 2016 was busy for AP Foundation with a celebration concert by Foundation scholars, the announcement of the 2016 scholars

and the introduction of Foundation-sponsored ensemble concerts at selected retirement villages.

Each year the recipients of the Foundation's annual Player Scholarships present a boutique concert to the valued 21st Century Circle legacy group, supporters who have indicated their intention to leave a gift in their will to the APO through the Foundation. The annual scholarship concert, held in the intimacy of the Rannoch homestead, acknowledges the commitment of the 21st Century

Circle members to the APO.

2014 scholar Camille Wells (oboe) and 2015 scholars Mark Bennett (violin) and Tim Sutton (trombone) showcased their respective instruments and technique and talked about their individual study trip. It was an up-close-and-personal interaction with the players and highlighted the value of the scholarship experience. The Foundation is committed to the annual scholarship programme as an effective way of supporting not only individual player development but also the whole orchestra.

2016 scholarships have been awarded to Huw Dann (trumpet) and Ruth Brinkman (contrabassoon) and we look forward to their celebration concert later this year.

A new initiative for the Foundation in 2016 was a series of three chamber

concerts at selected retirement villages across Auckland. The purpose of the concerts was to bring a taste of the APO to those who enjoy orchestral music but find it difficult to attend a Town Hall concert, as well as raising awareness about the Foundation and its purpose to grow and nurture an endowment fund to support the long-term future of the APO. Each concert was very well received auguring well for a continuation of the programme in 2017.

Careful stewardship of the Foundation's investment funds together with raising awareness of the Foundation and encouraging gifts in wills will continue to be key objectives of the Foundation in 2017.

Belinda Vernon

Auckland Philharmonia Foundation Chair

THANK YOU

Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra gratefully acknowledges the contributions made by the following companies, trusts and organisations. These funds support the orchestra's current operations and education programme.

CORE FUNDERS



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Hamana Charitable Trust	Ministry of Education	Waiwera Water
Impressions International	Mt Wellington Foundation	

CONCERTS

DATE	CONCERT/ACTIVITY	TIME	LOCATION
Thu 16 Feb	The New Zealand Herald Premier Series: Myths and Legends	8pm	Auckland Town Hall
Sun 19 Feb	A Grand Day Out	10am	Gibbs Farm
Thu 23 Feb	Bayleys Great Classics: Hanslip Plays Mozart	7.30pm	Auckland Town Hall
Thu 2 Mar	The New Zealand Herald Premier Series: Scottish Symphony	8pm	Auckland Town Hall
Tue 14 Mar	Deloitte Summer Salon: Broadway	6.30pm	Shed 10, Queens Wharf
Sat 18 Mar	Auckland Arts Festival: Raiders of the Lost Ark	7pm	Civic Theatre
Sat 25 Mar	Auckland Dance Project: Awa – When Two Rivers Collide	5pm	Auckland Town Hall
Thu 30 Mar	The New Zealand Herald Premier Series: The Sorcerer's Apprentice	8pm	Auckland Town Hall
Thu 6 Apr	Bowie. Starman	8pm	Aotea Centre
Sat 8 Apr	APO Connecting: APO 4 Kids	10am & 11.30am	Auckland Town Hall
Mon 10 Apr	In Your Neighbourhood: Romantic Strings	6.30pm	Somervell Church, Remuera
Tue 11 Apr	In Your Neighbourhood: Romantic Strings	6.30pm	St George's Church, Takapuna
Sun 23 Apr	APO at the Pop-up Globe	TBC	Ellerslie Racecourse
Thu 27 Apr	APO Connecting: Gallery of Sound	6.30pm	Auckland Town Hall
Sat 29 Apr	Hans Zimmer Revealed	6pm	Vector Arena
Wed 3 May	The New Zealand Herald Premier Series: From Russia With Love	8pm	Auckland Town Hall
Thu 4 May	APO on the Shore: From Russia With Love	8pm	Bruce Mason Centre
Fri 5 May	APO Connecting: APO 4 Kids	10am & 11.30am	Bruce Mason Centre
Thu 11 May	Newstalk ZB Series: Pushing Boundaries	8pm	Auckland Town Hall
Sat 13 May	APO Connecting: APO Adventures Central	12-2pm	Auckland Town Hall
Thu 18 May	Bayleys Great Classics: Sound the Horn	7.30pm	Auckland Town Hall
Wed 24 May	Unwrap the Music: Vivaldi's Four Seasons	6.30pm	Auckland Town Hall
Thu 1 Jun	The New Zealand Herald Premier Series: Mountain King	8pm	Auckland Town Hall
Wed 7 Jun	Michael Hill International Violin Competition: Semi-final 1	7.30pm	Concert Chamber
Thu 8 Jun	Michael Hill International Violin Competition: Semi-final 2	7.30pm	Concert Chamber
Sat 10 Jun	Michael Hill International Violin Competition: Grand Final	7.30pm	Auckland Town Hall
Mon 26 Jun	In Your Neighbourhood: Sacred & Profane	6.30pm	St Peter's Church, Takapuna
Wed 28 Jun	In Your Neighbourhood: Sacred & Profane	6.30pm	St Luke's Church, Remuera
Sun 2 Jul	Harry Potter Live in Concert	TBC	Vector Arena
Thu 6 Jul	Newstalk ZB Series: Fallen Heroes	8pm	Auckland Town Hall
Fri 14 Jul	Opera in Concert: Manon Lescaut	7.30pm	Auckland Town Hall
Thu 20 Jul	The New Zealand Herald Premier Series: Ibragimova Returns	8pm	Auckland Town Hall
Sat 22 Jul	APO Connecting: APO Adventures South	2-4pm	Vodafone Events Centre, Manukau
Wed 26 Jul	Unwrap the Music: Beethoven's Fourth Symphony	6.30pm	Auckland Town Hall

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