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ON 40 YEARS
AS AUCKLAND'S
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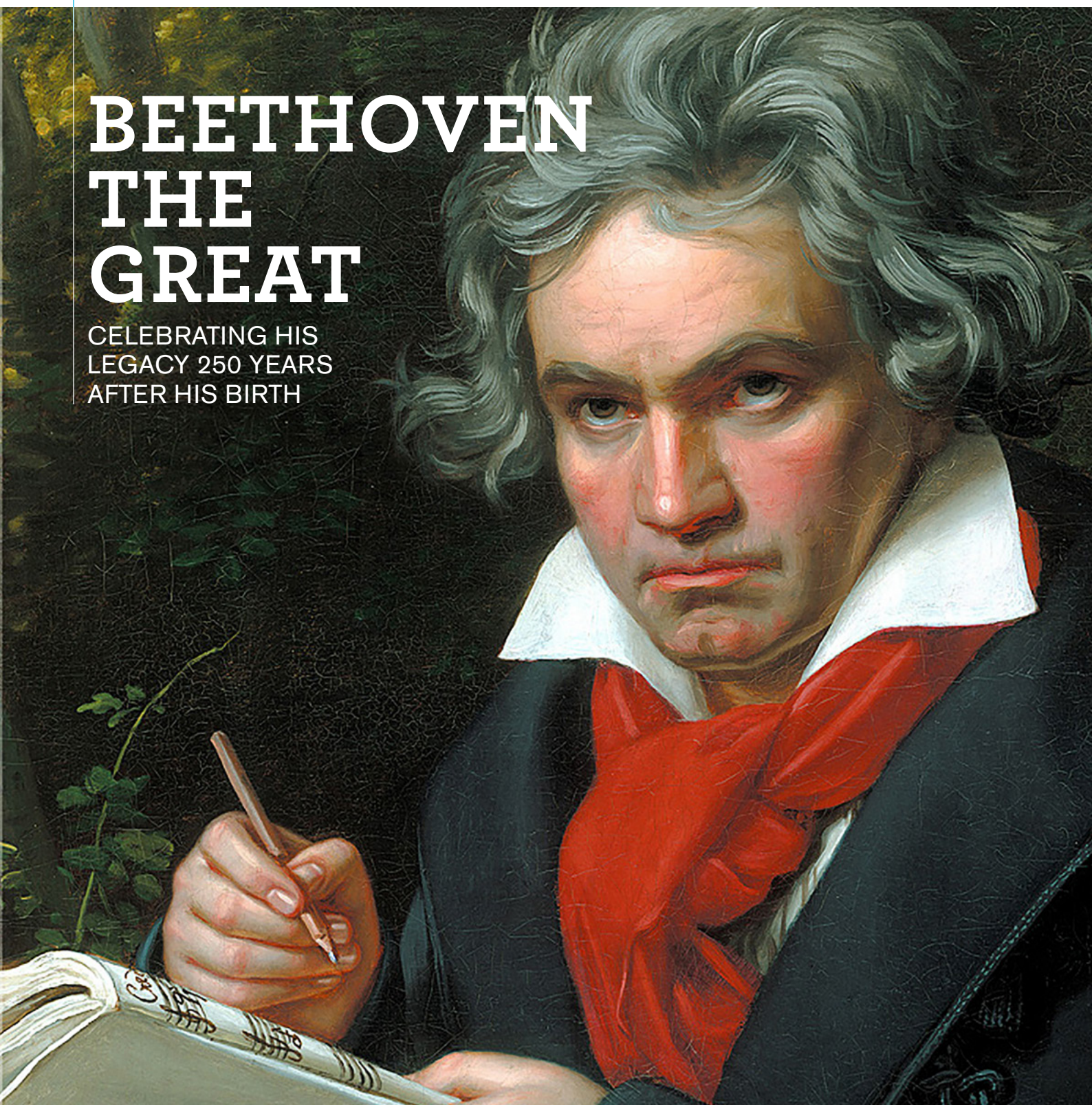


Phil News

SUMMER 2020 VOL.44 NO.1 *your free copy*

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LEGACY 250 YEARS
AFTER HIS BIRTH



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FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE



IMAGE: ADRIAN MALLOCH

UPFRONT WITH
BARBARA
GLASER

Welcome to the Summer 2020 issue of *Phil News*. This year is a particularly exciting one for APO as we celebrate our 40th birthday – that's 40 years of being Auckland's orchestra, and 40 years of sharing the joy of orchestral music with communities in this amazing region.

In this issue of *Phil News*, we look back at APO's journey from its start in

1980 to the orchestra it is today, including stories of people who have been a part of our journey throughout the years.

We share our 40th birthday with another milestone event – Beethoven's 250th. We're thrilled to join in the worldwide celebrations by performing his nine symphonies across four concerts – all in 9 days. This is APO's first time performing a Beethoven symphony cycle and will be a significant moment in the orchestra's history.

In 2020 we welcome back Berlin Philharmonic's Principal Horn Stefan Dohr to perform Danish composer Hans Abrahamsen's Horn Concerto. This new work is very dear to APO, because we are one of a group of orchestras from around the world – Berlin Philharmonic, NHK Symphony (Tokyo), the NTR ZaterdagMatinee (Concertgebouw, Amsterdam) and Seattle Symphony – who banded together to commission this piece. We also head back to Waiheke Island for a special In Your Neighbourhood concert featuring Stefan.

As we celebrate 40 years of bringing music to Aucklanders, we also celebrate the wonderfully talented composers of New Zealand, with works by Ross Harris, Dame

Gillian Whitehead, Leonie Holmes, Chris Gendall, Celeste Oram and Alex Taylor, featured in our 2020 programme. Turn to page 27, where Dame Gillian shares some of her favourite pieces of music.

When looking back on the past 40 years, it's impossible not to think of beloved Kiwi pianist Michael Houstoun, who has performed with the APO many, many times since 1980. Sadly, Michael will be retiring at the end of this year following an illustrious career. He'll be performing with the orchestra one last time at our *The New Zealand Herald Premier Series: Houstoun Plays Rachmaninov* concert in July – a not-to-be-missed event. Tickets are selling fast, so don't miss out!

In this issue we unpack Mahler's massive Sixth Symphony, which APO is performing in June, we explore English composer Ralph Vaughan Williams' connection to New Zealand, and we learn why our Metlifecare Unwrap the Music conductor and presenter Graham Abbott is passionate about sharing the stories behind our favourite orchestral works.

We hope you enjoy this Summer issue of *Phil News*!

Barbara Glaser

A dinner party

is even more enchanting when we prepare and serve the food. We will bring the restaurant to your house, or venue of choice, to serve a scrumptious dinner that will take your guests on a truly divine culinary journey.

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NZ ORCHESTRAS APPOINT FIRST ASSISTANT CONDUCTOR IN RESIDENCE



Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra is delighted to announce the appointment of New Zealander Vincent Hardaker as the first ever Assistant Conductor in Residence for the group of professional orchestras of New Zealand.

The programme is an initiative across a consortium of orchestras to nurture the next generation of professional conductors in New Zealand. It is a collaboration between the APO, Christchurch Symphony Orchestra (CSO), Orchestra Wellington, Dunedin Symphony Orchestra (DSO) and New Zealand Symphony Orchestra (NZSO).

"This position means so much to me as a Kiwi musician and I can't wait to continue my exploration of classical music and the conducting profession, alongside the great musicians of the APO and the other participating orchestras," says Hardaker.

Three conductors, selected from a longlist of 43, auditioned before a panel of musicians and management from participating orchestras on Friday 15 November.

"The Assistant Conductor Programme was created to develop the depth of conducting talent in New Zealand and to expose conductors to the professional orchestra environment and give them the opportunity to grow in their practice," says APO Chief Executive Barbara Glaser.

The first APO concert where Vincent will step up to the podium is APO Connecting's *Community Classics: Water* concert on Saturday 9 May, 3pm, at Auckland Town Hall.

WELCOME TO THE APO FAMILY

It's been an exciting few months for the orchestra, as we have welcomed a number of new members to the APO family both on stage and behind the scenes.

Be sure to look out for our newest players on concert night – Section Principal Clarinet Jonathan Cohen, Co-Principal Horn Norberto López, Sub Principal Cello Chen Cao, and Tutti Second Violins Liam Osborne and Lucia Siwy.

Working behind the scenes, APO's long-time Orchestra Manager Wendy Gardiner has stepped up into the role of Director of Operations. Wendy has been part of APO since the 1990s, when she joined the orchestra as a viola player.

At the end of 2019, we also welcomed two new board members – businesswoman Naisi Chen and content strategist and marketing expert Oliver Sealy – who bring a wealth of expertise and experience to the table.

We are delighted to welcome everyone on board and know that they'll make an invaluable contribution to the orchestra!

2020 FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT ANNOUNCED

Each year, the Auckland Philharmonia Foundation awards a scholarship to an APO musician, giving them the opportunity to further hone their skills and gain new-found knowledge of their instrument.

This year's recipient is Sub Principal Horn Carl Wells, who'll be heading to the United States to attend the 52nd International Horn Symposium in Oregon, participate in specialist low horn lessons, and get to know some of the music education initiatives in the US.

Congratulations, Carl!



IMAGE: ADRIAN MALLOCH



LITTLES LEARN ABOUT THE ORCHESTRA

In May, New Zealand's very own friendly monster Moe will be joining the APO to help children learn about the instruments that make up the orchestra. Moe and his friends will be using a famous piece of music by composer Benjamin Britten: *The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra*.

Written in 1945 with the subtitle *Variations and Fugue on a Theme of Purcell*, it was based on the Rondeau movement of Purcell's *Abdelazer* suite. Originally commissioned for a British educational documentary film called *Instruments of the Orchestra*, it has been used ever since by music educators worldwide to introduce young children to orchestral music.

Moe will also ask instruments from each of the four main sections of the orchestra – strings, woodwinds, brass and percussion – to demonstrate how each type of instrument works. Moe and his other friends – Fern, Gilbert and Frank – might even ask the musicians to play a few other well-known pieces to highlight a few special instruments! Recommended for children 10 years and under.

i APO 4 Kids Moe's Guide To The Orchestra

10am & 11:30am, Sat 23 May

Auckland Town Hall

10am & 11:30am, Sat 30 May

Bruce Mason Centre, Takapuna

apo.co.nz/moesguide

**Four Winds AUCKLAND
FOUNDATION LIVE**

YEAR OF PREMIERES

APO's 2020 season is filled with an exciting mix of familiar favourites, but concertgoers can also look forward to a fantastic line-up of new works being premiered by the orchestra.

In February, we're joined by Stefan Dohr (Principal Horn Berlin Philharmonic) for the Australasian premiere of a new Horn Concerto by Hans Abrahamsen, jointly commissioned by the Berlin Philharmonic, APO, NHK Symphony (Tokyo), the NTR ZaterdagMatinee (Concertgebouw, Amsterdam) and the Seattle Symphony. You can read more about how this piece came to fruition on page 18.

Premiering during our *Beethoven 250* festival are three all-new works by New Zealand composers Dame Gillian Whitehead, Chris Gendall, and Celeste Oram and Alex Taylor, especially commissioned by APO for the *Ludwig Reflected* speaker and chamber music series.

APO has premiered all of Kiwi composer Ross Harris' symphonies and his latest, *Symphony No.7*, is no exception. His latest work features in the programme for our *The New Zealand Herald Premier Series: Transformations* concert in April.

October sees APO's very own Principal Oboe Bede Hanley step into the spotlight to perform the world premiere of composer Gary Kulesha's Oboe Concerto – composed especially for Bede!

Lastly, we'll end our mainstage concert series with the premiere of a new work by Auckland composer and former APO composer-in-residence Leonie Holmes.

ROSS HARRIS >
IMAGE: ADRIAN MALLOCH



APO YOUNG ACHIEVERS ENSEMBLE TOPPEE FLAT IMAGE: THOMAS HAMILL

CONNECTING KICKS OFF PARTNERSHIP WITH THE BLUES

APO's Connecting education and outreach programme has teamed up with the Blues Super Rugby club.

The partnership will see up-and-coming musicians of APO Connecting's Young Achievers initiative perform live at seven Blues rugby matches played at Eden Park and one match in Whangarei during the 2020 season.

APO Young Achievers are part of the orchestra's Inspire Partnership Programme, which works with aspiring young musicians aged 16 to 25. The orchestra provides regular musical activities designed to nurture their

talent and hone their craft, shaping Auckland's future professional musicians. This partnership with The Blues is one of those activities.

"We're thrilled to join forces with the Blues, who share our passion for Auckland and its communities," says Director of APO Connecting Thomas Hamill.

"The partnership will give our Young Achievers a platform to step into the spotlight and showcase their talent. We hope that their passion for music will inspire Blues fans and be a fun, uplifting and engaging presence at Blues games."

GALA EVENING RETURNS TO TOWN HALL

The annual Deloitte Winter Gala returns to the Auckland Town Hall in 2020 following the success of last year's event hosted at the APO's home base for the first time.

The annual event, taking place on Thursday 2 July this year, is a highlight on the APO calendar, with guests coming together to enjoy a delectable three-course meal and fine wines while

enjoying live entertainment from the orchestra and guest artists.

A silent auction of special items will feature throughout the evening, with proceeds going towards the APO Connecting programme of education, community and outreach activities.

Keep an eye out for ticket information on the APO website.



THE 2019 DELOITTE WINTER GALA

40 YEARS OF MUSIC

In 2020, APO celebrates its 40th anniversary. *Phil News* looks back at how it has grown from a group of 19 musicians to the 72-piece orchestra it is today.

Violinist Kate Walshe remembers it well: the speed at which the Auckland Symphonia disbanded.

"It was July 1980. We were all down in Rotorua when we got the news," Walshe recalls. "Funding had been taken away, and the Symphonia folded overnight."

Funding, that dreaded F-word. A persistent obstacle for cultural institutions around the world, but perhaps even more keenly felt in the world of symphony orchestras, with a productivity model frozen in time; you can't scale down the number of musicians in a Beethoven symphony or simply add more concerts to spread the cost.

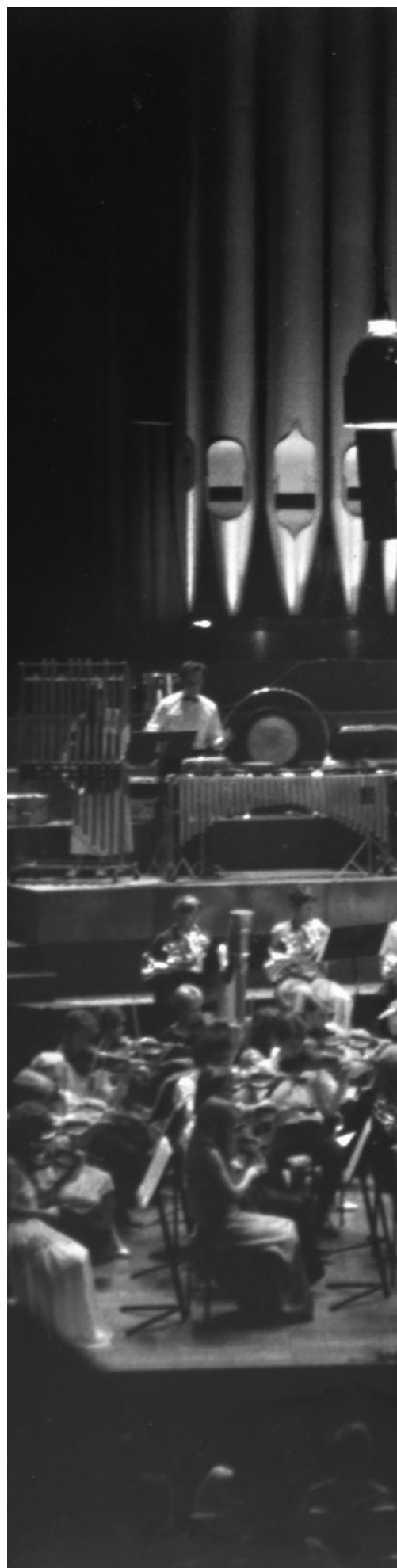
But it was also funding frustrations that ultimately ignited the determination of a group of Auckland musicians to pick up their instruments from the ashes of the Symphonia, and reform as the Auckland Regional Orchestra on 30 September 1980. This singular objective for those 19 musicians, known as the Phoenix Group,

was to regain control over the future of the orchestra and its finances.

The Phoenix Group worked hard over the next few months to reform as the Auckland Regional Orchestra, a group led by then-Concertmaster Brecon Carter, as well as the late John Ure and Claudia Price, among other recognisable names in APO's history. Kate says one thing that stood out to her at that time was a feeling of hope. "Everyone was full of hope for the future. We were so enthusiastic and just got stuck in."

Brecon Carter, who was Concertmaster from 1981 to 1987, explains: "Players had no funding straight away. We had to get daytime jobs and rehearse in the evenings. Gradually the powers that had funds to offer started to realise that we were onto a good thing and we got funding bit by bit."

"When the arts council came on our side and started giving funding this was a huge positivity for the players."



“

The orchestra was fresh and exciting, and its character was distinct from any other orchestra in the country at that time.

”

SHARE YOUR APO STORY

Do you have an APO story or memory to share? We want to hear it! Please send your stories, memories and photos to us in an email to marketing@apo.co.nz

STAND UP AND TAKE NOTE.

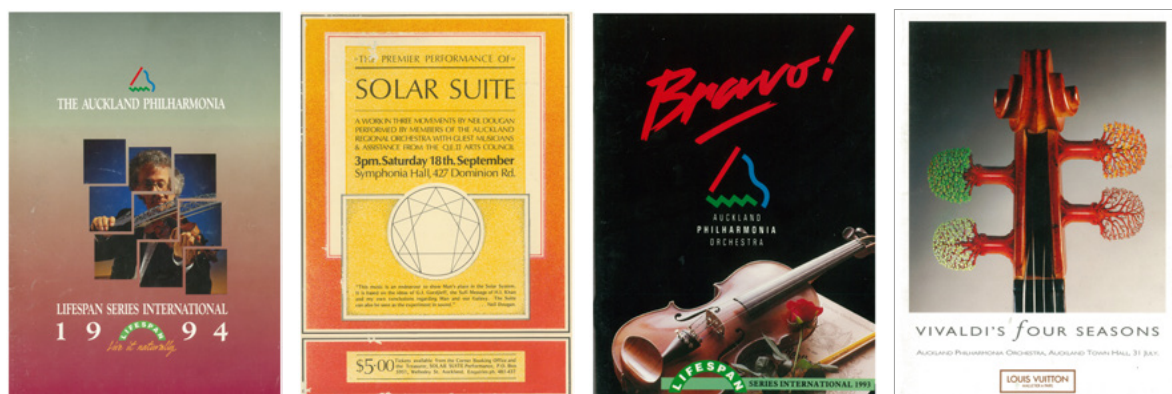
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> APO CONCERT
AND SERIES
PROGRAMMES
FROM THE
'80s AND '90s



We had gradually developed friendships with important people in the community who supported us and that was really important for us."

What distinguished the orchestra at this time was its cooperative approach. The players oversaw everything, from artistic programming and rehearsal schedules, to auditioning new players. "It worked fantastically – we had to meet probably once a week as a group. We'd all sit in the greenroom at Phil Hall [the orchestra's rehearsal space on Dominion Road] and hash out issues," Walshe says. There were subcommittees for day-to-day administration, but big decisions, including auditioning new players, were always made as a group. Rehearsals were in the evening, as players all held day jobs.

Christopher Blake, who was General Manager of APO from 1985–1990, says it was a very exciting time to be part of the orchestra. "It was a coming together of people in contemporary classical music. We collaborated with many New Zealand composers and did a lot of commissions during that time," he says.

As it was a small orchestra, with thirty or so players, the repertoire played was mostly classical. The first series concert from the new Auckland Regional Orchestra would take place on 4 November 1981, featuring a programme of Vivaldi's *Spring*, Mozart's Symphony No.35, Beethoven's Symphony No.2 and Britten's *Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings*, featuring John Ure as soloist. The orchestra's Principal Conductor Georg Tintner conducted the concert, which sold out.

"There was a great morale, and a real feeling of family," Walshe says. "We owned the orchestra, and we were invested in the outcomes."

By 1985 the group had become known as the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra, a name change designed to better reflect the aspirations of the orchestra. 1985 also signalled the next great leap for the orchestra, with full-time retainers paid to a core orchestra of 45 musicians. It meant musicians could give

up their day jobs and go into daytime rehearsals. For many, it meant a career choice. For Auckland, it meant a full-time professional resident orchestra.

The orchestra was now in great demand – regularly accompanying the Bolshoi Ballet tours at St James theatre, performing alongside international stars including Kiri Te Kanawa, and even Nigel Kennedy, who was hot off the success of his highly-acclaimed 1984 recording of Elgar's Violin Concerto.

Throughout the years, the APO also collected the full set of the Three Tenors; supporting Plácido Domingo in 1992, Jose Carreras in 1994, and finally Luciano Pavarotti in 1999, and again for his final NZ concert tour in 2005.

Behind the scenes, support for the orchestra also grew; the Friends of the APO, a group of volunteers established at the very start of the Auckland Regional Orchestra, continued valuable fundraising activities and in 1987 the Auckland Philharmonia Foundation was established to secure the future of the orchestra.

"There was a great deal of community support. The musicians were determined to have an orchestra and the Auckland community responded to that. There was so much energetic activity around the orchestra and all of the hard work translated into what the orchestra is today – Auckland's orchestra, enjoyed by the citizens of Auckland," says Blake.

Gretchen La Roche, Chief Executive Officer of Christchurch Symphony Orchestra, recalls how thrilling it was for her to experience the orchestra as a young, developing musician during the '80s. She says: "What was remarkable to me, and to everyone, was that Auckland was shaping its own character and embracing the dynamic of a city of the Pacific. The orchestra was fresh and exciting, and its character was distinct from any other orchestra in the country at that time.

"The orchestra was consciously reflecting Auckland and its confidence and the character of New Zealand. There was something special going on."

The orchestra built an annual programme of concerts that included summer matinees and lunchtime concerts, as well as establishing an annual Opera in Concert tradition. Opera in the Park, and subsequently the Symphony Under the Stars at Auckland Domain, drew in record-breaking crowds for the orchestra, with an estimated 350,000 people attending the 1996 concert.

The APO also made a commitment to supporting New Zealand composers, establishing its Composer-in-Residence programme in 1996.

In 2004, Prime Minister and Minister for the Arts Helen Clark, who believed the orchestra was an important asset to the city, helped change the funding system by working with various stakeholders to reform the city councils and create a stable funding stream for the orchestra. The Auckland Regional Amenities Funding Act 2008 saw local authorities assume more responsibility for supporting the orchestra and this continued under the new Auckland Council.

For all its success and extraordinary growth during the 1990s, the APO's funding situation remained precarious, and in 2005 the decision was made to transition the orchestra to a traditional management structure.

From its humble beginnings in 1980 to the 72-piece orchestra it is today, the APO continues to go from strength to strength and leave an impression on those who connect with it, like La Roche.

She explains, "The APO was so influential in my development as a musician and as a person. It really captured that coming-of-age of New Zealand and finding one's own identity. APO reflected that, which I was going through as an adult, so beautifully."

i Celebrate 40

7:30pm, Wed 9 September

Auckland Town Hall

apo.co.nz/celebrate40

There have been countless people who have been part of APO's journey since the orchestra's inception in 1980 – from musicians, to administrative staff members, to patrons and supporters.

Phil News caught up with some of the people who have played a role in the growth and development of the orchestra throughout the years, people whose lives were impacted by APO, and people who are still involved with the orchestra today.

Philippa Harris

APO Executive Secretary,
1985–1993



"I was lucky enough to be part of the orchestra at that time because it was evolving just as Auckland was going through a huge growth spurt and the city itself changing its character. The orchestra grew from its uncertain re-incarnation after the demise of the Auckland Symphonia into a sophisticated professional organisation which I believe set the foundations for the current successful organisation that it is."

"When I started, I had one typewriter. When I finished everyone had their own computer. So, my job had evolved from doing everyone's typing to one which involved more of the artistic admin and being secretary to the CEO plus secretary to the various committees. It was an absolutely fascinating time.

"As Auckland grew so did the need for the orchestra to connect more with the community. Funding needed to be sought from a wider variety of sectors of the community – hence the appointment of a Development Manager to help source sponsorships and trust funding. Also, the projects started to vary – education and schools concerts, light music concerts etc.

"What made the changes in the APO so interesting for me was that when I arrived as General Manager of the Dunedin Symphony Orchestra, I found the orchestra in Dunedin was at a similar stage of growth to where the APO was when I joined them, and so I've been to introduce some of the things I'd been so fortunate to learn and experience during my time with the APO."

Chris Blake
APO General
Manager,
1985–1990



"When I first joined the orchestra in 1985 players were still the governing body, with a big business advisory group supporting them."

"The orchestra was struggling financially, and audiences were really small. We were keen to get things rolling, so everyone committed a lot of time and energy. One of the first things I noticed when I joined was that the orchestra had to connect more strongly to Auckland, so we launched our first big marketing campaign using the Harbour Bridge. We produced our first full colour brochure.

"In the following years we continued our efforts and by 1990 we were fully subscribed and the orchestra experienced a market boom.

"It was a coming together of people in contemporary classical music. We collaborated with many New Zealand composers and did a lot of commissions during that time. For the 10th anniversary in 1990, APO commissioned 10 orchestra fanfares, all by Auckland composers.

"There was a great deal of community support. The musicians were determined to have an orchestra and the Auckland community responded to that. There was so much energetic activity around the orchestra and all of the hard work translated into what the orchestra is today – Auckland's orchestra, enjoyed by the citizens of Auckland.

"Looking back, it was an exciting time for me. I worked as a composer as well and there was a real community of performers and composers working around the orchestra, which was very open-minded."



Gretchen La Roche
Chief Executive,
Christchurch
Symphony Orchestra

"My connection with APO began when I was a high school student growing up in Gisborne. I was a young clarinet player and the local teacher had left, so it was suggested that my parents contact Peter Scholes, then Principal Clarinet of APO, to take me on as a student."

"I tried to coincide my trips with APO concerts so I could stay on and attend, so my first experience of the APO was in the '80s as a young, developing musician watching

her inspirational teacher play in this orchestra. What was remarkable to me, and to everyone, was that Auckland was shaping its own character and embracing the dynamic of a city of the Pacific. The orchestra was fresh and exciting, and its character was distinct from any other orchestra in the country at that time. The orchestra was consciously reflecting Auckland and its confidence and the character of New Zealand. There was something special going on.

"It was such a gift to be exposed to that early on. It ignited my love of orchestra and fuelled my interest from my early stages as a musician to later in a professional capacity leading an orchestra. The APO was so influential in my development as a musician and as a person. It really captured that coming-of-age of New Zealand and finding one's own identity. APO reflected that, which I was going through as an adult, so beautifully."

Tony Waring

APO Marketing Manager, 1994–1998

"I joined the APO in 1994 as Marketing Manager, with very little knowledge of orchestral music. 'However', I said to GM Paul McLaren at the interview, 'I think I am representative of your potential audience, which may be the best perspective for your marketing manager to come from.'"

"My favourite project was introducing Live Cinema to Auckland, with the orchestra putting on amazing recreations of the original movie experience with *Ben-Hur*, *The Thief of Baghdad*, *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, and Charlie Chaplin's *City Lights* and *The Gold Rush*. Staging these events at The Civic and St James made these events like a trip back in time to the golden era of the movies. Footage from the films made great TV ads, and we further hyped up *Ben-Hur* by enlisting the local Roman legion re-enactment

group to stage a battle outside The Civic against a band of gladiators. Those guys got right into their roles, and one of the gladiators went to hospital with a sword wound!

"We also had fun with the Proms promotion, closing off Queen Street for a race from QEII Square to the Town Hall between teams of six from the Police and Fire Service pulling London taxis, and following behind them was a London double decker bus full of orchestra players, and conductor Sir William Southgate as the bus conductor. We also had a celebrity cricket match in Aotea Square, which was rained out one year, but the marvellous TV presenter John Hawkesby was determined to get us our photo opportunity for the assembled TV and press photographers, and braved the downpour by going out to inspect the wicket."



Dame Rosanne Meo

APO Patron &
Chair Donor

"I was first approached to join the board around 35 years ago. From the first meeting I went to I felt an enormous passion to be involved with the orchestra. It exposed me to the arts sector in a way, particularly orchestral music, I hadn't been involved before."

"The most impressive thing for me has been to see the organisation grow from being a small group of incredibly enthusiastic, dedicated musicians to the professional organisation it is now. The same passion has remained amongst the players of the APO and this sets them apart from many other organisations.

"In the late-90s and then in 2004 the orchestra went through a very difficult stage in terms of funding and ownership. I had retired from the board by then, but I was asked by a group of players to come back and along with Tim Hannah, Richard Ebbett and a group of musicians we set about restructuring APO.

"It required enormous commitment from the players to trust us as to what we thought were the right next steps. That began the pathway of us recruiting current Chief Executive Barbara Glaser, who has brought an international and very professional leadership to the role and introduced us to people we couldn't access before. Her combined leadership with music directors Eckehard Stier and Giordano Bellincampi has been huge in terms of the orchestra and players' development.

"For me, it's not just about the music, it's about the players and getting to know them. I regard them with genuine affection and seeing their growth and development, as well as the organisation's, has been an incredible gift for me. It's been a great honour both as board member, patron and chair donor. When I am sitting in the hall during a concert and watch the orchestra it's wonderful to reflect on that journey and I'm very grateful for that."



Breon Carter

APO Concertmaster,
1981–1997

"In 1980, when the Auckland Symphonia went into liquidation, some players got together and decided to form an incorporated society of their own so they could run the orchestra."

"Players had no funding straight away. We had to get daytime jobs and rehearse in the evenings. Gradually the powers that had funds to offer started to realise that we were onto a good thing and we got funding bit by bit.

"When the arts council came on our side and started giving funding this was a huge positivity for the players. We had gradually developed friendships with important people in the community who supported us and that was really important for us.

"One of the great things that we did was a series of Baroque concerts which we did in Symphonia Hall, which was an old cinema.

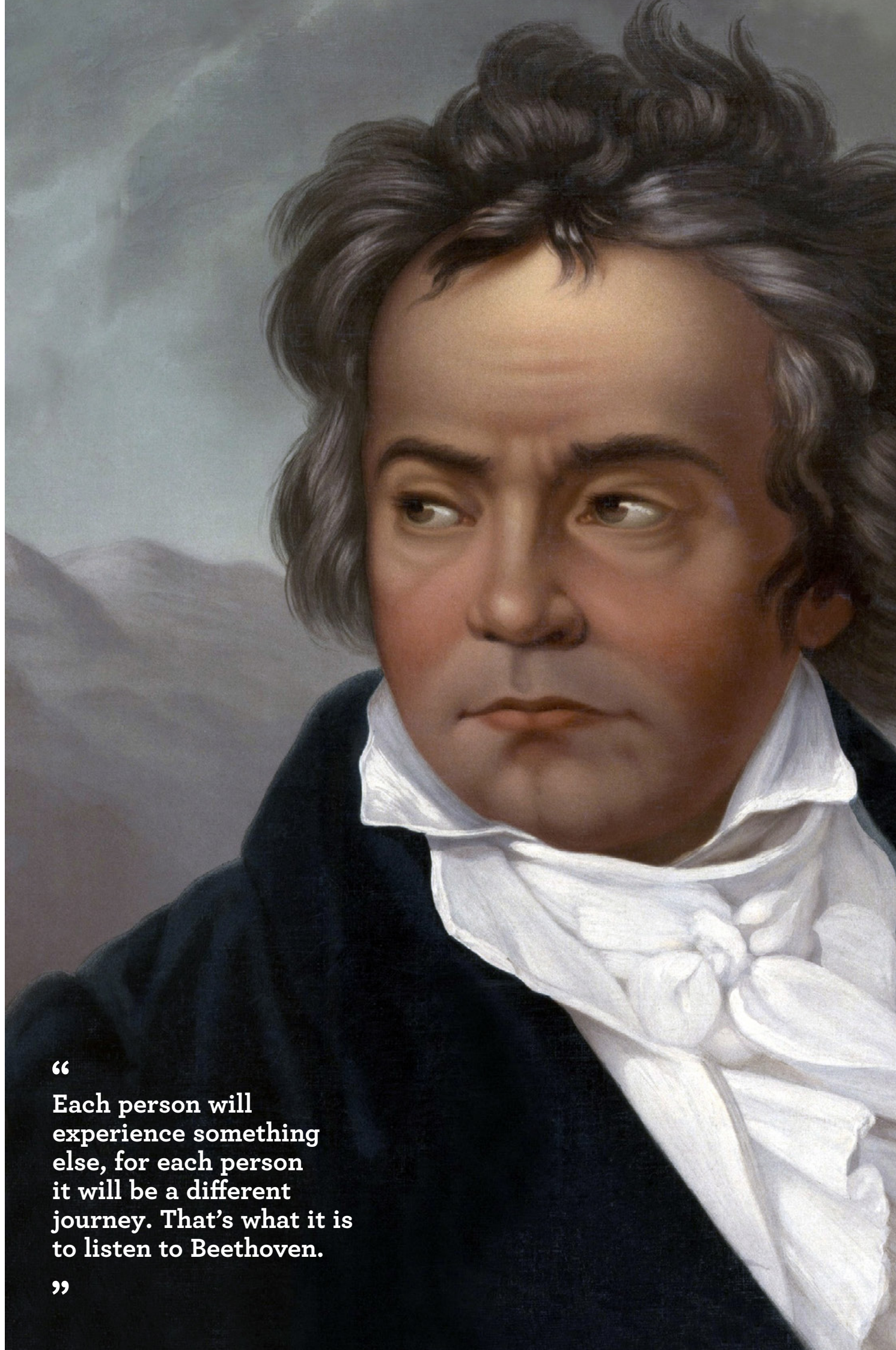
"We did those Baroque concerts with no conductor, I directed from the leader's chair. This is a wonderful learning process for orchestra players, they have to listen to what everyone else is doing and combine with it. You can't rely on watching someone keeping time.

"My relationship with the conductors was important. The concertmaster is a strong connection between the guy on the podium and the orchestra. I remember one time, Eric Bergel, who was Principal Guest Conductor at the time, stopped the orchestra mid-rehearsal and said to the trombone section 'You are sounding like cows!'. You can imagine the response was very negative. One of the principal jobs of the leader was to be a peacemaker, so I asked 'Maestro, how do you spell that word?' and he said 'C-H-A-O-S'. Turns out we had misheard him!"









“
Each person will
experience something
else, for each person
it will be a different
journey. That’s what it is
to listen to Beethoven.

”



Beethoven's *lasting* *legacy*

In celebration of Beethoven's 250th birthday this year, the APO are undertaking one of the most challenging and rewarding endeavours in orchestral music – his symphony cycle. Liesl Crowther talks to two Beethoven experts about what makes the composer's symphonies so extraordinary.

Legend has it that, after seeing a young Beethoven perform, Mozart said something along the lines of: "Mark that young man, he will make a name for himself in the world." Today these words certainly ring true, as orchestras around the world are hosting special concerts and events to commemorate the composer's 250th birthday in 2020.

Though many composers have stood the test of time, Beethoven most often emerges as the most popular of the bunch. In 2019, he was voted Australia's favourite composer in ABC Classic FM's Classic 100 Composer poll. He also came out tops in the UK's Classic FM Hall of Fame 2019, beating out Mozart as listeners' favourite composer with 21 of his masterworks featured on the chart. In New Zealand, he was the most featured composer in RNZ Concert's Settling the Score 2019 poll of Kiwis' favourite classical music pieces.

Nancy November, Associate Professor of musicology at The University of Auckland, explains that the multifaceted nature of his compositions is one of the key elements that makes Beethoven's music so enduring.

"What we're seeing now, 250 years on, is that his music is so multifaceted and complex that people connect to it in different ways. It still means different things to audiences who listen in different ways. People with completely different sociological and political backgrounds can still connect to that music," she says.

"Each person will experience something else, for each person it will be a different journey. That's what it is to listen to Beethoven. That's a testament to its power to speak to people."

During his lifetime, Beethoven composed nine symphonies, 32 piano sonatas, one opera, five piano concertos, 16 string quartets and numerous other chamber works. Of all of his works, his symphonies have arguably captivated audiences the most.

"His symphonies seem to survive translation. For music to be transposed from the concert hall down to solid piano and for people to still like playing it, says something about the richness of the composition," says November.

From the very first notes of his First Symphony Beethoven broke the mould, starting the piece in the wrong key and

with a dissonant chord – something unheard of at the time.

“Each work is highly individual and presents both technical and interpretive challenges. This music is rightly said to be better than it can be played, richer than can be conveyed in any single performance,” explains William Kinderman, a professor of music at the UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music and author of the upcoming book *Beethoven: A Political Artist in Revolutionary Times*.

“Beethoven sought to counter difficult social and political conditions through artworks that project positive energies and seem to envision ways of surmounting difficulties. He lived through some of the most turbulent times in European history: the French Revolution, the Reign of Terror, Napoleon’s rise and fall, the repressive politics of the Metternich regime in Austria after 1815.

“His music reflects the principles of the French Revolution (liberty – fraternity – equality) but not the disappointing political events that actually ensued. His artworks often project ‘effigies of the idea,’ or positive symbols that can help inspire us to maintain courage and confidence in potential progress,” he says.

This is evident in the heroic tone of his Third Symphony, known as the ‘Eroica’ Symphony, which was originally dedicated to Napoleon Bonaparte until, to Beethoven’s outrage, he declared himself Emperor of France. The same can be said for his Fifth Symphony, which evokes a

sense of fate knocking at the door within its first eight notes.

“A cycle of the Beethoven symphonies is always an adventure, a major undertaking for the performers but also the audience. Each of them raises fascinating issues,” says Kinderman.

“The Sixth or ‘Pastoral’ Symphony, for instance, is bound up with a conception of nature that resonates with current concerns about our environment. The intrinsic value of nature emphasised by Beethoven, and following the penultimate storm movement, the shepherd’s closing hymn offers thanksgiving to the godhead, making a gesture toward protection of our increasingly endangered planet. Beethoven was familiar with issues of climate change, since he was aware of the cooling after the Tambora volcanic eruption of 1815, causing widespread famine in the year that followed.”

November explains that it is obvious, from Beethoven’s conversation books from 1818 onwards, that the great composer became increasingly interested in how his music was perceived as his hearing loss progressed. “Instead of retreating into himself as his hearing loss intensified, he became more outwardly focused,” she says. “He became aware of how our other senses have a bearing on our perception of music, creating a multimedia phenomenon, a richer audio landscape.”

His final, astounding Ninth Symphony, which he finished when he was

completely deaf, is a testament to this. His use of voices was revolutionary (until then, symphonies had been purely orchestral) and the work set a new benchmark for future composers. Its exploration of the path from darkness to light ushered in a new musical era and cemented Beethoven’s place in history and it remains one of the most beloved pieces of music around the world.

i The Classicist

7:30pm, Sat 21 March

Auckland Town Hall

The Romantic

7:30pm, Tue 24 March

Auckland Town Hall

The Revolutionary

7:30pm, Thu 26 March

Auckland Town Hall

The Radical

5pm, Sun 29 March

Auckland Town Hall

apo.co.nz/beethoven250

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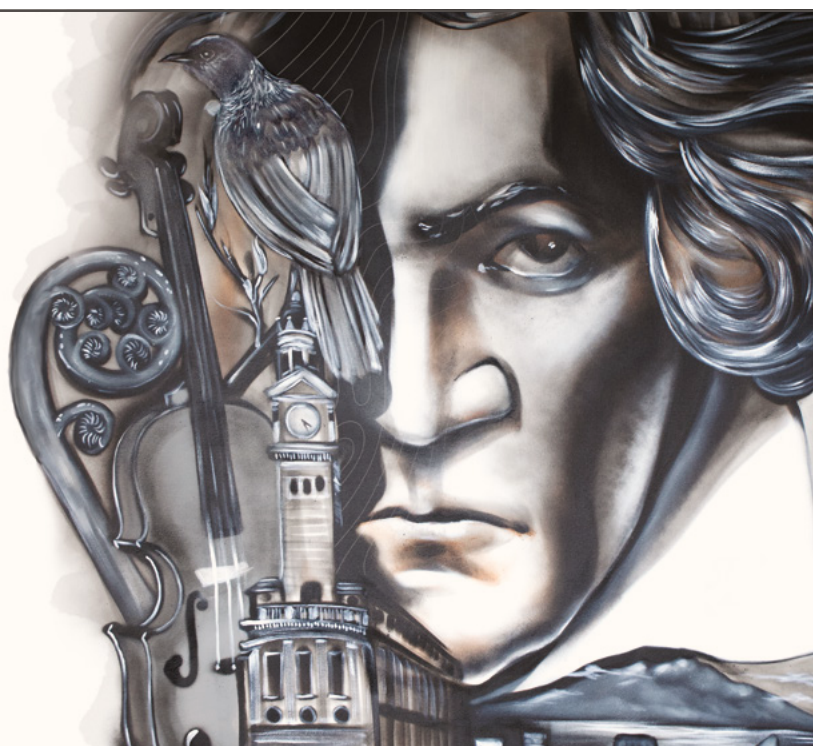
Supported by the APO Stellar Fund and
the Rua & Clarrie Stevens Charitable Trust

DID YOU KNOW?

The unique, NZ-inspired artwork for APO’s *Beethoven 250* festival was specially created by Kiwi artist Enuake Sirikige for the orchestra.

Check out the Watch & Listen page on our website (apo.co.nz) to see a time-lapse video of Enuake creating the bespoke artwork.

BEETHOVEN
250 CELEBRATING
250 YEARS
OF BEETHOVEN



Demystifying music

Conductor and presenter Graham Abbott talks to Liesl Crowther about his lifelong passion for telling the stories behind the music.

IMAGE: ADRIAN MALLOCH

To say that conductor Graham Abbott is passionate about music education is an understatement.

The APO Metlifecare Unwrap the Music presenter remembers first encountering classical music watching Bugs Bunny cartoons as a young boy. Though he comes from a non-musical family, he recalls always having a desire to be involved in music, asking his mother to teach him to use their record player as a young boy, attending his first orchestral concert at age 14, learning the recorder, piano and violin at school and viola at university.

However, his main interest has always been music education. "I've always had great joy revealing what goes on within a piece and telling the story behind it. I remember as a student being blown away by a poem being explained, discovering its layered meaning. I instantly applied it to music. When I see music, I see something the listener can't always hear."

After five years as a high school music teacher – conducting community orchestras and choirs on the side – he won the ABC William van Otterloo Conducting Scholarship, enabling him to study for a year with British-Australian conductor Myer Fredman at the Sydney Conservatorium Opera School. This was the foot-in-the-door opportunity he had been waiting for.

Following his apprenticeship at the opera school, he stepped into the role of conductor-in-residence at The University

of Adelaide before joining the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra as Associate Conductor.

"The mass media rarely gives time to classical music, so people can be forgiven for thinking 'does that still happen?'. I want to make sure that people who love this sort of music realise that others love it too, and it's okay to love it. Music is valuable and exciting and part

“**Just like people talk about Miley Cyrus or Taylor Swift, it's okay to talk about Haydn over dinner.**”

of life, like a football match or a barbecue. Just like people talk about Miley Cyrus or Taylor Swift, it's okay to talk about Haydn over dinner."

Nowadays, alongside his role as Metlifecare Unwrap the Music presenter, Graham works as a freelance conductor and continues to present on Australia's ABC Classic FM radio station, which he has

been doing since 2003.

For Graham, it's all about the "a-ha moment", when people learn something new about a piece of music or learn to listen to it in a different way. "There is a fulfilment in unpacking something. It's like discovering hidden things in a painting. It's an enriching experience, it makes us better somehow."

His love for telling the stories behind music is evident at APO Metlifecare Unwrap the Music concerts, where Graham exuberantly draws audiences in with interesting facts for concertgoers of all ages and knowledge levels.

This year, he'll be unpacking the

overture from Rossini's opera *William Tell*, the *Four Sea Interludes* from Britten's *Peter Grimes* (of which APO will perform the full opera on Friday 9 October) and Saint-Saëns' Organ Symphony.

"It's music that will blow audiences out of their seats. Each programme has thunderous and big music, but also music that's incredibly subtle, like the breathtakingly beautiful *Dawn and Moonlight* from the *Four Sea Interludes*, and the quintet for cellos of Rossini's *William Tell* Overture. It's a something-for-everyone sort of year, with the orchestra there in all its glory."

i Metlifecare Unwrap the Music
Rossini's William Tell

6:30pm, Tue 19 May
Auckland Town Hall

Britten's Four Sea Interludes

6:30pm, Tue 30 June
Auckland Town Hall

Saint-Saëns' Organ Symphony

6:30pm, Wed 2 September
Auckland Town Hall
apo.co.nz/unwrap

Metlifecare



STEFAN DOHR

A work of his own

Known for his exceptional talent as a horn player, Stefan Dohr is also an advocate for new music for the instrument. Tabatha McFadyen chats to him about his latest project in collaboration with composer Hans Abrahamsen and a group of orchestras from around the globe – including APO.

In 2013, the Berlin Philharmonic premiered a new work by Danish composer Hans Abrahamsen. This piece, entitled *Let me tell you*, has reached a global level of acclaim that is increasingly rare for new works, but what really sets it apart is the intensity of the audience reaction.

Instead of the piously appreciative applause often elicited by audiences after a challenging piece of contemporary music, it's met with rapturous standing ovations, one of the factors that's led to it being performed an almost unheard of 37 times (so far). It was awarded the prestigious 2016 Grawemeyer Award – kind of like the Nobel Prize for classical composition – and a recent collaboration of seven of *The Guardian's* critics named it as 'The Best Classical Music Work of the 21st Century'.

Stefan Dohr played the premiere as a member of the legendary Berlin Philharmonic, where he has held the position of Principal Horn since 1993. He knew immediately that it was something special. "I thought it was one of the most compelling new works I'd heard for a long time," he explains. "When I heard from a colleague that Hans also played the horn, I had to ask him if he would be interested in writing a concerto."

Abrahamsen enthusiastically agreed. The process to get the necessary number of orchestras together to finance the commission began immediately. First came the Berlin Philharmonic itself.

Japan's NHK Orchestra, Amsterdam's NTR Zaterdag Matinee, the Seattle Symphony Orchestra followed, after which time Dohr approached the APO to see if they'd be interested in joining the party.

"We approached the APO for a couple of reasons," he explains. "Firstly because I felt a great connection to the orchestra last time I played there (in 2017), and also because I was so impressed by their commitment to interesting, adventurous programming, especially considering, that as far as I'm aware, they have a far less luxurious funding situation than we have here in Germany." When he mentioned to Abrahamsen that he wanted to approach the APO, the composer was delighted for another reason: unbeknownst to Dohr, he and APO Music Director Giordano Bellincampi (who will conduct the work in the first New Zealand Herald Premier Series Concert for 2020) have been long-time colleagues and friends.

This new concerto is part of Dohr's on-going project of championing new works for the horn. "I want to expand the repertoire for the instrument, partly because I don't want to be trapped only playing Strauss and Mozart, much as I love them, when I have the opportunity to play as a soloist. Most importantly though, I believe that if we don't keep creating chances for new music to be heard, new voices can't develop and that's when music starts to die."

Of course, to get the powers that be behind a new work, the performer also needs a significant enough profile to get orchestras and audiences excited. Dohr fits the bill: his is the kind of playing that has come to redefine the limits of possibility for a hornist. He seemingly has a capacity to play both louder and softer than anyone else, a preternatural gift for shaping a phrase and one must assume a third lung hidden somewhere. As a critic once said, "Dohr is not only one of the great horn players, he is one of the great instrumentalists". This leads to him having what he describes as his ideal career: an ever-changing mix of orchestral playing, solo concerts, teaching and chamber music.

The variety of his interests will be on display during his visit to New Zealand. In addition to his performance with the full APO, he will lead a masterclass with students at the Auckland School of Music and play a chamber music concert with APO members as part of the In Your Neighbourhood series. The programme, compiled by Dohr, is a mix of Slavic repertoire by Dvořák and Martinů, enjoying both its lyrical melodic possibilities and driving rhythmic fervour.

With all of that, does he find time to do anything other than playing the horn? "At the moment things are very busy, but I really love what I do so I feel very lucky that my calendar is as full as it is. When I do get time though, I love sailing, and of course great food and wine – three things that Auckland seems to do very well!"

“

...I believe that if we don't keep creating chances for new music to be heard, new voices can't develop and that's when music starts to die.

”

i The New Zealand Herald
Premier Series

Bach & Brahms

8pm, Thur 20 February

Auckland Town Hall

Conductor Giordano Bellincampi

Horn Stefan Dohr

J.S. Bach Orchestral Suite No.3

Hans Abrahamsen Horn Concerto
(Australasian premiere)

Brahms Symphony No.2

apo.co.nz/bachbrahms

 The New Zealand Herald

i In Your Neighbourhood

Island Time

3:30pm, Sun 23 February

Waiheke Island

Featuring Stefan Dohr,
Principal Horn Berlin Philharmonic

Dvořák Serenade for Winds

Martinů Nonet No.2

apo.co.nz/islandtime

 Davis
Funerals



IMAGES: SIMON PAULY

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Tragic symphony

In her memoirs, Mahler's wife Alma described the composer's Sixth Symphony as "his most personal work".

Alastair McKean ponders this titanic piece of music.

Mahler's Sixth Symphony is an overpowering emotional experience, but when it's programmed, orchestras must start by asking the conductor two fairly prosaic questions.

Firstly: what's the order of the movements? Mahler's autograph score is first movement, Scherzo, Andante, Finale. At the première, though (literally at the première: he made the decision after the dress rehearsal), he switched the middle movements, so Andante then Scherzo. The score was already in print, so Mahler asked the publisher to insert an errata slip, and he always played Andante/Scherzo thereafter.

Then in 1919, the conductor Willem Mengelberg sought clarification on the order from Mahler's widow Alma. It's not clear why he asked: he had known Mahler, and indeed had conducted the symphony a few years earlier as Andante/Scherzo. Alma sent a telegram: 'first Scherzo then Andante', and this lit the touch-paper.

Scherzo/Andante can be supported by musical logic. For instance, David Matthews, the composer and Mahler scholar, argues the impact of the Finale is lessened if we have just heard the

Scherzo, as they're both in the same key. I've oversimplified his argument, but the point is that the argument can be made. The difficulty is that to posit Scherzo/Andante as Mahler's final decision must rely on speculation about what Mahler might have done, rather than the available biographical and documentary evidence of what he did.

And as if that's not enough, we also need to ask the conductor: how many hammer blows? In the Finale, Mahler writes for an instrument called 'hammer'. This raises firstly the question of precisely what this means, the hammer not being an instrument taught at Juilliard. Mahler wanted a powerful, non-metallic thud, and most orchestras obtain a Thor-dimensioned monstrosity with which the percussionists assail a large box. In the autograph they do so five times, but Mahler cut two hammer-blows before the première. And while revising the symphony before its second performance, he cut the last of the remaining three. Some conductors prefer to reinstate the third blow, which raises the question of why Mahler cut it in the first place. Here we go back to Alma.

They had been married two years, with two small daughters, when Mahler led his wife up the path to his composing hut near their lakeside summer villa, and played her his just-completed symphony. They both wept. In her memoirs, Alma famously said that in the Finale, Mahler had described the downfall of his hero, 'on whom fall three blows of fate, the last of which fells him as a tree is felled'. She adds darkly: 'Those were his words.' And in 1907 three terrible things happened: Mahler resigned under pressure as head of the Vienna Court Opera, their eldest daughter suddenly died, and he was diagnosed with the heart condition that ultimately killed him. The romantic story is that Mahler excised the third hammer blow out of superstition, to ward off the third 'blow of fate'. But the chronology doesn't match; he made the cut in 1906. It was a musical decision.

Not that the symphony doesn't earn its 'Tragic' nickname. It starts with a

march, not unusual for Mahler, but this one is different: it's urgent, hard, not a jovial military band but the tramp of an army on the move. A couple of minutes in, though, the music peters out on a gurgle in the contrabassoon. Out of nowhere, the timpani play a stentorian rhythm: bam! bam! ba-bam bam bam! Over this, the trumpets play a bright, shining A major chord – which immediately darkens to A minor. This doom-laden motif reappears throughout the piece. Shorn of the hopeful major chord, it closes the piece, in desolation.

It's the bleakest conclusion to any of Mahler's works, but it's wrong to dismiss the symphony as an exercise in unrelenting gloom. A blissful passage with offstage cowbells paints the alpine landscapes Mahler so loved; the Andante (wherever it ends up) is beautiful; and shortly after our doom-laden motif, there comes a great melody, marked 'Schwungvoll', which we might translate as 'full of life'. Alma writes: 'he came down from the wood to tell me he had tried to express me in a theme'. Mahler enthusiasts can get quite heated arguing about Andante/Scherzo or the third hammer blow. But all agree that this remarkable woman inspired this 'great soaring theme'. If the symphony is tragic, its outcome nevertheless isn't pre-ordained. Hope remains until the last. It's an overpowering emotional experience because, like that major-to-minor shift, it shines so brightly before falling into darkness.

GUSTAV MAHLER



i The New Zealand Herald Premier Series

Mahler 6

8pm, Thur 25 June

Auckland Town Hall

Conductor Antony Hermus

Mahler Symphony No.6

apo.co.nz/mahler6

The New Zealand Herald



THE KEY TO A GOOD EVENING

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Composer connections

English composer Ralph Vaughan Williams' *The Lark Ascending* was crowned listeners' favourite piece of music in Classic FM's Hall of Fame 2019. William Green explores his influence on Kiwi composers.

The name Ralph Vaughan Williams conjures up things quintessentially English – folk song, modal music, and a sense of nostalgia and restraint.

While we'll be hearing from the 'city' composer when the orchestra plays *A London Symphony* in March, images of rolling English countryside are seldom far from our minds when we listen to his music. With our more rugged terrain and impressive volcanic cones, we're half a world away from such Englishness down here in the South Pacific, but has the personality and character of Vaughan Williams left any imprints on our own composers in Aotearoa?

While earlier New Zealand composers such as Ernest Jenner, Hugo Anson and Harry Luscombe could hardly escape his wide-ranging influence, our most direct link to Vaughan Williams is through Douglas Lilburn, who studied composition with him at the Royal College of Music in the late 1930s. At this stage Vaughan Williams was in his mid to late 60s, teaching there one day a week, and was said to have muttered, "another wretched student wants to come to me."¹ Asked one day, "isn't it time you composed something?"², Lilburn responded with the *Drysdale Overture* (named after the rural New Zealand homestead where he grew up). It was given a reading rehearsal by the College's First Orchestra (an honour reserved for the select few) and Lilburn went on to win the Foli Scholarship, the

Hubert Parry Prize and the Cobbett Prize.

While Vaughan Williams concentrated more on compositional integrity and thought processes rather than technical aspects, Lilburn picked up some of his mannerisms such as the modal flattened 7ths. Ever the New Zealander, Lilburn responded to his own landscape (my 2018 visit to Drysdale in the remote Turakina Valley revealed sharp, craggy cliffs rather than rolling English meadows) but his mentor continued to be an influence, particularly in the period culminating in the Second Symphony.

Lilburn in turn passed on his own wisdom, initially at the Cambridge Summer Music Schools in the late 1940s, and it would be surprising if something of Vaughan Williams didn't permeate down to these 'second generation' composers (most strongly to Dorothea Franchi and Ron Dellow, perhaps). John Ritchie also fell under his spell to some extent and, a generation further removed, Ross Harris has cited Vaughan Williams as an early influence (see if you can detect any when Ross' Symphony No.7 is premiered by the APO on 23 April).

Perhaps the strongest link we have is through English-born, New Zealand composer Margaret Wegener. A close friend of Vaughan Williams, who helped to get her music published, her compositions are heavily influenced by him, particularly her songs and choral music. Many APO players were involved

in recording a CD of her orchestral music some years ago. She is currently being cared for by family north of Kerikeri, and at the time of writing is just five months shy of her 100th birthday – a living link with the great man.

As a young country, the search for an identity has weighed heavily on our creative artists, and in this regard, we come back to Lilburn. He admired Vaughan Williams' insistence on self-discovery and even attributed the older composer's slow start to his inward search, rather than a hasty adaptation to any prevailing style. The result, Lilburn once wrote, was music which "conveys the man's essential humanity, his tenderness as well as his strength, and the searching simplicity of his wisdom."³

William Green is an Auckland-based pianist, composer and arranger. He will be giving the pre-concert talk for *The New Zealand Herald Premier Series: Cityscapes*.

**The New Zealand Herald
Premier Series**

Cityscapes

8pm, Thur 5 March

Auckland Town Hall

Conductor Robert Spano

Flute Melanie Lançon

Harp Ingrid Bauer

Jennifer Higdon *City Scape: river sings
a song to trees*

Mozart Concerto for Flute and Harp
Vaughan Williams *A London Symphony*

apo.co.nz/cityscapes

 The New Zealand Herald

1. Philip Norman, 'Douglas Lilburn: His Life and Music' p.75

2. Ibid p.74

3. Douglas Lilburn ed. Robert Hoskins, 'Memories of Early Years and other Writings' p. 98

Philip Norman, 'Douglas Lilburn: His Life and Music' (Canterbury University Press, 2006)

Douglas Lilburn ed. Robert Hoskins, 'Memories of Early Years and other Writings' (Steele Roberts, 2014)

John Mansfield Thomson, 'Biographical Dictionary of New Zealand Composers' (Victoria University Press, 1990)

DEVELOPMENT NEWS

Playing our parts

You can help provide the music scores for the APO's 2020 season by donating to the Notes Fund.

It seems a simple observation to make, but for the hundreds of pieces of music that the APO performs each year, every player needs a score on their stand to guide them. The APO spends over \$35,000 per annum on scores.

The Notes Fund enables APO supporters to share the joy of music with others either by donating towards a specific score or making a general donation.

It is important for the orchestra to purchase scores outright rather than hiring them whenever possible. As APO Librarian Robert Johnson explains, "it means we can preserve all our own string bowings and other performance markings



IMAGE: ADRIAN MALLOCH

that are particular to our orchestra, so we don't have to waste more time than necessary preparing the music for subsequent performances"

"This year is extra special for APO as we celebrate our 40th anniversary. It would be a wonderful gift to the orchestra to reach our goal for 2020. We've had a great response so far, but we still need your help," says APO Director of Development Susan Wall.

If you would like to see a full list of

musical scores and parts that you can provide for the orchestra's 2020 concerts, please visit apo.co.nz/support-donate/notes-fund/

i To learn more, get in touch with Charlotte Crocker, APO Annual Giving Programmes Executive:

charlottec@apo.co.nz

09 638 6266 ext. 234

Houstoun's Last Hurrah

6.30pm, Thursday 7 May
Private residence, St Heliers

Join us for a special APO fundraiser with much-loved New Zealand pianist Michael Houstoun ahead of his *The New Zealand Herald Premier Series: Houstoun Plays Rachmaninov* concert with APO in July.

Houstoun is retiring from the stage after enjoying an illustrious career spanning 50 years, so this is one of the last opportunities to revel in his talents and meet him before he retires.

Hosted by APO, Haydn Staples and Lynley Stewart, the evening will include a conversation between Houstoun and APO Chief Executive Barbara Glaser, as well as an intimate performance by the acclaimed pianist.

Tickets: \$300 per person – limited to 50 guests.

i To find out more or to reserve your tickets, please contact Development Manager Adele Diviney

adeled@apo.co.nz

09 638 6266 ext 247

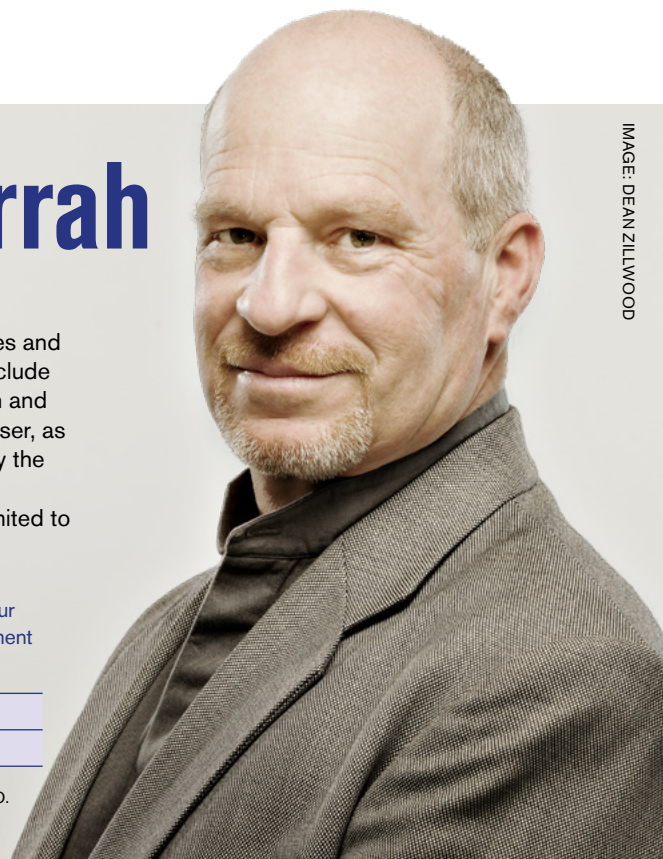


IMAGE: DEAN ZILLWOOD

* Funds raised will support NZ artists performing with the APO.

CONNECTING NEWS

Orchestra symbols

APO Connecting have partnered with Te Kura Māori o Ngā Tapuwae to create unique kōwhaiwhai (Māori designs) that will be displayed at education and family concerts across future Connecting seasons.

Scarves and ties are so 1990s! For years musicians performing at APO Connecting concerts have shown off their section of the orchestra by adorning themselves with coloured scarves or ties: red for Strings, yellow for Brass, green for Percussion and blue for Woodwind. But this year we decided to make a change and get rid of the old-fashioned staples and replace them with something innovative which speaks to the bi-cultural context that the APO operates in within Aotearoa. Step up our first partner school: Te Kura Māori o Ngā Tapuwae.

Our premise was that we could use symbology in kōwhaiwhai to represent the different sections of the orchestra and create beautiful artworks enriched with meaning to better showcase the sections of the orchestra. This is no mean feat as there is huge range and diversity within sections. How can the lengthy tubing on a French horn be compared to the mighty bell of the tuba in our brass section? And what ties together the

contrabassoon with the piccolo in the winds? The students at Ngā Tapuwae rose to the occasion and have created kōwhaiwhai for every section that is imbued with meaning and that captures the essence of the orchestral sections with delicate understanding and real panache.

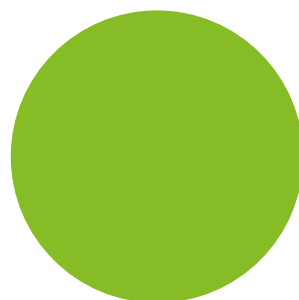
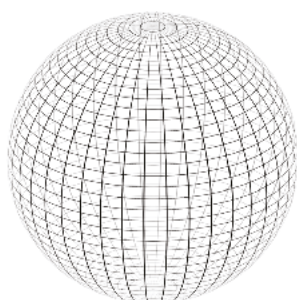
Some of the thought that has gone into the art is really clever. For example, the woodwind symbol retains its blue colouring. In Te Ao Māori, the colour blue represents the Māori god Tawhirimatea, the god of wind, which is needed to blow into the instrument and make sound. This is also represented on a delicate koru pattern that flows down the side of the oboe like shape. Similarly, the often-overlooked triangle in the percussion section plays a starring role with one larger triangle housing several smaller ones in the percussion design. For Māori this symbol is known as niho taniwha and originates from the Waikato. "Waikato taniwha-rau. He piko, he taniwha. He piko, he taniwha." means many Rangatira (chiefs) that come together and unite as one; just as so often the orchestra unite behind a percussive rhythm or pulse. This level of detail runs throughout all the kōwhaiwhai and is a tribute to the sharp minds of our young designers.

It was a highlight of 2019 to see the sections reimagined in this way by the students at Ngā Tapuwae, who all deserve huge credit for doing a great job. A big thanks go to Olivia Chapman at Ngā Tapuwae for driving the project and to John Boscawen for his generous support to make the project viable. The kōwhaiwhai will be displayed hanging from the music stands of APO 4 Kids, Community Classics and all our education concerts throughout 2020 and beyond. Ties and scarves – consider yourselves redundant!



^ STUDENTS FROM TE KURA MĀORI
O NGĀ TAPUWAE

Full meanings and descriptions will be made available on the APO website in due course.



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Dame Gillian Whitehead

Acclaimed New Zealand composer Dame Gillian Whitehead has composed a new work specially for APO's Beethoven 250 festival, inspired by the great composer. Here, she shares three pieces of music that have inspired her.

i Ludwig Reflected #1

6pm, Mon 23 March

Concert Chamber,
Auckland Town Hall

Gillian Whitehead New work in
response to Beethoven's late
string quartets

Beethoven String Quartet in D
Major Op.18 No.3 (mvts I & II)

apo.co.nz/beethoven250

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i The New Zealand Herald Premier Series Perspectives

8pm, Thu 18 June

Auckland Town Hall

Conductor Alpesh Chauhan
Violin Akiko Suwanai

Gillian Whitehead *Resurgences*
Mendelssohn Violin Concerto
Sibelius Symphony No.2

apo.co.nz/perspectives

The New Zealand Herald



GRIEG

Holberg Suite, Op.40

My father was away during the Second World War, and my mother and I lived in Elizabeth St off Dominion Rd, very close to the old APO premises. In the evenings, Mum would put me to bed; after looking after me all day, finally she had time to play the piano. I still hear the music she played then in a different way, as something very special, unlike anything else I came to know and love, speaking to me before I could understand words. There are a number of pieces, etched into my brain as she practised (Bach, Beethoven, Schubert, Albeniz), but one piece I particularly loved and still love was Grieg's *Holberg Suite*, in the piano version. It's still larger than life, a perfection, singing in my mind. I'm sure that it was hearing these pieces, night after night as I fell asleep, that led me to compose.

MOZART

Don Giovanni, Act I: Scene I

The first scene of Mozart's *Don Giovanni* is a wonderfully dramatic structure. It begins conventionally enough. A quarrel between the fleeing Don and Donna Anna, the arrival of the Commendatore, the sword fight. But the last two chords of that sword fight push us into the terrifying world of the opera – horror and compassion as the Commendatore dies, Donna Anna's grief at discovering his body, grief which transforms into desire for revenge. By the end of the scene we learn, purely through the music, the complexities of Donna Anna, and Don Ottavio's four-square character, his lack of imagination. Leporello, from the servant class and an outsider, expresses his fear of the situation as well as playing the buffoon to Don Giovanni, (also adding useful vocal counterpoint throughout), and the Don has no music of his own but shape-shifts to mimic the music of other characters. Sheer genius.

MAHLER

Symphony No.3

Mahler stands in a category of his own, emerging from the time of the romantic symphony, foreshadowing the expressionistic age to come. I learnt so much from studying this piece. I learnt about the control of large-scale structure, about focusing now on the big picture, now concentrating on detail in a chamber-sized instrumentation. There's the subtlety of the incorporation of the sound world he lived in – natural sounds alongside military calls, post horns and bells. (Mozart does the same). And above all the organic growth from the first notes, which enables the work to sustain its great length and remain coherent, and explore the worlds of extreme joy and despair, of irony and exaggeration, as no other composer can.

An aerial photograph of a densely populated suburban neighborhood, likely in New Zealand, taken during the 'golden hour' of sunset. The houses are mostly two-story, with light-colored roofs and walls, interspersed with green trees. The sky is a gradient of blue and orange, with the sun low on the horizon, creating a warm, hazy atmosphere. The text 'ALTOGETHER AT THE TOP OF THEIR GAME' is overlaid in large, white, sans-serif capital letters.

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ME
AND
MY

Horn

with
Nicola
Baker



The horn has come a long way since its humble beginnings. A descendant of the ancient hunting horn, it was originally introduced into the orchestra to add an element of the outdoors and chivalry associated with the instrument. As the horn evolved, it became a more permanent part of the orchestra, gaining popularity during the late-Classical and early-Romantic periods.

"The horn as an instrument was evolving and becoming more chromatic in ability. Certainly by the Romantic period, the time of Brahms and Schumann, horns were very much part of the orchestral sound," says Principal Horn Nicola Baker.

Nicola started out playing the piano until high school, when her music teacher needed someone to play the mellophone in the school orchestra.

"Within a month or two I was playing in the school orchestra, within a year or two I was playing in the Wellington Youth Orchestra," explains Nicola. "I figured out pretty quickly that I enjoyed the collaborative aspect of a big number of people making music together. For a number of years I played both the horn and piano, but when it came down to choosing, my mind was very much made up."

After high school, Nicola studied a Bachelor of Music in Performance at Victoria University of Wellington while freelancing for orchestras in the city. Following her studies, she travelled to the United States to continue her

learning at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. She lived in the US for five years until the role of Principal Horn at APO came up in 1992, and she has been with the orchestra since.

"The horn has a reputation of being a difficult instrument. I don't think that it helps me, or any horn player for that matter, to think of it that way. You just have to think of it as a medium with which you play the music," says Nicola, who plays an Engelbert Schmid horn.

At its most basic, the horn is a piece of brass tubing through which air is blown into a mouthpiece and amplified out of the end, called the bell. It has four valves. Three enable the player to lengthen the tubing to create different pitches. A fourth thumb valve 'shortens' the instrument to change its pitch entirely. "I essentially have two different horns in the same instrument that I switch between using the thumb valve, something that the other brass instruments don't have."

She describes the horn section as having a unique role in the orchestra, in that it crosses over the territory between the brass and woodwind instruments. "Our sound is less direct than the

trumpets and the trombones who face forwards and outwards; we face sideways and back, which means that by the time our sound reaches the hall, it's less direct. And when it comes to the warm, lyrical solo melodic lines, we get to do that a lot more than the other brass instruments do."

This isn't the only multi-tasking that horn players do. Due to the similarities

with the horn, they often also play the Wagner tuba (named after the composer) when needed, something Nicola and the other APO horns will have the opportunity to do at this year's The Trusts Community Foundation Opera in Concert – Britten's *Peter Grimes*.

"Wagner really liked the sound of

the tuba but its tone is too heavy to play the melody, so he conceived of a hybrid instrument halfway between the horn and tuba. Its resonant timbre can be heard in his musical drama *The Ring of the Nibelung*," Nicola explains. "The name includes the word 'tuba', but the timbre and style of playing is similar to the horn so in modern orchestras the horn players are tasked with playing this instrument."

“
...when it came
down to choosing
[between the
horn and piano],
my mind was very
much made up.
”

Ready, set, *throw*

Ben Gemmell sits down with Principal Percussionist Eric Renick to find out more about his other passion – Ultimate Frisbee.

“I’m like a dog. If you throw something at me that I have to chase, man, I’ll just do it until I have to lie down!” laughs Eric. He’s taking a break from rehearsal and he’s met me for lunch at Q Cafe, just a couple of metres up from the Auckland Town Hall. He’s ordered their vegan pad thai.

We’re chatting about ultimate, known informally as ultimate frisbee. It’s a non-contact team sport played with a flying disc (frisbee). In a typical game, each team will score points by passing the disc

“
Throwing
is the
biggest
hurdle to
get over.
”

among their teammates in the opposing end zone. As with netball, players cannot take steps while holding the disc and they must release it within ten seconds of catching it.

He’s smiling as he thinks about it. I ask him if any specific skills are needed to learn how to play. He shakes his head. “Not if you can run and if you can catch. You’ll learn how to throw. Throwing is the biggest hurdle to get over. The throw that you probably do most often, is called a ‘forehand’ or a ‘flick’, where you’re throwing it this way.”



He raises his hand and makes a finger-gun gesture, where his index and middle finger are curved slightly. I can picture the frisbee nestled underneath his thumb. "Since most people can do this throw, you'll typically take it away and make them throw *this way*." He now shows me a backhand throw.

Eric explains that he has been playing ultimate ever since his college days in Miami as a training orchestra musician. He was less than impressed when his colleagues first invited him to watch a game. "I was like, 'Ultimate? What is this, 'extreme frisbee'? – I was the guy who was making fun of it!" He laughs.

He frowns when I ask him about his first time playing ultimate in this side of the world. "I had a really bad experience. I started going to some pickup games and it was a weird vibe. They were all of a sudden really competitive, using all these plays and terminology and yelling at people."

Foreign Legion, which may sound like an organised group of expat superheroes, is the name of Eric's ultimate team. Like Eric, their members all moved to



New Zealand and they each had a similarly miserable time when joining the ultimate scene here – so they started their own team. They adapted the game to accommodate players across all levels. "We lowered the stall count, to encourage getting rid of the disc earlier and thrown to more people. We make sure that everyone gets a throw."

'The Legion' have become more than just a team, says Eric. "We grew to become really great friends! We still organise events and we all go on vacations together. We have all gone to the Coromandel. Everyone still comes, and it's totally per chance that this Sunday we're all having a Legion barbecue."

His two worlds of music and sport rarely mix, and he likes it that way. "I just enjoy my time there. I hang out with people who have nothing to do with music. It's really important to have friends who aren't in the APO. They ask me silly questions about the orchestra, and they show up!" He notes that most of his Foreign Legion teammates have seen him in concert at least once.

We're finishing lunch and time is ticking before he has to head back to the Green Room. I ask him about the future and where he's going next with the sport. "I'm 40 now, so trying to be as fit as I have ever been would be really cool. But to be honest, I take my music very seriously so frisbee has to be a total release of pressure. I'm just here to have fun."

Metlifecare in partnership with Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra

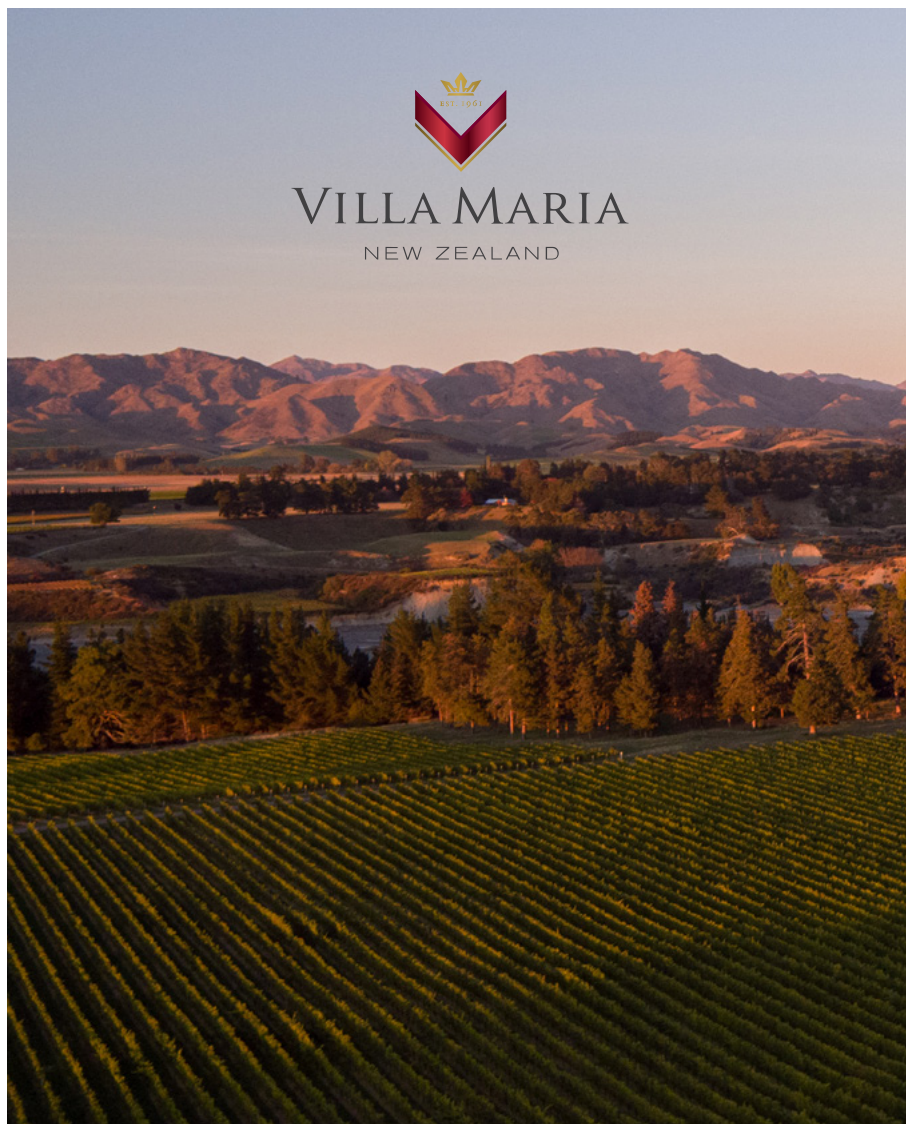
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A shared passion

Good music and good wine are a match made in heaven, a symphony of the soul and the senses. Villa Maria founder Sir George Fistonich shares his top wine picks for summer and the ideal music to accompany them.

Villa Maria has supported APO since shortly after the orchestra's inception in 1981, a relationship that spans almost 40 years. For Villa Maria founder and owner Sir George Fistonich, partnering with APO was a no-brainer.

"Both Villa Maria and APO share a passion for what we do. Through our respective crafts we strive to bring people joy. Our partnership is an ideal marriage," says Fistonich.

Villa Maria was founded in 1961 when Fistonich, just 21-years-old at the time, leased five acres of land from his father in Mangere, Auckland and started off with just an acre of vines. He made his first wine under the name Villa Maria in 1962 with grapes harvested from this block.

Throughout the 1960s Villa Maria was a one-man band, with George's wife, Gail, supporting him in his venture. He made dry red and white wines, sourcing grapes from the greater Auckland regions. In the early 1970s, he started to employ staff and the company expanded rapidly.

Today, Villa Maria employs more than 250 permanent staff, grows 28 different grape varieties, and exports wine to over 60 countries worldwide.

A lifelong lover of classical music, Fistonich believes that music and wine are a perfect pairing. He shares his favourite wines for summer and the ideal music to accompany each selection.

Sir George Fistonich's TOP WINE PICKS



VILLA MARIA CELLAR SELECTION MARLBOROUGH SAUVIGNON BLANC 2019

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VILLA MARIA RESERVE MARLBOROUGH PINOT NOIR 2017

**BEST ENJOYED WITH:
THE HEROES OF THE
ROMANTIC PERIOD**

A duo of floral aromas and black cherries interplay with flavours of dark chocolate and fresh raspberries. A gentle acidity gives this Pinot Noir a harmonious finish that lingers ever so softly. Like the great compositions of the Romantic era, this masterpiece will age gracefully.



VILLA MARIA SINGLE VINEYARD IHUMATAO CHARDONNAY 2018

**BEST ENJOYED WITH:
THE GREATS OF NEW
ZEALAND MUSIC**

Awarded the Best Wine from Auckland at the New Zealand Wine of the Year competition 2019, this is a fitting choice this summer for supporters of the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra! A beautiful melody of white peach, grapefruit and roasted nuts on the nose unfold with flavours of subtle flirt and toasted oak.



CRESCENDO NEWS

EXCLUSIVE ORCHESTRA EXPERIENCES

The Crescendo membership programme provides exciting and exclusive events that enhance the concert-going experience.

A 'fly-on-the-wall' experience of APO rehearsals is just one of the many opportunities members enjoy. They are also invited to a series of Meet the Artist events following performances at the Town Hall. This year these informal interactive Q&A sessions will feature visiting guest artists and conductors, including horn player Stefan Dohr of the Berlin Philharmonic.

Crescendo gives you the chance to engage with and get a look at the workings of the orchestra. A Crescendo membership can be purchased with your subscription or at any time during the year. Choose Crescendo Gold to enjoy a special level of hospitality at main stage concerts, including wine and canapés during the concert interval. Memberships start from \$100 per year.



^ A BEHIND THE SCENES EXPERIENCE WITH INGRID BAUER, JUST ONE OF THE MANY EXPERIENCES MEMBERS ENJOY.

Here's what Richard Galloway has to say about Crescendo after being a member for four years:

"As a classical music novice, I have found Crescendo very helpful in learning more about the orchestra. I particularly enjoy watching rehearsals and meeting members of the orchestra. Crescendo has also introduced me to other concert-goers and the wonderful APO staff."

Crescendo Calendar of Events to JULY 2020

20 FEBRUARY

Meet the Artist:

Stefan Dohr, Berlin

Philharmonic Principal Horn

Concert: *The New Zealand Herald*

Premier Series: *Bach & Brahms*

15 APRIL

Open Rehearsal:

Great Classics: Rejoice & Requiem

Auckland Town Hall

16 JUNE

Behind the Scenes:

Ingrid Hagan,

APO Principal Bassoon

A presentation of the bassoon

i For more information or to join, please contact Annual Giving Programmes Executive Charlotte Crocker:

charlotttec@apo.co.nz

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FOUNDATION NEWS

HELPING TO SUPPORT THE ARTISTIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE APO IS A CORE AIM FOR THE AUCKLAND PHILHARMONIA FOUNDATION.

Every year the Foundation provides a scholarship opportunity and the deserving recipient in 2019 was Ewa Sadag, second violin, who has been with the APO for 25 years.

In May, Ewa studied in Switzerland with acclaimed violinist Monika Lisik Urbaniak, an experience she describes as "truly refreshing and inspirational".

Ewa was able to develop her skills and to bring back that specialised knowledge to the orchestra to inspire and motivate her colleagues. Ewa then performed and shared her experiences with members of the 21st Century Circle at a boutique concert in September last year.

The 21st Century Circle members are special supporters who have indicated their intention to leave a gift in their will to the foundation. These gifts are then wisely invested to ensure the growth and future of the orchestra.

The 2020 recipient of the Foundation scholarship is APO's Sub Principal Horn, Carl Wells, who will be attending an international horn symposium in Oregon and receive specialist low horn lessons.

Read more about Carl's scholarship on page 4.



< EWA SADAG

i If you would like to find out more about the 21st Century Circle, please contact Development Manager Adele Diviney:

development@apo.co.nz

09 638 6266 ext 247

CHAIR DONOR SPOTLIGHT

AUDREY HAY SUPPORTS THE CHAIR OF FIRST VIOLIN PLAYER YURI CHO.

Tell us a little bit about your musical background and your relationship with the APO.

I have been involved in music ever since I started learning the violin at the age of nine and played in school orchestras, Junior Symphony with Charles Nalden, Auckland String Players with Georg Tintner, and Bach Cantata Orchestra with Ron Dellow. My mother, who played the piano and violin and was in the Auckland Bohemian Orchestra from 1918-1939, was a very good accompanist, which was a great help. I was also interested in singing and had 12 years in the Dorian Choir, including two very successful tours to UK and Europe. Then followed eight years in the Orlando Singers, a small chamber choir. I now enjoy playing chamber music with friends two or three times a week.

What inspired you to become a chair donor?

I have always felt connected to the APO because it grew out of the String Players and the Bohemian Orchestra before that. I know that all regional orchestras in New Zealand need money to keep going. The APO players work hard all year giving superb performances every time to thrill their Auckland audiences—they deserve any support we can give.

If someone is thinking of becoming a chair donor, what advice would you give them?

Being a chair donor is fun; getting to know the players in the orchestra and your chair, going to small functions and hearing them play, talking about their instrument or some special study trip they went on, or meeting the following week's soloist. It is like being part of a big musical family.



^ AUDREY HAY (RIGHT) WITH HER SISTER BEVERLY GENTLES

i For more information about becoming a Chair Donor, please contact Director of Development Susan Wall:

susanw@apo.co.nz

09 638 6266 ext. 233

FRIENDS NEWS

2020 PROMISES TO BE AN EXCITING YEAR FOR THE FRIENDS. THERE ARE SEVERAL FUNDRAISING EVENTS PLANNED THROUGHOUT THE YEAR AS WELL AS OUR REGULAR MEET THE ARTIST EVENTS.

We work closely with APO Connecting fostering young talent in our city as well as assisting the orchestra with promotional material to advertise concerts for In Your Neighbourhood and North Shore concerts.

As a Silver Sponsor of the APO, the Friends will continue to raise funds to enable us to donate \$20,000 per year which includes our chair donor contribution. Your \$35 subscription goes a long way to achieving this goal.

The Friends support the orchestra on concert nights by selling programs, providing information and supplying supper for the orchestra, soloists and conductor. The supper is famous worldwide as we are the only organisation that does it!

Buses to concerts are very popular.

Our bus conveners provide a very good service beginning from four points around the city to the Town Hall. You can get more information from the information table on concert nights or at apo.co.nz/concert-bus

Our Meet the Artist events are hugely interesting and entertaining, regularly hosting international soloists and conductors who give us an insight into their professional lives. In 2019 we hosted artists like organist Ben Sheen, conductor David Kay and pianist Javier Perianes. We consider ourselves very fortunate that these busy people make time for the Friends. 2020 will be no different and we are pleased to have an exciting line-up of guests.

Won't you come and join us? It's the best Friday morning gig in town!



MEMBERS OF THE FRIENDS
IMAGE: ADRIAN MALLOCH



Further information:

Jackie Wilkinson, President
wilkinsj@xtra.co.nz

Bryce Bartley, Membership Secretary
bryce_chris@inspire.net.nz

2020 DATES:

**14 February, 6 March, 3 April,
8 May, 26 June**

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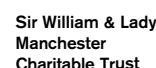
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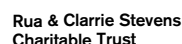
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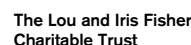
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FEB –
JUL
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CONCERTS

DATE	CONCERT/ACTIVITY	TIME	LOCATION
Thu 13 Feb	Great Classics: Colours of Russia	7.30pm	Auckland Town Hall
Thu 20 Feb	The New Zealand Herald Premier Series: Bach & Brahms	8pm	Auckland Town Hall
Sun 23 Feb	In Your Neighbourhood: Island Time	3.30pm	Morra Hall, Waiheke
Thu 5 Mar	The New Zealand Herald Premier Series: Cityscapes	8pm	Auckland Town Hall
Sun 15 Mar	Beethoven 250: Beethoven's Big Birthday Bash	2.30pm	Auckland Town Hall
Sat 21 Mar	Beethoven 250: The Classicist	7.30pm	Auckland Town Hall
Mon 23 Mar	Beethoven 250: Ludwig Reflected #1	6pm	Concert Chamber
Tue 24 Mar	Beethoven 250: The Romantic	7.30pm	Auckland Town Hall
Wed 25 Mar	Beethoven 250: Ludwig Reflected #2	6pm	Concert Chamber
Thu 26 Mar	Beethoven 250: The Revolutionary	7.30pm	Auckland Town Hall
Fri 27 Mar	Beethoven 250: Ludwig Reflected #3	6pm	Concert Chamber
Sun 29 Mar	Beethoven 250: The Radical	5pm	Auckland Town Hall
Mon 6 Apr	In Your Neighbourhood: Folk Songs	6.30pm	St Helier's Church & Community Centre
Tue 7 Apr	In Your Neighbourhood: Folk Songs	6.30pm	Titirangi War Memorial Hall
Thu 16 Apr	Great Classics: Rejoice & Requiem	7.30pm	Auckland Town Hall
Thu 23 Apr	The New Zealand Herald Premier Series: Transformations	8pm	Auckland Town Hall
Fri 1 May	Up Close: Vivaldi	6pm	St Luke's Church, Remuera
Sat 9 May	APO Community Classics Central: Water	3pm	Auckland Town Hall
Thu 14 May	The New Zealand Herald Premier Series: Fire & Fantasy	8pm	Auckland Town Hall
Tue 19 May	Metlifecare Unwrap the Music: Rossini's William Tell	6.30pm	Auckland Town Hall
Sat 23 May	APO Connecting: APO 4 Kids – Moe's Guide	10am & 11.30am	Auckland Town Hall
Sat 30 May	APO Connecting: APO 4 Kids – Moe's Guide	10am & 11.30am	Bruce Mason Centre, Takapuna
Thu 18 Jun	The New Zealand Herald Premier Series: Perspectives	8pm	Auckland Town Hall
Thu 25 Jun	The New Zealand Herald Premier Series: Mahler 6	8pm	Auckland Town Hall
Tue 30 Jun	Metlifecare Unwrap the Music: Britten's Four Sea Interludes	6.30pm	Auckland Town Hall
Thu 9 Jul	The New Zealand Herald Premier Series: Houstoun Plays Rachmaninov	8pm	Auckland Town Hall
Fri 10 Jul	Up Close: Concerti	6pm	St Mary's Church, Parnell
Sun 19 Jul	Great Classics: The Creation	5pm	Auckland Town Hall
Wed 22 Jul	Together with APO: Blue Planet II Live	7.30pm	Aotea Centre
Sat 25 Jul	Family Concerts: Room on the Broom & Stick Man	11.30am & 2pm	Aotea Centre
Thu 30 Jul	The New Zealand Herald Premier Series: Legends	8pm	Auckland Town Hall



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