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IN THE GARDENS
OF SPAIN

POWDER HER FACE
THE TRUE STORY
BEHIND A VERY
BRITISH SCANDAL

STRUTTING HER STUFF
INTRODUCING COMPOSER
GEMMA PEACOCKE



Phil News

WINTER 2022 VOL.46 NO.1 *your free copy*

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UPFRONT WITH BARBARA GLASER

After a disrupted start to 2022, it is an amazing feeling to be back performing to full houses and engaging with our community across Tāmaki Makaurau.

In the face of restrictions and uncertainties we didn't produce a summer edition of *Phil News*, but I know how much people enjoy reading about concerts and artists and goings-on at the APO, so we are pleased that you are holding the winter issue. It is packed with the exciting things we're

doing in the second half of the season and celebrates what we have already achieved this year.

Shakespeare takes pride of place in this magazine and on stage, where we have two takes on *Romeo and Juliet*, plus an appointment with NZ Opera for Verdi's adaptation of 'The Scottish Play'.

Elsewhere, there are in-depth stories on Manuel de Falla and Thomas Adès's breakthrough work *Powder Her Face*.

There's a feature on Gemma Peacocke, a Kiwi composer who, because she has spent most of her career overseas, is less known here than she should be. I'm excited to hear her first commission for the APO, in a concert that the APO's resident brain, orchestral librarian Robert Johnson, is looking forward to enormously.

We also go behind the scenes to honour an indispensable member of our team, Artistic Coordinator Debbie Nicholson, who has just celebrated the incredible milestone of 20 years at the APO.

Sadly, we say goodbye to a trio of musicians who between them have dedicated more than 60 years to the orchestra – Section Leader of the Second Violins Dianna Cochrane, Associate Principal Flute Kathryn Moorhead and First Violin Ela Grabczewska. They have all brought so much to the APO through their experience and artistry. I'd like to thank them for their commitment, and we wish them all the very best in their next adventures.

And we wish you the very best too, as we gallop into the second half of the season. I look forward to seeing you at a performance very soon.

Barbara Glaser

Barbara Glaser
APO Chief Executive



*A special reminder
for our audience...*

COVID-19 Health and Safety

At the APO the health and safety of our audience, musicians and staff remains our priority. We are following the advice of the Ministry of Health regarding public events and mass gatherings that correspond to the current alert level.

Mask wearing is strongly encouraged for audience members. If you are feeling unwell, please stay at home and contact APO Ticketing (ticketing@apo.co.nz / 09 623 1052) for advice about your tickets.

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New NZ Assistant Conductor-in-Residence appointed for National Orchestra Network



LEONARD WEISS

Sydney-based conductor Leonard Weiss has taken up the prestigious role as New Zealand's Assistant Conductor-in-Residence, following a Covid delay.

The position is funded by Creative New Zealand and managed by Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra (APO), but the role represents a collaboration between the APO, Christchurch Symphony Orchestra (CSO), Dunedin Symphony Orchestra (DSO) and New Zealand Symphony Orchestra (NZSO).

"This national Assistant Conductor-in-Residence Programme was created as a long-term strategy to build greater depth among emerging conductors within Australasia," says APO Chief Executive Barbara Glaser.

"While these gifted young conductors get to benefit from being immersed in a professional orchestral environment close to home, our audiences can look forward to seeing more locally based talent on the conductor's

podium thriving and developing alongside our orchestras."

Weiss takes over from the inaugural recipient, Vincent Hardaker.

"This role offers me a chance to be a part of the season life-cycle of each of these fantastic ensembles," says Weiss, who spent a year of advanced study with Marin Alsop as the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra's 2020-21 BSO-Peabody Fellow.

"It will be an incredibly busy time but I'm thrilled to have a developmental opportunity as significant as this at this stage in my career, and to be able to contribute to the orchestras' musical lives in such a meaningful way."

Auditions took place in late 2021. Live auditions were impacted by COVID but the subsequent online process was no less intense.

"My final interview was on Zoom and lasted for well over an hour," recalls Weiss.

"I faced a huge panel of musicians and members of the management teams from all the orchestras across New Zealand. I was particularly conscious of Maestro Bellincampi leading much of the questioning. He was tuning in from his home base in Europe and I think it must have been about three or four in the morning for him!

"It was an amazing process, and I was struck by how incredibly warm and welcoming everyone was."

Over the course of his tenure Weiss will participate in a structured development and performance programme led by APO Music Director Giordano Bellincampi and supported by music directors and guest conductors from the other New Zealand orchestras.

Weiss will conduct rehearsals and concerts across all the orchestras' 2022 seasons and will also play a part in behind the scenes planning and strategy sessions with the music directors and artistic planning teams.

In addition to his ongoing coaching and development, Weiss will also share his own expertise with aspiring conductors, composers and ensembles studying at school and at university.

"I'm especially excited by the chance to work with young Kiwi composers and lead the various workshops scheduled around the country while I am in New Zealand. It's a special honour to be part of the creative process that brings new works to life in front of an audience."





Ryman Healthcare joins APO family

The APO is delighted to announce a new partnership with Ryman Healthcare, presenting partners in our new Baroque & Beyond series.

Ryman also sponsors October's movie-plus-orchestra family performances of *Room On the Broom* and *Stick Man*. The heart-warming animations come complete with René Aubry's magical music score performed live by the APO, and take place on Saturday 15 October at the Aotea Centre (see apo.co.nz/rotb for more).

Baroque & Beyond evolved from a series of concerts held over the 2020 lockdown, where, in good chamber music fashion, many pieces were led by the players without a conductor. These concerts allow for the musicians to innovate, grow and strive for excellence in new ways, with much-loved Baroque masterworks mixed with complementary chamber music.

When it came to finding a partner for the series, it quickly became clear that Ryman was a natural fit.

"We have definitely found a kindred spirit and just the sort of company that I want to work with," says APO Deputy

Chief Executive Stuart Angel. "All of the conversations flowed so easily. This open and honest dialogue has enabled us to create a genuine partnership between our two organisations and one that both sides are equally excited to see how it develops and blossoms over time."

See p26 for more about Baroque & Beyond, including an interview with APO Concertmaster Andrew Beer.



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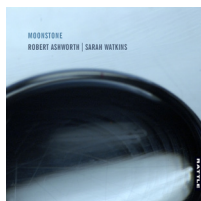
AMALIA HALL

Lark Violinist Wins Variety Club Award

Congratulations to Amalia Hall, who claimed the inaugural Gary Daverne Classical Award at a black-tie ceremony celebrating this year's Variety Artists Club of New Zealand's Bennys. The award goes to an artist who has excelled in classical concert music as a vocalist, instrumentalist, conductor or music director. Amalia was handed her trophy by none other than Gary Daverne himself.

"Sometimes we meet people who make a huge difference in our lives, and Gary Daverne has been one of those people to me," Amalia wrote on her Facebook page. "I met him when I was 10 and he invited me numerous times as a soloist with Auckland Symphony Orchestra through my teens."

Amalia's association with the APO goes back even further. She made her debut with the orchestra as a nine-year-old, and has appeared many times since. On 19 August she plays Vaughan Williams' *The Lark Ascending* under the baton of returning conductor Tobias Ringborg as part of the Bayleys Great Classics series, in a programme that also includes music by Lilburn and Sibelius.

MOONSTONE
ROBERT ASHWORTH | SARAH WATKINS

New Album Features APO Connections Aplenty

A new album from APO Section Principal Viola Robert Ashworth, in partnership with the APO's orchestral pianist of choice Sarah Watkins, has just been released. The recording, out through Rattle Records, is titled *Moonstone*, after a previously unrecorded work by Gillian Whitehead. Dame Gillian is fresh from her violin concerto *Tai timu, tai pari*, which the APO premiered in June, with Concertmaster Andrew Beer as soloist.

There are numerous other APO connections among the album's works, six of which are new commissions and all of them composed by New Zealanders. Of the eight pieces, five were written by former APO composers-in-residence.

As well as Dame Gillian, there's music from Gareth Farr, David Hamilton, Leonie Holmes and Ross Harris. Elsewhere, Chris Cree Brown creates fascinating sonorities in his *Dreams Lines for Viola and Piano*,

while the performers reach back in time for Alfred Hill's Sonata movement in B minor. Keep an ear out too for Sarah Ballard, whose compositions are influenced by her bhakti yoga practice.

The album was produced by Kenneth Young, whose association with the APO as composer, conductor and mentor goes back decades. Rattle boss Steve Garden engineered, with assistant John Kim.

The Young/Garden/Kim axis is the same group that was behind Andrew Beer and Sarah Watkins's *11 Frames*. That album won Andrew and Sarah Classical Artist of the Year at the Aotearoa music awards, and Rattle will no doubt be hoping for similar recognition here.

They're in with a good shout. If it's any indication of quality – and we like to think it is – we've had *Moonstone* on repeat for a few weeks.

Moonstone is available on download (in high resolution if you want it) and through the usual streaming services, or Rattle will press a CD for you upon request, which includes the company's usual evocative artwork and a booklet. Steve Garden tells us that if you hurry, you can also buy a physical copy of *Moonstone* from Marbecks.



> ROBERT ASHWORTH AND SARAH WATKINS.
IMAGE: RATTLE RECORDS

APO back with RNZB

The APO is once again pleased to be collaborating with the Royal New Zealand Ballet. *Cinderella* is a new work featuring the choreography of Loughlan Prior set to a score by Auckland composer Claire Cowan.

This is the second ballet to feature the pair, following on from 2019's superb *Hansel and Gretel*, which won critical acclaim for the dancing, and a Best Classical Artist award for Cowan at the Aotearoa Music Awards.

The season kicks off in Wellington on 3 August and hits Auckland – with the APO in the pit – between 10 and 13 August, before once more travelling south for shows in Napier, Christchurch and Dunedin.

< IMAGE © ROSS BROWN

SHARE A CONCERT WITH THE NEXT GENERATION OF MUSIC LOVERS

Introducing young people to the thrill of a live orchestra is easy and it's free!

The APO first introduced its Young Companion ticket scheme +1C back in 2017. It gives adults and seniors, with a full price ticket to a main series concert in the Town Hall, the opportunity to bring a guest under 16 years old for free.

For the rest of 2022 the APO has extended this offer so that parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles or even close family friends, who already have or purchase a ticket, can bring up to three youngsters aged under 16 to see an APO concert at no extra cost.

APO Chief Executive Barbara Glaser says it's another way to show APO's commitment to nurturing young music lovers. "We realise that the last couple of years has been tough on everyone. Our enhanced Young Companion ticket scheme provides another great way to have an evening out without breaking the bank. Giving more young people the chance to see Auckland's Orchestra perform for free with family and friends

is just one more way we can open up this wonderful world of music to them," she says.

Young Companion tickets are available for all New Zealand Herald Premier Series and Bayleys Great Classics concerts in the 2022 Season. Tickets are subject to availability and some terms and conditions apply. Contact APO Ticketing for more information on 09 623 1052.





GEMMA PEACOCKE

White Horses fire Peacocke's Imagination

Introducing Gemma Peacocke, the best composer you've never heard of. By Richard Betts.

"The rats are getting to me at the moment," says Gemma Peacocke. "My husband took a video of one the other day; it's just infested."

Peacocke's on the line from her home in the Bedford-Stuyvesant area of Brooklyn, New York. She says her neighbourhood has a great sense of community – "as you'd expect in places that are deprived, the people tend to come together" – and it was recently named by *TimeOut* as one of the world's coolest places to live.

But Bed-Stuy is also known for gangs and drugs and urban decay. And, apparently, rats.

"They are enormous and they're shooting back and forth across the footpath."

It's a long way from Hamilton, where Peacocke grew up. Peacocke's been a long way from Hamilton all of her professional life. As well as the US, she has lived in England, Japan, France and Austria, which explains why, despite being among our most gifted and intriguing composers, she is, by her own admission, barely known here.

Peacocke has been in New York since 2014, when she was accepted into a Masters programme at NYU to study with respected composer-performer Julia Wolfe.

"I didn't really know who she was," admits Peacocke of her professor, who is best known as co-founder and co-artistic director of contemporary music luminaries Bang On A Can. "I think that helped because I didn't have that fear or starstruck thing; I didn't understand how important she was."

Peacocke only realised how big a deal Wolfe was when Wolfe won the Pulitzer Prize for Music in Peacocke's second year at NYU. Wolfe has since become a mentor.

"[Wolfe] made it all happen for me. She's very accepting of everything you write and quietly opens doors in the background without telling you she's doing it, so she was everything I needed at the time."

With her Masters finished, Peacocke won a place at the ivy-est of the ivy league colleges, Princeton, where she is completing her PhD. Wolfe still looms, though – Peacocke's research topic is haunting in the music of Julia Wolfe. As part of her work, Peacocke is creating a portfolio of her own music based on the idea of ghosts. The topic fits right in with the subject of her first APO commission, titled *White Horses*, which the orchestra plays on 29 September.

Peacocke says that *White Horses* is not programmatic, but it was inspired by the true story of Viva Waud Farmar, a WWI nurse and early aviatrix, who in 1937 jumped from a plane over Cook Strait, while flying as a passenger from Blenheim to Wellington. Farmar had no known mental illness and her body was never found.

"When you fly over Cook Strait and look down it's so beautiful," says Peacocke. "You can imagine [Farmar] looking out and seeing it all glistening – you can imagine any number of things going through her head when she made that decision, and when she's falling through the air. So that's what I've based the piece around, the brief,

unexplained and unfinished story of her descent. I imagine different parts of her frame of mind, what might have been in her life up to that point."

The piece is percussive, with dramatic material cosying up to lighter, more melodious sections. It is also entirely acoustic, which is unusual for Peacocke, who often incorporates electronics into her music.

"An orchestra is such an enormous, powerful force already," she reasons. "I've been asked to write for orchestra and electronics but I've heard very few orchestral pieces where I've felt electronics were necessary or added anything."

With or without electronics, Peacocke's work is often achingly beautiful. Is that on purpose or is that just how it comes out?

"I think it's how it comes out. As an undergraduate [at the New Zealand School of Music] I was supposed to write European modernist stuff and I just kept failing at it. I always come back to pretty stuff."

Peacocke still beats herself up about her inability to write the spiky music expected of her as a young composer at NZSM, but in Wellington she found an ally in former APO Composer-in-Residence John

Psathas. The pair have remained in contact and Psathas continues to be supportive.

"Every time I came back to New Zealand I'd have a beer with John and he'd say, 'You've got to keep doing this, you have something.' I didn't believe



△ JULIA WOLFE

him for a long time, I thought he was just being nice. But he's probably had thousands of students and there's no particular reason to keep pushing me a decade after I finished studying with him."

If Julia Wolfe, John Psathas and APO Director of Artistic Planning Gale Mahood all think you've got something (see breakout box), you should probably accept that you're a special talent. Maybe, but even now Peacocke admits to self-doubt. She is, however, entirely comfortable with the imperfections that inevitably exist within her music.

"I don't subscribe to the idea that you're supposed to write perfect music and that it's some gift from the heavens," she says. "It's an expression of your thoughts and your feelings during the writing process. And that's as much as you can ever create, right?" ■

“
The piece is
percussive,
with dramatic
material cosying
up to lighter,
more melodious
sections.
”

Gale Mahood on Gemma Peacocke

"Gemma's music spoke to me; I couldn't get away from it. I work from home on Fridays and I usually sit at my desk and listen to music all day long. Sometimes I've listened to nothing but New Zealand music to discover the voices that are out there. I kept coming back to Gemma. I couldn't forget her music. She doesn't have a huge amount of experience in writing for orchestra but I wanted the APO to get in on her career at that early phase and be part of supporting her to build those orchestration skills. She has a very interesting voice, so I'm excited to see what she does with it."

i The New Zealand Herald
Premier Series

Bezuidenhout's Mozart

7.30pm, Thursday 29 September
Auckland Town Hall

Conductor Johannes Fritsch
Piano Kristian Bezuidenhout

Gemma Peacocke *White Horses*
(world premiere)

Mozart Piano Concerto No.22

Martinů Symphony No.6 'Fantaisies symphoniques'

apo.co.nz/bezuidenhouts-mozart

The New Zealand Herald

FILTH! SMUT! OUTRAGE!



THOMAS ADÈS

Thomas Adès is arguably the finest British composer of our time. Alastair McKean examines *Powder Her Face*, the work that made Adès's reputation.

The English do scandal in a particular way. Compare with the American variety. Watergate was archetypal, sure: hidden wickedness exposed, and the guilty brought down and disgraced. But on the other side of the Atlantic, it's not a real top-line scandal unless it involves sex (preferably a bit kinky), power, money (lots of money) and, above all, class. Naturally, this is well understood at the BBC, which recently mounted a marvellous dramatisation of the Jeremy Thorpe affair of the 1970s.

For those who've forgotten, Thorpe (Hugh Grant at his oily best) was the happily married leader of the Liberal Party, who attempted to have his secret male lover assassinated and subsequently stood trial for conspiracy to murder.

The title of the show? *A Very English Scandal*. Last year there was a followup of sorts, *A Very British Scandal*, on the spectacular 1963 divorce of the Duke and Duchess of Argyll. It stars Claire Foy, best known for a somewhat different part in *The Crown*.

The BBC, however, wasn't the first to dramatise this story. That distinction is held by the great British composer Thomas Adès (pron. ADD-ez), in his 1995 chamber opera *Powder Her Face*, the suite of which is performed by the APO on 8 September.

The opera never explicitly says that its lead character is the Duchess of Argyll; she's simply called 'Duchess'. It is, however, inspired by true events. When the historical Duke sued for divorce, he

accused the Duchess of having had 88 lovers. This was largely imaginary. For instance, many of those named were in fact gay but, homosexuality then being illegal, the Duchess rather decently refused to out them by denying it. The centrepiece of the case, though, was an all-too-genuine collection of Polaroids that the Duke, an extremely unpleasant man, had stolen from his wife's locked cupboard. The most notorious of these featured the Duchess *in flagrante* with a gentleman who remains unidentified, as his head was not in shot. (It was probably Churchill's son-in-law.) The operatic incarnation of this incident, the Duchess's 'Humming Aria', is said to have been deemed unsuitable for broadcast by the British radio station Classic FM.

Adding More Adès

If you're curious, what else to hear? The piano concerto *In Seven Days* is about the Creation myth, and although the piece stands alone perfectly well, it was written for performance with visuals. Adès calls it a 'video ballet'. The recording (on Signum) comes with a DVD. Watch it: you'll never again look at light playing on water in the same way. Then I'd go to *Asyla*, a symphony in all but name, whose enormous orchestra includes the shimmery-watery sound of a detuned piano. The first movement is haunted by the horns, calling across the ruins of Romantic music; the third movement is an electrifying collision between *The Rite of Spring* and clubland techno music. Adès's second opera, *The Tempest*, is on a Metropolitan Opera DVD. Ariel's music is dazzling, and the ending, with Caliban and Ariel alone on the island, is magic. The surprisingly breezy Piano Concerto is twinned on a recent Deutsche Grammophon recording with the Mahlerian *Totentanz* (Dance of Death). This is a cantata for mezzo-soprano, baritone, and orchestra, whose mediaeval text is a dialogue between Death and the various people for whom he has come. He starts with the Pope, the Emperor, the Cardinal and so on through the social orders, until he beckons the Maiden, and the Child. It's devastating.

All this is easy to sensationalise. Adès never does. *Powder Her Face* has only four singers, and the same one plays the Duke, the Judge at the divorce trial who denounces the Duchess with appalling cruelty, and the Hotel Manager, a figure of Death who at the end of the opera evicts her from the grand hotel where she has been living. Similarly, one soprano appears as the Duchess's envious, scornful maid, as the Duke's mistress, and as a rubbernecker at the divorce

court. So the Duchess's persecution by vicious, hypocritical people is woven into the piece, even in the cast list. It should be noted that Adès's Duchess is *not* an agreeable character. Selfish, arrogant, racist, a screaming snob, she's a monster. And yet ultimately she's a pathetic figure, even a tragic one, and the audience leaves the opera house feeling sympathy and compassion for her.

The most sensational thing about *Powder Her Face* is the music. It's

music that bursts out of its skin, and it's music of a diamond quality, of brilliance and hardness. It's haunted by Berg, Stravinsky, Strauss, and especially by popular music. The real Duchess liked to claim that she was named in Cole Porter's 'You're the Top' (not quite accurately: P.G. Wodehouse inserted her into the later British version of the song), so Adès gleefully wrote a pastiche 1930s pop song of breathtaking authenticity, and was justifiably chuffed when his grandmother



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More smut and filth! Disgusting!

The footmen-and-champagne world of the Duchess wasn't entirely unfamiliar to William Walton. Nobody would have predicted this when he was born to a family of very modest means in grimy Oldham. But he won a scholarship to Oxford and was adopted by the wealthy, artistic Sitwell family, with whom he lived for 10 years. Although he liked to exaggerate his provincial roots, their milieu changed him utterly. At the time he was composing his blazingly exciting Symphony No.1, he took up with a baroness. Alas, she left him. The third movement is headed *Andante con malincolia*, and although the Italian for 'melancholy' is actually 'malinconia', the anguish is unmistakable. Walton suffered a long creative block before writing the finale. Its radiant opening reflects his having fallen in love – this time with the wife of a lord. In the best upper-crust style, Walton languidly recalled that he "got on very well with her husband".

< DUCHESS OF ARGYLL

told him it was "exactly like the kind of music we used to have in those days at the Waldorf". All these influences are subsumed into an exhilarating, unmistakably original voice. On opening night Adès was just 24 years old.

Adès wrote for a characteristically eccentric ensemble of 15 virtuoso players, including three saxophonists and an accordionist. The single percussionist plays about three dozen instruments, including a popgun, an electric bell, 'crochery and/or glass', and several fishing reels. With the opera's more or less instant global success, it made sense to follow other operatic composers and extract suites (for conventional orchestra), and Adès has written three. The one the APO will play is in three movements. The central one is based on the 'Fancy Aria',

in which the Duchess's maid muses on the upper classes: 'Fancy being rich. Fancy being lovely ... Fancy eating lobster in the middle of the week ... Fancy being her'. The outer movements are tangos, the last being a rescoring of the opera's wordless finale, and the first of its overture. It is raucous, exuberant, and totally fabulous. Watch the musicians. They'll be having a ball. ■

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The New Zealand Herald Premier Series **Grosvenor Plays Grieg**

7.30pm, Thursday 8 September
Auckland Town Hall

Conductor Alpesh Chauhan
Piano Benjamin Grosvenor

Thomas Adès Three-piece Suite from
Powder Her Face
Grieg Piano Concerto
Walton Symphony No.1

apo.co.nz/grosvenor-grieg

 The New Zealand Herald



The Dead

Prokofiev was taken aback when people disliked his plan to give *Romeo and Juliet* a happy ending. It wasn't as though Shakespeare never did happy endings. *Romeo and Juliet*, the composer noted years later in a commentary for the journal *Sovetskoye iskusstvo* (Soviet Art), was created in parallel with *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, "in which all ends well". In any case, this was a ballet, and the logic of preferring a happy ending to a tragic one was easy to grasp if you gave it even two minutes' thought: "Living people can dance. The dead cannot".

To adapt is to translate, and to translate is to betray. To put it another way, if you're doing Shakespeare without any of Shakespeare's language, you've already lost so much that you might as well change the story too. The great musical Shakespeare adaptations have nearly all been based on librettos or synopses in languages other than English, and Shakespeare, more than any other major dramatist, resists being translated and rejects being boiled down to synopsis.

It isn't just that his language is so flexible and potent. It's that it has so much work to do. Plays written for the Elizabethan thrust-stage theatres where Shakespeare spent the bulk of his career used very little in the way of sets and set machinery, because the audience were sitting and standing all around the stage and the multiplicity of sightlines made it impractical. Instead, they built the worlds of their stories with expository dialogue and soliloquy. You don't see an envious moon, already sick and pale with grief, hanging over Juliet's balcony. You just hear Romeo describe it. Is there a stage direction telling Juliet to lean her cheek upon her hand? No, there's just Romeo, yearning aloud as he describes her doing it. When you strip out that language, what you have left are the shadows cast by the plot, as bare of detail as the chalk outlines of bodies in a police procedural.

Imagine Verdi as a police consultant standing over one of those chalk outlines. (There are crime shows with less plausible high concepts.) "Recreate the scene for me, crime-composer!"

^ SERGEI PROKOFIEV

The APO meets Shakespeare in the second half of 2022. David Larsen examines the jumbled history of Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet*, while Richard Betts highlights concerts of Verdi's *Macbeth* and Bernstein's *Symphonic Dances from West Side Story*.

Can't Dance

barks the lead detective. "Who was this Macbeth character? Give me a tune I can sing to the judge!" We already know that the great composers of opera can tell stories through music that match the power Shakespeare could reach through the English language. But does Verdi's *Macbeth* capture the essence of Shakespeare's one, or merely gesture towards it? Can a musical adaptation answer the detective's question?

You might reasonably respond that you don't care, because a world in which we have Verdi's Shakespeare as well as Shakespeare's Shakespeare is better than one where we don't, and in any case, Verdi's version can feed back into our understanding of the original in ways that are interesting and powerful. My own


lasting experience of this phenomenon has been with the scampering violin theme from Prokofiev's 'Young Juliet' movement. It evokes a vivacious carefree energy, and does it so sweetly and so well that it now lives rent-free in my brain as a fundamental aspect of who this character is before she first walks on stage to meet her mother – and us – and be told she's in line to be married off to a friend of her father. That's the introduction Shakespeare wrote for her, and it offers limited scope to be carefree. It doesn't matter. Prokofiev's conception of Juliet is too convincing.

Likewise, the stark high strings at the opening to his 'Romeo at Juliet's Tomb,' with the climactic arpeggiated rise and fall that follows, dramatise grief and the final

collapse of hope with a shattering power that has over-written all my memories of the source material.

I do have one niggling question: how could Prokofiev write this music and still believe the story needed a happy ending?

Oh, right, he was thinking that dead people can't dance. This would be a disconcertingly asinine piece of reasoning to come from an artist of his stature, except that we don't know whether he meant it to be taken seriously. There's good reason to suspect he didn't. He wrote his commentary for *Sovetskoye iskusstvo* in 1941, seven years after the fact, and also just after the period of the great Stalinist purges. Productions of *Romeo and Juliet* at the Kirov Ballet and then at the Bolshoi Theatre had been

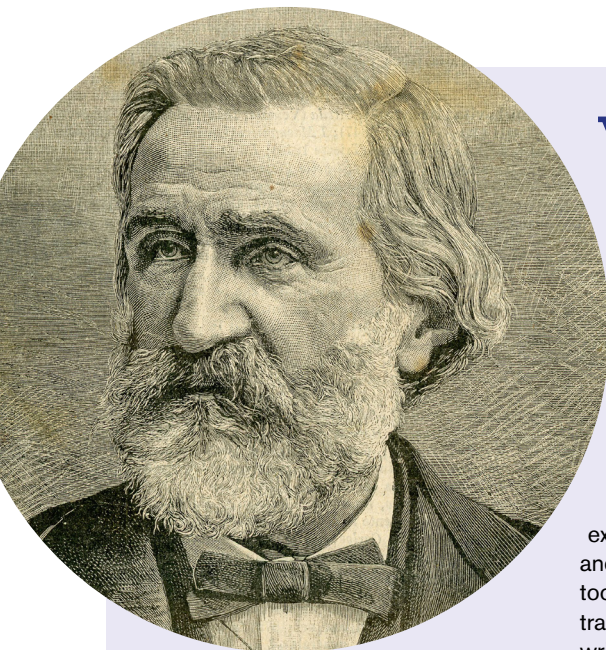


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^ GIUSEPPE VERDI

Verdi's Macbeth: *Bloody, Bold and Resolute*

England's greatest playwright was idolised by Italy's greatest operatic composer, Giuseppe Verdi. One imagines the musician revelling in Shakespeare's rhythm, the way the words wrap themselves around the tongue, the wit and the wisdom. Well yes, except Verdi couldn't speak English, and his encounters with Shakespeare took place entirely through Italian translations. That didn't stop Verdi from writing *Falstaff* or *Otello*.

Decades before either of them came *Macbeth*, which NZ Opera tours from September to October, and which plays in Auckland on 21, 23 and 25 September. For those three dates, the APO takes its customary place in the pit.

The opera, which debuted in Florence in 1847, is an important landmark in the development of Verdi's craft, notably in the increased sophistication of the instrumentation – see, for example, the evocative cor anglais of Lady Macbeth's sleepwalking scene.

Verdi, terminally self-critical, declared the premiere to be “not a disaster”. It was, of course, much better than that, as the composer acknowledged in the opera's dedication to Antonio Baretti, the father of Verdi's late wife:

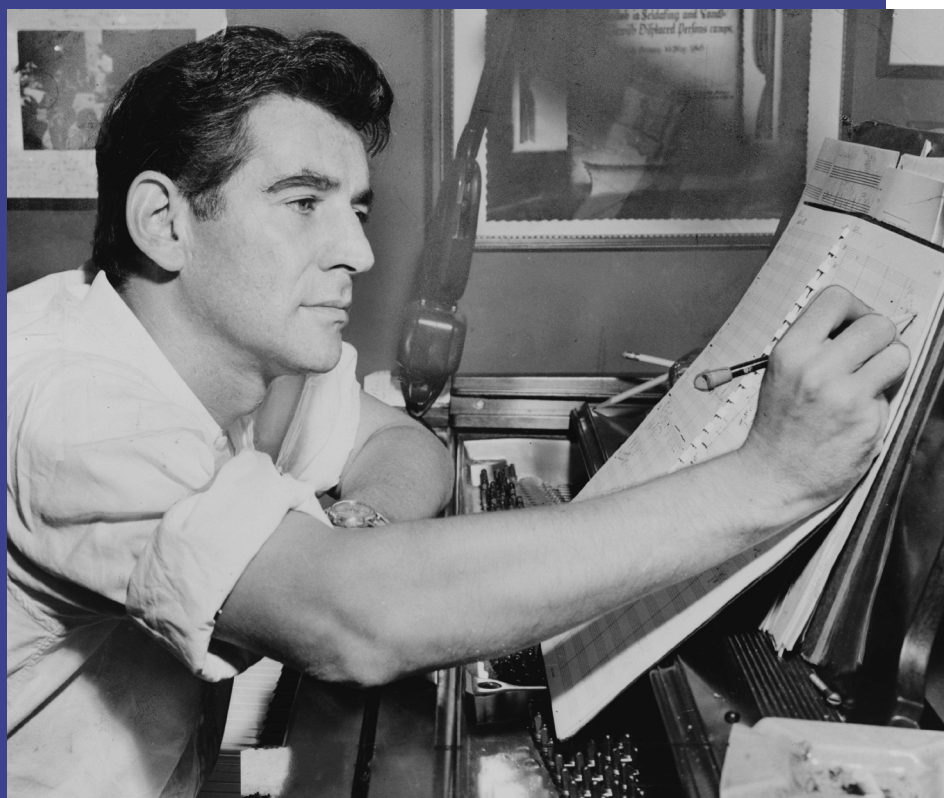
“Here now is this *Macbeth*, which I love in preference to my other operas, and thus deem more worthy of being presented to you. The heart offers it; may the heart receive it.”

Richard Betts

An Englishman in New York

If it weren't bad enough that Prokofiev wanted to give *Romeo and Juliet* a happy ending, try this on for size: relocating Verona to New York, and turning the bloody rivalry of the Montagues and Capulets into a race-based turf war. By 1957, when Leonard Bernstein wrote the music to *West Side Story*, he could get away with treating the Bard this way. He was, after all, among the most famous musicians in America. After *West Side Story*, he was acknowledged as one of the most gifted musicians of his or any other age.

West Side Story remains arguably the greatest of all musicals. So impressive is the score, that even shorn of its singers and sets and dancers, the music still sparkles, which is why the APO has selected Bernstein's Symphonic Dances for its next Unwrap the Music concert, with the endlessly fascinating Graham Abbott conducting and presenting.



^ LEONARD BERNSTEIN

Richard Betts

cancelled when colleagues there fell from grace, after which Prokofiev came under pressure to revise the work, in particular its untraditional ending. Even once he complied, it was not accepted for performance anywhere during the 1930s. This appears to be why he created the three orchestral suites, in an attempt to create popular interest in the ballet and get it out of his desk drawer and onto a stage.

Students of Soviet history will note that the composer got off lightly. The odds of being sent to a gulag or shot during those years were terrifyingly high, especially factoring in Prokofiev's gift for alienating anyone he considered his artistic inferior, which included several key members of Stalin's musical bureaucracy. It seems likely he entered the 1940s keenly aware that when asked to explain your attempted Shakespeare rewrite for an official Soviet newspaper, you might be wise to invent something technical and slightly ludicrous, rather than argue sincerely for views that had already been shot down. Hence, dead people can't dance.

The curious thing is that in the wake of this history there is more consonance between Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet* and the work it adapts than there might have been otherwise. In formal terms, Shakespeare's play behaves like a comedy for its first half, right up to the death of Mercutio, and then executes a hard right turn into tragedy. None of the other plays have the same mix of filthy-joke-driven high spirits, youthful energy, and death. Maybe Prokofiev, in grafting a tragic finale onto music he wrote with a very different climax in mind, found a way to strike to the heart of this particular bit of Shakespeare as well as anyone could. ■

i Verdi's Macbeth

21, 23, 25 September

Auckland Town Hall

Presented by NZ Opera, with the APO and New Zealand Opera Chorus

apo.co.nz/nzopera-macbeth

i Unwrap the Music: Bernstein's Symphonic Dances

6:30pm, Tuesday 18 October

Auckland Town Hall

Presenter/conductor Graham Abbott.

apo.co.nz/unwrap-bernstein

i The New Zealand Herald Premier Series

Star-Crossed Lovers

7.30pm, Thursday 1 December

Auckland Town Hall

Conductor Giordano Bellincampi
Violin James Ehnes

Beethoven *Egmont*: Overture

Bernstein *Serenade*

Prokofiev *Romeo and Juliet* (selections)

apo.co.nz/starcrossed-lovers

 The New Zealand Herald

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11.30AM & 2PM SATURDAY 15 OCTOBER
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Family favourites *Room on the Broom* and *Stick Man*, written by Julia Donaldson and illustrated by Axel Scheffler, come to life on the big screen. Enjoy these heart-warming stories complete with René Aubry's magical music score performed live by the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra.

Room on the Broom is an enchanting tale of friendship and family about a kind witch who invites a surprising collection of animals to join her and her broomstick.

Stick Man tells the story of a happy-go-lucky father's epic journey across the seasons as he tries to make it home in time for Christmas.

A marvellous orchestral experience for young and old.



As You Wish: The Magic of a Bedtime Story

The APO's next 'live cinema' concert features *The Princess Bride*. Robin Lane says that this modern fairytale doesn't mean what you think it means.

You've managed to feed them, bathe them, wrestle them into their PJs and finally into bed. As the chaos of the day transitions into tranquil night, you share that magical moment that is the bedtime story. Most of us remember our bedtime stories long into adulthood (I still shudder at the memory of my dad doing the voice of Smaug when reading me *The Hobbit*) and the special bond it creates between parent and child.

But what if your dad is an Oscar-winning screenwriter? That is what Jenny and Susanna Goldman got to enjoy with their father William. He asked them what kind of story they would like to hear one evening. One answered, "Princess!" and the other answered, "Bride!" From these short improvised bedtime stories came the novel *The Princess Bride* (1973).

A 1982 attempt by Ray Harryhausen to adapt the book into a screenplay failed before Goldman himself wrote the adaptation. The film of *The Princess Bride* (1987) is the odd one out among Goldman's list of credits, which, though impressive, tends not to prominently feature wholesome family movies. Notable inclusions are *Butch Cassidy and The Sundance Kid* (1969), *All the President's Men* (1976) and *Marathon Man* (1976). All incredible films but not ones to show the littlies, unless you never want them to visit the dentist again.

Taking the helm of the big screen adaptation was Director Rob Reiner, best known for directing *This is Spinal Tap*

(1985), *When Harry Met Sally* (1989) and *A Few Good Men* (1992), and who assembled an epic cast. If it's been a while since you've seen the film then you will find yourself repeatedly saying, "Oh I forgot they were in this!" before getting frustrated as you try to remember their names and what else they've been in.

To ease your suffering and to prevent any bickering with loved ones the answers are Cary Elwes (*Robin Hood: Men in Tights*), Robin Wright (*Forrest Gump*), Mandy Patinkin (*Homeland*), Christopher Guest (*This is Spinal Tap*), Wallace Shawn (you mainly know him for this but he is also the voice of Rex the dinosaur in *Toy Story*), Fred Savage (*The Wonder Years*), Mel Smith (*Alas Smith and Jones*), Billy Crystal (*When Harry Met Sally*), Peter Falk (*Columbo*), Peter Cook (comedic legend best known for his work with Dudley Moore) and Andre the Giant (WWF).

You're welcome.

Key to the magic of the film is the original soundtrack by gruff-voiced Dire Straits guitar legend Mark Knopfler. The music manages to translate the many genres and tones of the film into a fantastical score. While the original is almost exclusively electronic, the live concert version allows fans a chance to

hear the synth become symphonic with full live orchestra.

The evolution of bedtime stories has seen us go from Aesop's Fables to picture books to motion pictures. No film truly captures that evolution quite like *The Princess Bride*, each generation relishes in showing it to the next, experiencing it for the first time all over again. Its innocence and good nature are rarely seen in modern big screen blockbusters. It provides the perfect amount of nostalgia with the comforting realisation that it is actually as good as you remembered. Most importantly, you will know

you have won at parenting if your child can coldly turn to your friends, look them in the eye and perfectly deliver **that** line: "My name is Inigo Montoya. You killed my father. Prepare to die." ■

“
My name is Inigo Montoya. You killed my father. Prepare to die.
”

i Kapiti Ice Cream presents

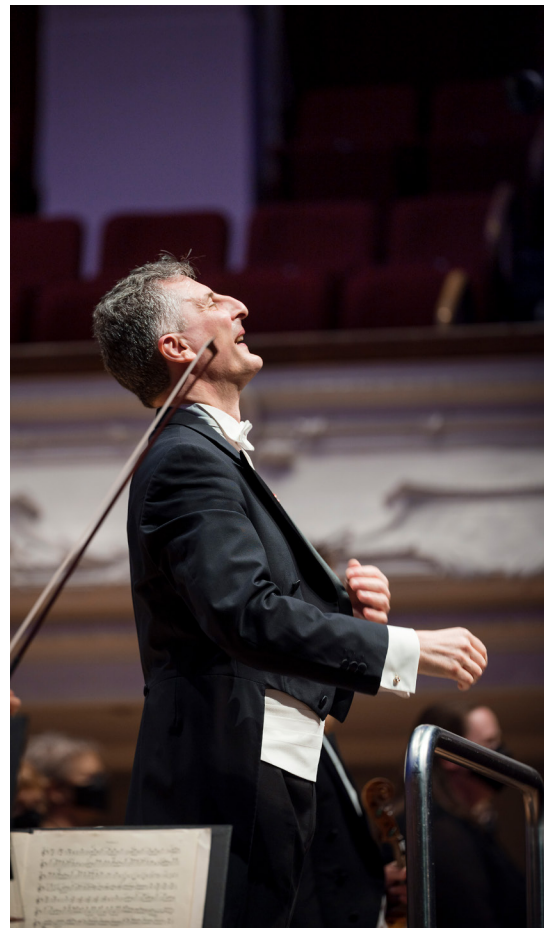
The Princess Bride in Concert

7:30pm, Thursday 6 October

Kiri Te Kanawa Theatre
Aotea Centre

apo.co.nz/princess-bride

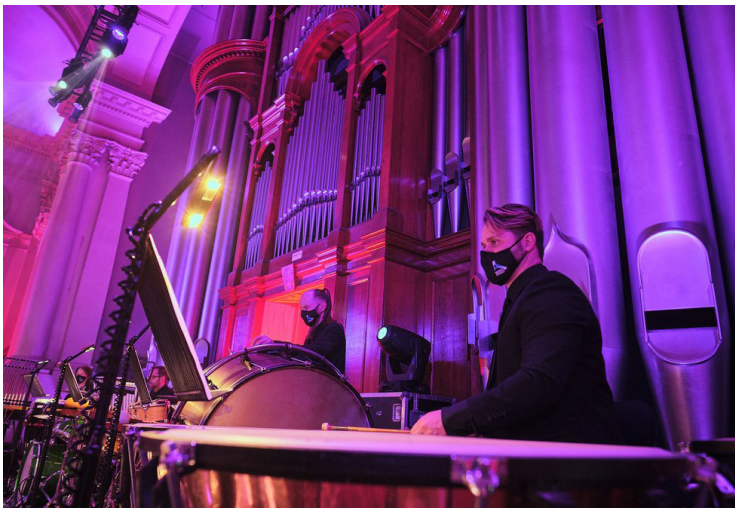






The Year So Far

Images by Adrian Malloch
and Thomas Hamill





Falla Music

Manuel de Falla was Spain's greatest composer of last century. Richard Betts offers an appreciation.

Cádiz, in the southwest of Spain, is a bewitching city. Andalusian to its core, it has quite the history. Cádiz is one of the oldest continuously occupied cities in Europe, and the archaeological evidence is everywhere. There are trace elements of everything stretching from the Phoenicians to now. Later construction (by which we mean Baroque-era) includes a series of fortifications protecting the city from invasion by sea. The walls are metres thick, the battlements implacable as a nightclub bouncer and similarly poised on the edge of violence.

The people, though, are not. They are friendly and proud, their food fresh, their music passionate. Most days you can find huddled groups, some strumming

guitars while others clap complex rhythms; maybe a dancer swirling, or an older gentleman wailing the call to prayer that is flamenco singing.

Look closely, though, and you'll see that Cádiz curls a little at the edges. The cathedral ceiling is hung with nets, to prevent falling plaster from startling the penitent. Descend into the crypt, past the sign on the stairway that says, confusingly, "Please download here," and you'll find the graves covered in a sandy film.

Among the dead lies Manuel de Falla (1876-1946), Spain's greatest composer of last century, and a son of Cádiz. As well as



^ MANUEL DE FALLA



assuming pride of place in the cathedral, Falla has tributes dotted all over the city, from a plaque above his childhood home to the charming Librería Manuel de Falla bookstore and the impressive Moorish-facaded Gran Teatro Falla.

Three hundred kilometres and a world away from Cádiz is the city of Granada. Falla moved here in middle age but that's by the by. Granada is a tatty place; you'd almost call it charmless, were its brief moments of beauty not so splendidly

and Isabella, spend their eternal rest; and the country's greatest treasure: the Alhambra.

The Alhambra is a series of astonishing palaces, one of those places where photographs never do justice. Unlike the faux-Moorish Gran Teatro Falla, this is the real thing, begun in the 13th century, when Granada was a Muslim emirate.

The summer palace of the Alhambra is known as the Generalife (pronounce

it hen-a-ra-LEAF-ay, or something like that). Slightly elevated and therefore cooler than the rest of the complex, the Generalife is most famous for its gardens.

It is here that Falla sets the first movement of *Nights in the Gardens of Spain*, three conjoined nocturnes for piano and orchestra, which the APO plays on 4 August, with Spanish virtuoso Javier Perianes at the keyboard. The composer appropriately marks the score's opening section *tranquillo e misterioso* – tranquil and mysterious – mirroring the dreamlike serenity of the Generalife, a wonderland of flowers and frogs and fountains.

The air is heavy with jasmine. The amphibians, certain of their regal status and your lack of it, croak away unconcernedly on the edge of pools. The fountains are particularly significant; in Granada, where you can go months without rain, flowing water indicated

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Javier Perianes on... Falla the Frenchman

"Falla was in Paris when Paris was, culturally speaking, the centre of the world. There are many connections to France in *Nights in the Gardens of Spain*. The beginning of [Ravel's piano piece] *Jeux d'eau*, it's almost the same notes as the beginning of the piano part in *Nights in the Gardens of Spain*. Falla is literally quoting [Debussy's] *La mer* in the third movement. Of course there are Spanish dances and flamenco, but it's full of French colour, and this combination makes the piece absolutely a French-Spanish piece."

wealth. The people who built the Alhambra were very wealthy indeed. In the Generalife, as well as streams and pools and fountains there is a water stairway; they all help ignite the bursts of orange from flowering pomegranates.

The play of water is reflected in the ripples of Falla's piano, which you might think were very Spanish if they weren't so very French (see breakout box). Paris was Falla's home from 1907 until 1914, and where the influence and encouragement of friends like Ravel, Debussy and Dukas accelerated Falla's development. (In Paris he would also meet Stravinsky – just listen to the Spaniard's later Harpsichord Concerto and draw your own conclusions about the importance of that intersection.)

Falla began *Nights in the Gardens of Spain* in France but war forced him south, and the work was completed in Madrid. Paris was never the same and nor was Falla but for different reasons. While France languished, Falla prospered. Back in his homeland the piece he fashioned had the soul of Spain and the forms of France, except where soul and form were switched, as if the Pyrenees joined rather than separated the two countries. Either way, *Nights in the Gardens of Spain* was Franco-Hispanic music.

Another very different Franco caused Falla to leave Spain altogether. Francisco Franco became the fascist dictator in 1939. Falla moved to Argentina the same year. The two events were not unrelated. Franco's regime attempted to turn Falla into a standard bearer for the expression of nationalist sentiment in the arts. The composer was having none of it, and Falla settled in the Argentinian province of Córdoba. (Is it whimsical to imagine he went there to remind himself of *Nights in the Gardens of Spain*, the final movement of which is 'In the Gardens of the Sierra de Córdoba'?) He remained in Argentina for the rest of his life, despite various enticements from Franco's regime.

Sadly, Franco had the last laugh. Falla's composing career essentially ended once he left Europe, and he died in November 1946. At the Spanish government's insistence, Falla's body was flown home to Spain, where he was born, where he was revered, where he made his best music. And where Falla had asked not to be buried. ■

Javier Perianes 'Spanish music is for everyone'

Phil News: How did growing up in Andalusia in southern Spain shape you?

Javier Perianes: It's difficult to say. I could be tempted to tell you that Andalusia is one of the places where flamenco or Spanish music is more present and we live with this music from childhood, but it's not true in my case. It was a childhood full of light and friendship and activities because the weather here in the south of Spain invites you to have an outdoors life. Artistically, I would even say

this is not the best environment, because constantly you want to be out, not inside practising, but I was very dedicated and very responsible.

PN: How important is Falla to the development of classical music in Spain?

JP: For pianists there's a trio: Falla, Albéniz, Granados. Falla is the most international of them, because of his compositions for orchestra. Overall, Falla and [Renaissance composer Tomás de Luis] Victoria are the keystones of our international composition. My career has been very close to Falla. I recorded *Nights in the Gardens of Spain* more than 10 years ago [on the Harmonia Mundi label], so there's a long relationship.

PN: How has your interpretation changed since then?

JP: I want to think that the way I approach pieces after 10 years is not completely different, but there is some evolution. Any time you approach a score you need to find something fresh. A terrible word for any musician is 'routine'. So when I'm with an orchestra playing *Nights in*

the Gardens of Spain, and I hear that first chord, I think, "What a beautiful opportunity I have".

PN: The opening and especially the piano captures the essence of walking through the gardens of the Generalife. When you play this work, are you thinking musical things, or are you thinking metaphorical things like how otherworldly the gardens are?

JP: When I'm playing I'm listening to the music. Sometimes you have a glimpse of the perspective of the gardens or the magnificent landscape, but when I play I have to worry about the rhythms, the colour, find the right way to be flexible, listen to what's happening around you because you can't play without listening to the orchestra.

PN: Do you worry about being pigeonholed as a Spanish music specialist?

JP: Not at all. This is my third time with the APO; the first was Bartók 3 and the second Beethoven 4. I'm not scared of being considered a Spanish pianist who

plays Spanish music because I love it. But do I need to be Spanish to play Falla? No. Do you need to be German to play Beethoven? I don't think so. People say, "But Falla is very rhythmic." Yes, and so is Beethoven. That is my message for my colleagues: the music is not just for the Spanish people, it's for everyone.

Interview by Richard Betts

i The New Zealand Herald Premier Series

Firebird

7.30pm, Thursday 4 August

Auckland Town Hall

Conductor Shiyoon Sung*
Piano Javier Perianes

Salina Fisher *Tupaia*
Falla *Nights in the Gardens of Spain*
Boulanger *D'un matin de printemps*
Boulanger *D'un soir triste*
Stravinsky *The Firebird: Suite* (1919)

*Shiyoon Sung replaces the previously advertised Tianyi Lu.

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▼ ANDREW BEER



APO Concertmaster Andrew Beer leads a new concert series, Baroque & Beyond, combining Baroque masterworks with later works that have been inspired by them. Andrew Beer tells Tabatha McFadyen about the programme and the process.



Why has Bach had such a lasting hold over composers, performers and listeners of subsequent generations? Andrew Beer's answer is straightforward: "He's simply one of the greatest ever." Good point, well made.

When APO Director of Artistic Planning Gale Mahood came to Andrew with the idea for the Baroque & Beyond concert series, he was delighted to lead the project.

"I think it's a really exciting idea, because of course the Baroque music is well known and is an audience favourite, but then we're able challenge the audience as well. That's really important to both me and Gale – to provide a combination of comfort food and also something completely new."



KRISTIAN BEZUIDENHOUT

April's concert, Concerto Grosso, featured Handel and Purcell facing off against Britten and Holst. In October, Beer and his team need traverse just the two composers: Bach and the Estonian Arvo Pärt, who is among world's most performed living composers.

It's a tough assignment for Pärt, whose *Collage sur B-A-C-H* and *If Bach had been a Beekeeper...* are contrasted against Bach's Harpsichord Concert No.1 and Brandenburg Concerto No.5. The Brandenburg in particular is accepted to be a high-water mark of Baroque orchestral music, and in the concert you'll hear Pärt's works bravely wrestling with Bach's legacy.

"It's fascinating," says Beer. "Pärt starts with a lovely B-flat major section, but then right away he just tears it apart."

Tearing it apart in the Bach works will be visiting soloist Kristian Bezuidenhout. Bezuidenhout is a stylistic all-rounder. Perhaps best known as a period instrument fortepianist, he takes on the fiendishly difficult harpsichord role here, just a couple of days after performing on piano with the full orchestra in Mozart's 22nd concerto.

For Baroque & Beyond, Beer again leads the orchestra from his violin, so there'll be no conductor on the podium.

"It's 90 percent more exciting for me and nerve-racking as well – there's so much more responsibility. It's a great honour.

"It's also more responsibility and excitement for all the musicians, because there's a greater need from them to really know the other parts, to use their ears rather than their eyes – it ends up being like chamber music." ■

Ryman Healthcare presents Brandenburg 5

7.30pm, Tuesday 4 October

Holy Trinity Cathedral

Violin Andrew Beer
Flute Chien-Chun Hung*
Harpsichord Kristian Bezuidenhout

Arvo Pärt *Collage sur B-A-C-H*
J.S. Bach Harpsichord Concerto No.1
Arvo Pärt *If Bach had been
a Beekeeper...*

J.S. Bach Brandenburg Concerto No.5

*Chien-Chun Hung replaces the
previously advertised Melanie Lançon.

apo.co.nz/brandenburg-5



The Love and the Detail

Tiana Lyes speaks with one of the APO's unsung heroes:
Artistic Coordinator Debbie Nicholson

With a job that offers unprecedented access to world-class artists – and all their idiosyncrasies – Debbie Nicholson must have a story or two to tell.

Sadly, the APO's Artistic Coordinator remains coy when pressed. "I'm supposed to be very discreet, of course," Debbie smiles, "and funnily enough, it's rare to find any backstage drama or diva-ish demands to speak of, and certainly no bowls of hand-picked, blue M&Ms."

"We don't do riders [a set of backstage requests for the artist] for mainstage concerts," Debbie explains. "While the guest artist's expectations are usually perfectly reasonable and straightforward – water, some fruit – we have always prided ourselves on looking after our artists. Anything they want, they can just ask and we'll do everything in our power to make sure that they're comfortable. It's essential they're happy and in good shape."

This hospitable-by-default approach to looking after APO's guests has remained unchanged for the nearly 20 years that Debbie has been with the orchestra, and forms a large part of her work.

"I have been told that the APO's reputation is such that word gets around the international scene, 'You should go to the APO – New Zealand's fabulous and you'll get looked after while you're there,'" Debbie says.

Another artist highlight is the opportunity to join concertgoers and musicians in the D Bar at the Town Hall after a concert. "The feedback from guest

artists is that it's a unique and special experience to mingle and unwind in such a relaxed way; it's not something they experience a lot overseas."

A former APO staffer explained Debbie's role as being "all about the love and the detail". The detail comes first: finalising contracts, booking flights and hotel, liaising with conductors on rehearsal schedules, and arranging visas and ground transport. The love is next. "Once the guest artist arrives, I'm their primary point of contact, making sure they are comfortable, prepared, and that they have an enjoyable and stress-free time while they're here."

Not listed on her job description but often called upon: ideas for day trips if the artist has a day off (visits to West Coast beaches and Waiheke Island lunch at a vineyard are favourite suggestions) and thinking on her feet to avoid concert night disaster. Debbie recalls one when memorable incident

when, in the rush of a costume change, a discarded bra had become hooked to the back of a soloist's dress during an Opera in Concert performance. Debbie hurried

to the wings for the soloist's stage exit, discreetly unhooked the offending bra and threw it in the corner of the dressing room. To this day she hopes she saved the singer the embarrassment of knowing what had occurred.

But Debbie's job looks a little different in the era of Covid. Nowadays she and the artistic team are always preparing for 'what if?' What if the borders aren't open? What if the artist gets sick? What if (until

quite recently) there are no MIQ spots, or isolation periods change? What if the flight is cancelled? Critical worker border exemptions, when they were required, didn't come with pre-booked quarantine, so like thousands of others, Debbie faced the stress of joining a lottery queue to secure hotel rooms – and the stakes are high for the APO.

Inevitably, her success rate with the many requirements and restrictions due to Covid have been mixed, and Debbie is despondent about it. "There's so much

riding on it," she sighs. "People reassure me that it's not within my control, but it's been really hard." With all of this playing heavily on her mind, plan Bs and

“
I have been told that the APO's reputation is such that word gets around the international scene, 'you should go to the APO – New Zealand's fabulous and you'll get looked after while you're there'
”

even plan Cs are carefully managed. Application form-filling is now a huge part of the job.

Even pre-Covid, a plan B was essential. Debbie recalls times where she's had to phone an artist who has slept through their alarm and is just minutes from their stage call, driven a guest soloist from a yoga session just 30 minutes before showtime and, when an artist has felt unwell, alerting the team, organising a doctor and having a replacement artist on standby.

During concert weeks the days can be long, particularly for an Opera in Concert, where she is attending to a number of soloists rehearsing for up to 10 to 14 days in the lead up to concert night. But the work is incredibly rewarding. "There have been many times when I would be sitting in the hall during a concert, and the tears of emotion would well up. After going through the week's rehearsals, and hearing it all come to fruition with the most amazing soloists, seeing everything gel with the incredible musicians of the orchestra or knowing how much the conductor loves this particular symphony I'd think, this is why I do this. So many people in our organisation have this feeling."

Debbie describes the feeling as "familonia", a portmanteau of 'family' and 'philharmonia' coined by another APO staffer. "Even though the APO has grown in number over the years, we have retained this incredible sense of family, and that extends to the conductors and soloists who join us."

Debbie's own musical background is in flute, and she previously worked as a flute teacher before joining the APO. But she says it's parenting that has given her the best experience for the job. She raised four children in the Hokianga over 10 years, was heavily involved in early childhood music education in the Far North Playcentre Association, then moved back to Auckland. She likes to take an organised and nurturing approach. "I put myself in [the artist's] shoes. Sure, they are an incredibly talented star of whom we are in awe,

but they're also a person who's been travelling for a long time, often jetlagged, away from their family. Mostly I know they will appreciate clarity about what's required of them and a good measure of kindness and care." ■



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APO horn player and conductor
David Kay shares the three pieces of
music that changed his life.



ELTON JOHN

'The Greatest Discovery' from *Live in Australia*

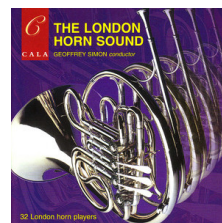
This is one of my go-to albums for nostalgia. During a trip to England with my family in 1996, I was in a local music store in Beverley, Yorkshire, and I picked up a copy of this concert recorded in Melbourne 10 years before. We spent many an hour on the train travelling around the country and Elton John pounded out through my headphones courtesy of a Sony Discman. James Newton Howard completed the arrangements for the orchestra. They complement Elton's sound and add that extra layer of finesse to his song writing. The live version of the 1970 song 'The Greatest Discovery' is the track I turn to the most, for its opening cello solo and gentle orchestral accompaniment. I guess in a way it was shaping my musical world; I have been involved as a conductor across many different collaborations over the years with people like Tim Finn, Marlon Williams, Teeks and most recently Rob Ruha and Tami Neilson.



BERNSTEIN

'Mambo' from *West Side Story*, by Gustavo Dudamel and the Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra

If ever there is a need for a little inspiration and enthusiasm needed to get me through the day, the go-to is the 2007 riot that is the Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra at the BBC Proms in the Albert Hall. There is infectious enthusiasm for playing over the stage, and you can't help but be swept away with the music, dancing and on-stage antics. Dudamel's youth and energy are matched by the players, who have the time of their lives playing this great music from *West Side Story*. It's also an engaging way to see young people – the future of music – creating something magical; it's an inspiration for all of us wanting to see our art form continue to flourish.



LONDON HORN SOUND

'Caravan'

Back in the early 2000s I was engrossed in the world of horn, both playing and studying. Through my studies I found a fabulous recording by 32 of London's top horn players of the late-1990s performing works from Mozart through to Queen. Without a doubt this was one of the most influential albums of my student days. It had this fabulous sound of 32 horns playing *Titanic* and 'Bohemian Rhapsody' and my favourite, the great Duke Ellington standard 'Caravan'. It was a sound that blew me away and set me on my path to the Guildhall School of Music and Drama to study with five of the players on the album. I was fortunate to be studying in London at the time of their second album, *Give it One*, and was able to sit in on the recording sessions at Abbey Road studios. Stunning horn playing and arrangements that take me back to the student days of London, and still make me want to be able to play like they do on the album!



Jonathan Cohen started playing music on the violin from age 5, and considered taking up the oboe later. The APO Principal Clarinetist ultimately switched to learning the clarinet from age 9.

In hindsight it was inevitable. Jonathan grew up in a musical family, and both his father and grandfather were clarinet players. "There were *lots* of clarinets lying around," says Jonathan. In a neat bit of symmetry, Jonathan went on to study clarinet at The Juilliard School in New York — the same as his grandfather had done, about 70 years earlier.

Hailing originally from New Orleans, Louisiana, Jonathan has worked extensively throughout the United States and in Germany, including with the Bavarian Radio Symphony, International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE), New York Philharmonic, and Metropolitan Opera Orchestra to name but a few. His first professional position was with the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra in Saint Paul, Minnesota. He remembers one winter when the temperature fell to -40 degrees (the point where Fahrenheit and Celsius meet, fact fans). It was a long way from New Orleans.

"I really like New Zealand's temperate climate," he deadpans.

While freelancing in New York in 2019, an APO position was brought to Jonathan's attention, and he has been with the orchestra ever since.

He made the shift to New Zealand as the pandemic was taking hold in February 2020, and only a month before the first lockdown began. While he says he loves living in New Zealand, he admits it was a strange beginning to calling it home.

The clarinet's development is commonly attributed to German instrument maker Johann Christoph Denner in the late 17th and early 18th centuries. In essence a straight wooden tube with a hollow bore, it produces sound by way of a single-reed (usually made from cane) attached

to the mouthpiece. As reeds warp or soften easily, they need to be constantly maintained and replaced. Jonathan admits this is a common bugbear for clarinet players, but says it's part of being a professional.

“Inevitably, every concert day you will feel like you don’t have quite the perfect reed ready, so you become accustomed to making it work.”

"Inevitably, every concert day you will feel like you don't have quite the perfect reed ready, so you become accustomed to making it work."

Clarinets come in a variety of registers covering various sizes and tones, and their sound is incredibly versatile, equally at home in big band, classical, jazz and even pop music. Jonathan explains that while he usually defaults to the B \flat clarinet for day-to-day practise, the A clarinet monopolised the early part of the year, when he was preparing

for APO's April performance of Nielsen's Clarinet Concerto, where he was soloist.

"The Nielsen has a reputation as being one of the hardest pieces [for clarinet] technically speaking," he says. "Nielsen wrote it for the clarinet player Aage Oxenvad, who was purportedly bi-polar, so he had manic mood swings and the piece is meant to reflect that." Some parts of the concerto are loud and aggressive, others are deeply lyrical, and a prominent snare drum throughout introduces almost battle march-like elements.




After playing a few of Nielsen's symphonies with APO's Music Director Giordano Bellincampi at the podium in previous seasons, Jonathan was delighted to join forces with Giordano again for the Clarinet Concerto this year. He describes how Nielsen's works aren't intended to be controlled and precise, but rather a little excited and unrestrained — a quality the conductor embraces.

"Giordano loves Nielsen, and I remember when we did the 5th Symphony it had these crazy clarinet solos. All Giordano would say was, 'more, more, more!'" ■



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Youth Justice

In 2021 the APO's Connecting education and outreach programme participated in Oranga Tamariki & Arts Access Aotearoa's arts programmes pilot, providing workshops to rangatahi in two youth justice residences.

Arts Access Aotearoa's belief that "participation in the arts can foster self-esteem, agency and self-exploration; it can be healing, rehabilitative and educational" resonated strongly with the APO Connecting team, whose catch-phrase 'Music Opens Minds' encapsulates the APO's belief in the transformative power of music and creative expression.

APO's part in the pilot was to provide three workshops throughout Term 3 of the 2021 school year, to students across three youth justice school units in South Auckland's Korowai Manaaki youth residence. APO musicians William Loveless (French horn), James (Xin) Jin (violin), and Jess Hix (percussion), worked alongside the talented Tongan-born musician, recording artist and actor Rizván Tu'itahi. Rizván had worked with the youth justice system before, bringing invaluable experience and an infectious, empowering energy to the project.

Over the three workshops, students were to write their own rap songs, which they would record and edit

with Rizván. William, James and Jess would assist Rizván, introduce their different instruments to participants, and ad-lib music to be incorporated into students' tracks.

The first workshop was a great success but the start of Covid-19 lockdown in August quickly put an end to in-person sessions. This spurred the APO Connecting team to adapt the project digitally and find new ways of engaging with participants. Rizván led a series of interviews with the APO musicians that were shown to students. Fortunately, several songs had also been recorded at the first workshop, which Rizván edited together after William, James and Jess recorded their parts at home. The resulting pieces of music are remarkable considering the short amount of time the group spent together, and paint a powerful picture of the students' desire to return home to their families.

Despite the ever-shifting circumstances and disruptions of the pandemic, APO Connecting was thrilled

to be a part of Arts Access Aotearoa's pilot and to provide rangatahi in the youth justice system the opportunity to experience and engage in live music-making. Our thanks to the incredible Arts Access Aotearoa team who worked so hard to make the project possible. We hope the pilot will attract ongoing funding and be built into a long-term programme.

Many thanks to Oranga Tamariki and Creative New Zealand for funding this Arts Access Aotearoa pilot programme.

▼ JAMES & RIZ



East Tāmaki's Anthem

In 2021 APO Connecting was proud to welcome East Tāmaki School to the APO Partnership Schools (APOPS) programme, which works with over 60 schools across Tāmaki Makau Rau every year.

Each APOPS membership is shaped by the APO Connecting team to cater to the unique needs of individual schools. For East Tāmaki School, the primary objective of 2021 membership was to compose an original school anthem involving all of its student music groups. East Tāmaki has an impressive selection of different music ensembles thanks to music education specialist and teacher Maria Winder, who retired at the end of 2021. Whether it was the choirs, the ukulele groups, the marimba players of the log drummers, Maria and principal Sarah Mirams wanted everyone to be involved.

To begin the project, performers from the Pacifica Arts Centre visited for three storytelling workshops with the entire school, to kick-start creativity and encourage students to think about their school's identity. APO Connecting then brought in freelance composer and sought-after arranger Ryan Youens to lead the school's music ensembles in a series of song writing workshops.

Ryan asked East Tāmaki's students:

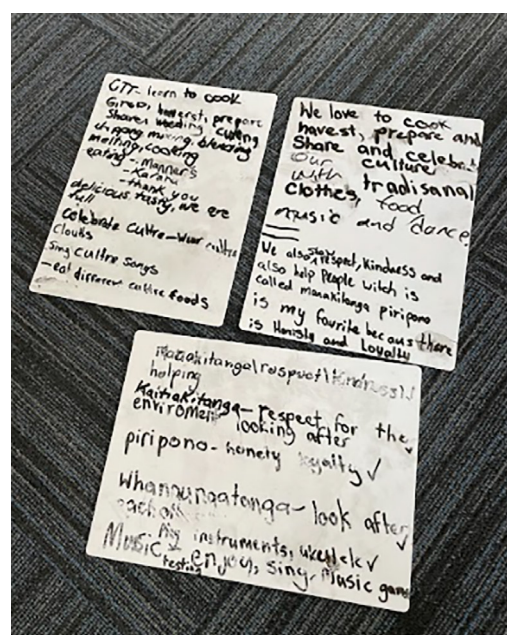
1. What does it mean to be in East Tāmaki in 2021?
2. What's your favourite thing about your community?
3. How would you describe East Tāmaki school to a newcomer or new student?

Students then brainstormed their own lyrics, rhythms and melodies, which Ryan arranged into a unified piece with accessible parts for the school's young singers and instrumentalists. The full song was given the title 'Kia Kōtahi Tātou', meaning 'together as one'.

Before COVID-19 restrictions began in August, the intention was for APO musicians to work with the school's music groups to prepare their parts, before performing and recording the anthem in full at the school's end of year music showcase in December 2021. Instead Ryan presented the final song and parts to East Tāmaki participants over Zoom, which the tamariki have been practising at home and in remote school sessions.

APO Connecting and East Tāmaki School are now planning a delayed showcase performance for parents in 2022, and can't wait to bring the new school anthem to life!

Many thanks to Stephanie Markson for generously funding East Tāmaki School's APOPS membership.



✓ FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: LAISNET, KALO, SHALOM, ANA, MAKAYLA, RUBE, ZACHARY, ADI, RONEL, JOSEPH, AND METUA

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APO 4 Kids Teleports to August/September

Parents – and their littlies – will be pleased to learn that the ever-popular APO 4 Kids shows have been rescheduled. Originally slated for April but Covid-affected at the time, two concerts will now play at 10am and 11:30am on Sunday 28 August, in Takapuna's Bruce Mason Centre. A pair of Auckland Town Hall concerts take place the following Saturday, 3 September, also at 10am and 11:30am.

The theme for this year's shows is space, so expect music and activities about space, stars and the planets in this special interactive one-hour concert with the full APO. Sing-along, dance-along and conduct-along to some popular space-themed orchestral works.

APO 4 Kids is a fantastic way to show the youngest members of your family just how much fun music can be. Come early for pre-concert musical activities and learn more about the instruments.



Further information:

apo.co.nz/apo4kids-in-space

FRIENDS NEWS

The Friends of the APO began the year a little late but the first Meet The Artist event at our usual venue in Ellerslie signalled a return with a vengeance. We were right back into our wonderful musical contributions and quality interviews and the next few months promise to be equally exciting.

In August we will be entertained by Vincent Hardaker, who will give a quick lesson about how to be a conductor.



This should be a lot of fun. There will be the customary Q&A at the end, followed by lunch, before we all go our separate ways.

We enjoy a special relationship with the orchestra, helped in no small part by the activities at the Town Hall on concert nights. The suppers for the orchestra are legendary around the world – according to the international guests who visit our shores.

We welcome new members and promise an enjoyable time at our Meet The Artist events through the year and special fundraising events. You will be introduced to a friendly group of like-minded people who are all eager to hear good music and an interview with some well-known soloists, conductors and administrators. See the Friends page on the APO website for details and the opportunity to join online. The website is updated regularly with the next guests performing at the MTAs, plus our fundraising events run in conjunction with APO Connecting.

< VINCENT HARDAKER
PHOTOGRAPHED BY ADRIAN MALLOCH

COME AND JOIN US.

MEET THE ARTIST DATES:

26 August

30 September

28 November

FUNDRAISING EVENTS:

17 August

Film and Lunch

21 August

**Haydn Staples Piano
Scholars recital**



For further information about the APO Friends

Jackie Wilkinson, President:
wilkinsj@xtra.co.nz

**Bryce Bartley,
Membership Secretary:**
Bryce_chris@inspire.net.nz

CRESCENDO NEWS

EXCLUSIVE ORCHESTRA EXPERIENCES

The APO's famous membership programme is ready for more vibrant socialising and revelling in great musical experiences.

Crescendo membership gives you exclusive benefits that suit your interests, as well as the enjoyment of being a part of the APO family.

- Interval drinks and canapés.
- Mixing with APO musicians.
- Exclusive access to Crescendo open rehearsals.
- The chance to meet visiting conductors and soloists.
- A warm and welcoming social network of like-minded music lovers.

These are just some of the benefits on offer to Crescendo members. Join Crescendo to elevate your concert experience into the perfect musical night out.

i For more information about opportunities to support the orchestra and/or to join Crescendo, please contact our Development Team:

development@apo.co.nz

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Already a member?

Why not consider gifting a membership to a musically inclined friend or family member?

Share your love of music with enthusiastic concertgoers – there's no better way to show your support for Auckland's orchestra.

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Unleash your inner Poirot and enjoy the lavish interplay between music and mystery, creating an evening like no other.

Delight in a selection of classical music featuring musicians from the APO as events unfold throughout this evening of intrigue.

Indulge in a divine three-course dinner with fine wines.

6.30pm, Saturday 29 October

This event supports APO Connecting, our award-winning education, outreach and community programme



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STANLEY ST PRESENTS

CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS

FESTIVE FAVOURITES AND FAIRY LIGHTS

7.30pm, Friday 16 December
3pm, Saturday 17 December
Holy Trinity Cathedral, Parnell

Conductor Benjamin Bayl
Soprano Anna Leese

The Graduate Choir NZ
Director Terence Maskell

Stanley St

December in Auckland is a wonderful time of year with pōhutukawa in full bloom, the summer sun glinting on the Waitematā and the APO's annual Christmas concert.

Music is at the heart of any celebration and a marvellous way to embrace the festive spirit of this special time of the year. This year we welcome popular New Zealand soprano Anna Leese as our soloist as well as the return of the sublime Graduate Choir NZ.

This much-loved event in the APO calendar will include Yuletide orchestral favourites like Tchaikovsky's *The Nutcracker* and Prokofiev's *Troika* together with a generous helping of traditional Christmas carols.

Come along, bring your family and friends, and share the spirit of the holiday season.

Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra gratefully acknowledges the contributions made by the following companies, trusts and organisations.

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For information about business partnerships and corporate events, contact:

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DATE	CONCERT/ ACTIVITY	TIME	LOCATION
Thu 4 Aug	NZ Herald Premier Series: FIREBIRD	7.30pm	Auckland Town Hall
Thu 18 Aug	Bayleys Great Classics: LARK ASCENDING	7.30pm	Auckland Town Hall
Sat 20 Aug	Community Classics West: SNOW & ICE	3pm	The Trusts Arena, Henderson
Sun 28 Aug	APO Connecting: APO 4 KIDS IN SPACE	10am & 11.30am	Bruce Mason Centre
Mon 29 Aug	In Your Neighbourhood: THE OBOE & THE HORN	6.30pm	All Saints Church, Howick
Tue 30 Aug	In Your Neighbourhood: THE OBOE & THE HORN	6.30pm	St Luke's Church, Remuera
Fri 2 Sep	APO Up Close: UP CLOSE WITH BACH	6.30pm	St Luke's Church, Remuera
Sat 3 Sep	APO Connecting: APO 4 KIDS IN SPACE	10am & 11.30am	Auckland Town Hall
Thu 8 Sep	NZ Herald Premier Series: GROSVENOR PLAYS GRIEG	7.30pm	Auckland Town Hall
Wed 21 Sep	New Zealand Opera: VERDI'S MACBETH	7.30pm	Aotea Centre
Fri 23 Sep	New Zealand Opera: VERDI'S MACBETH	7.30pm	Aotea Centre
Sun 25 Sep	New Zealand Opera: VERDI'S MACBETH	7.30pm	Aotea Centre
Thu 29 Sep	NZ Herald Premier Series: BEZUIDENHOUT'S MOZART	7.30pm	Auckland Town Hall
Tue 4 Oct	Baroque & Beyond: BRANDENBURG 5	7.30pm	Holy Trinity Cathedral
Thu 6 Oct	Kapiti Ice Cream presents: THE PRINCESS BRIDE IN CONCERT	7.30pm	Aotea Centre
Sat 15 Oct	Ryman Healthcare presents: ROOM ON THE BROOM & STICK MAN	11.30am & 2pm	Aotea Centre
Tue 18 Oct	Unwrap the Music: BERNSTEIN'S SYMPHONIC DANCES	6.30pm	Auckland Town Hall
Fri 21 Oct	APO Session Series: BENEE & THE APO	8pm	Auckland Town Hall
Sat 22 Oct	APO Session Series: BENEE & THE APO	8pm	Auckland Town Hall
Sat 29 Oct	APO Fundraiser: THE MYSTERY OF THE MISSING VIOLIN	6.30pm	The Hilton Hotel
Sun 30 Oct	Community Classics Central: SNOW & ICE	3pm	Auckland Town Hall
Sat 12 Nov	NZ Herald Premier Series: ALPINE SYMPHONY	7.30pm	Auckland Town Hall
Thur 24 Nov	Bayleys Great Classics: FLITER PLAYS CHOPIN	7.30pm	Auckland Town Hall
Thu 1 Dec	NZ Herald Premier Series: STAR-CROSSED LOVERS	7.30pm	Auckland Town Hall
Sat 3 Dec	APO Connecting: APO 4 KIDS CHRISTMAS	10am & 11.30am	Auckland Town Hall
Sat 3 Dec	APO Up Close: UP CLOSE WITH BAROQUE CONCERTOS	6.30pm	Concert Chamber, Auckland Town Hall
Fri 16 Dec	Stanley St presents: CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS	7.30pm	Holy Trinity Cathedral
Sat 17 Dec	Stanley St presents: CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS	3pm	Holy Trinity Cathedral
Sun 18 Dec	APO Connecting: APO 4 KIDS CHRISTMAS	10am & 11.30am	Bruce Mason Centre, Takapuna

All event details are correct at time of printing this publication.

Due to the continued uncertainty of Covid-19, and its effects on our community, we may be required to make changes to the concert date, repertoire, soloists and/or conductors of our advertised concerts.

We will stay in contact with ticket holders but also recommend checking in at apo.co.nz for up to date information.

We appreciate your understanding in these challenging times.



Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra

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Auckland 1142

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