



2019 Concert

Sunday June 23, 2pm
Dunedin Town Hall



Many thanks for coming to our concert and supporting the orchestra and the Otago Community Hospice.

We are thrilled to be in Dunedin this year and honoured to be part of the University of Otago's 150th anniversary celebrations.

Programme

Anthony Ritchie
Hippocratic Hymn

Johannes Brahms
Academic Festival Overture

Emmanuel Séjourné
Concerto for Marimba and Strings

I – Tempo souple

II – Rhythmique énergique

Soloist: Rachel Thomas

INTERVAL

Antonin Dvořák
Symphony no 9 “From the New World”

I: Adagio – Allegro molto

II: Largo

III: Molto vivace

IV: Allegro con fuoco

Programme Notes

Anthony Ritchie (b.1960) **Hippocratic Hymn, Op 204**

Anthony Ritchie is an established New Zealand composer with many commissioned works including concertos for violin, viola, flute, guitar and euphonium, four symphonies, chamber music, and six operas. He is currently Professor of Music at the University of Otago.

This short piece for brass, percussion and organ was commissioned by the New Zealand Doctors' Orchestra for a premiere at this concert. It aims to capture in music the ethical and selfless ethos that doctors aspire to in their profession, as exemplified by the Hippocratic Oath.

Johannes Brahms (1833 – 1897) **Academic Festival Overture, Op 80**

The academic record of Johannes Brahms was not particularly impressive. He never completed his undergraduate studies and had a dislike of the formality and tradition pervasive across most universities. Nonetheless, after achieving considerable success as a composer, he found himself nominated for numerous honorary doctorates.

The first, from the University of Cambridge, he declined, choosing to avoid the travel and ceremony that would have been necessary. The second, from the University of Breslau, he did accept – and by way of a thank-you sent a postcard. This was not well-received, and he was informed by the conductor Bernard Scholz, who had nominated him for the doctorate, that the University was rather expecting something more: “Compose a fine symphony for us!”.

Brahms' response was somewhat sly. Although the *Academic Festival Overture* displays superb compositional craft, it draws most of its melodies from popular songs of the day – songs more associated with the beer hall than the concert hall. In Brahms' own words, the result is “a very boisterous potpourri of student drinking songs”. The overture concludes with a triumphant rendition of *Gaudeamus igitur* – today well-known as the graduation hymn for the University of Otago, and many other institutions, but in Brahms' Germany beloved of many inebriated students.

Emmanuel Séjourné (b. 1961)

Concerto for Marimba and Strings

I – Tempo souple

II – Rhythmique énergique

Emmanuel Séjourné is a prominent contemporary French composer and percussionist, holding the position since 1984 of professor of mallet percussion at the Conservatoire de Strasbourg. His compositional output is most notable for award-winning incidental music for staged dramas and films, and for a number of works for percussion.

The *Concerto for Marimba and String Orchestra* was written in 2006 following a commission by the marimba virtuoso Bogdan Băcanu, who premiered it at the International Marimba Competition in 2006. In the short period of time since it has quickly gained favour, with its two movements displaying both the lyrical and expressive capability of the marimba, as well as its capacity for rhythmic drive.

Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)

Symphony No. 9 in E minor, “From the New World”, Op. 95

I – Adagio-Allegro molto

II – Largo

III – Molto vivace

IV – Allegro con fuoco

The genesis of Dvořák's *New World* Symphony – one of the most famous works in the repertoire – arguably starts with the wealthy New York philanthropist Jeanette Thurber. Thurber was a great supporter of the arts, with an apparent quest to cultivate a distinctively American style of music – a style that had yet to emerge in the late 19th century, when most music performed in American concert halls was either German in origin, or Germanic in style.

It was partially on this basis that Thurber was instrumental, in 1885, in setting up the now-defunct National Conservatory of Music of America in New York City. She was also instrumental in enticing Dvořák to take up residence in New York as director of the conservatory, with the allure of a staggeringly high salary and a contract that required only three hours of work a day while providing four months' holiday each summer. It is presumed that

Thurber's strong desire to bring Dvořák to America arose, at least in part, out of the Czech nationalism that pervades much of his music. Who better to help cultivate American nationalism in music than an already-established nationalist composer?

And herein lies the still-debated paradox of Dvořák ninth symphony, *From the New World*. Commissioned by the New York Philharmonic, and with a title that directly cites the influence of America, it is tempting to view the work as Dvořák's attempt to bring the music and scenery of America into the concert hall – much as his broader repertoire is so obviously influenced by the traditional music of his native Bohemia. And yet, it is written by a proud Bohemian who would struggle to remove Czech nationalism from his music even if he tried. (Dvořák's cello concerto also dates from his time in America, and arguably contains no suggestion that he ever left Europe). Much of the symphony is stylistically indistinguishable from his other orchestral works – so was Dvořák truly influenced by this new country?

If there are influences of America, they are most present in the middle two movements of the symphony. Both seemingly, in part, draw from early sketches for a never-completed work based on *The Song of Hiawatha*, an epic poem featuring Native American characters - and Dvořák did have some fleeting exposure to Native American music while in America. There is also a possible influence of African-American music: Dvořák was introduced to traditional spirituals by the African-American composer Harry Burleigh, and it has been suggested that Dvořák's choice of the cor anglais for the famous solo that opens the second movement was due to its resemblance to Burleigh's singing voice.

However, much as Dvořák's broader repertoire doesn't directly quote Czech folk music, instead using the rhythms and general style, the *New World* symphony doesn't directly quote any Native American or African-American music. It is perhaps on this basis, and on the basis of the symphony not dramatically deviating from Dvořák's characteristic style, that Dvořák only added the title *From the New World* very late in its composition (perhaps almost as an after-thought), and would later write that the symphony should be regarded as having only "impressions and greetings from the New World", as seen by a curious visitor.

Programme notes by Tom Wilkinson.

The Soloist

Rachel Thomas grew up in Christchurch after moving from England at nine years of age in 2003. She played music in various Christchurch ensembles throughout her school years, before studying performance percussion at the University of Canterbury under Brett Painter and Roanna Funcke, and graduating with a Bachelor of Music in 2015. Rachel is currently in her fourth year of studying medicine at the University of Auckland, this year based in Middlemore Hospital in South Auckland. She works as a freelance percussionist around the Auckland region, playing and teaching in various community orchestras, brass bands and ensembles.

Rachel has performed professionally and as a regular player and soloist in orchestras, brass bands and ensembles throughout New Zealand, Australia, Europe and Asia. Most notable of the groups she has performed with are the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra, Christchurch Symphony Orchestra, National Brass Band of NZ, NZSO National Youth Orchestra, NZ Doctors' Orchestra (2016 & 2017), From Scratch, and Strike. She performed as a marimba soloist with the National Brass Band for their 2017 tour of NZ, Hong Kong, the Netherlands and Germany. She is a regular pro-player with Australian brass bands in their National Championships.

Rachel made history by becoming the first percussionist to win the NZ Brass Band Championships 'Champion of Champions' title. She was also the youngest player to win, and only the second ever woman. She achieved this in 2016 and 2017. She has also gained first place in other competitions, such as the National Brass Band Championships Open Percussion Solo (2015 - 2017), Big Bang Competition Open Percussion Solo (2014 and 2015), and placed highly in the National Brass Band Championships Slow Melody Contest (2017), and the National Concerto Competition (2015).

The Conductor

Peter Adams is an Associate Professor of Music at the University of Otago and a well-known conductor, composer and clarinetist. He has built up a fine reputation as a musical leader in the community working with many local organisations including City Choir Dunedin, Opera Otago, St Kilda Brass, the Dunedin Symphony Orchestra and the Dunedin Youth Orchestra, and he has also guest conducted all around New Zealand and Australia with orchestras, brass bands and choirs.

Peter is somewhat of a specialist in conducting young people: he has been musical director of the National Youth Brass Band of New Zealand, the Waitaki Summer Music School, the Auckland Philharmonia Summer School, the South Island Youth Orchestra and the New Zealand Secondary Schools Symphony Orchestra.

We welcome Peter to his debut conducting the New Zealand Doctors' Orchestra.

The Orchestra

Violin 1

Juno Pyun~^T
Justine Bradley^C
Roy Knill^A
Allister Bush^W
Owen Bradfield^{AU}
Jasmine Jiang §^C
Sharon Park^A
Eric Kim^D
Albert Wu^A
Alison Sorley^A
Phil Hazell^{HB}

Violin 2

Louise Webster*^A
Nick Pittar*^{+ C}
Iain Ward^C
Selena Sun §^A
Daniel Wong^C
Lynette Murdoch^C
Stewart Mann^N
Luke Nie §^D
Erika Sirisomboonwong^C
Eva Hochstein^A

Viola

Anthony Doyle*^A
Nicola Austin^C
John Bonifant^W
Hugh Townend^M
Alex Hurrell^C
Tonya Sadler^C
Bex Wire^{Wa}

Cello

Peter Fleischl*^{Ta}
Jane MacDonald^W
Catherine Kwak §^A
Dom Monaghan^W
Clare Woodward^A
Katy Brett^C
Hannah Kim §^A
Umayya Gamalath §^C

Double bass

Tim Wilkinson*^C
Kate Stephens^D
John Blunt^{+ C}

Flute

Karin Lamb*^C
Malcolm Carmichael^H
Hannah Suh §^A

Oboe

Charlie Lin §^{* A}
Lucinda Atkinson^{Bl}
Ruth Moore^B
Jonathan Christiansen^A

Cor anglais

Jonathan Christiansen^A

Clarinet

Andrew Marshall^{* W}
Elias Chandran^H
Rachel Wu §^D

Bassoon

Martin Gardner*^C
James Smythe §^D

French horn

Rhona Sommerville*^A
Emma MacCallum^{Ri}
Christian Martin^{+ C}
Tom Steele^{+ C}

Trumpet

Rowena Howard*^W
Andrius Ramonas^A
Lucy Page-Dalton^C
Matt McCall^I

Trombone

Mark Barnes*^R
Janet MacPherson^C
Alfie Gamble Blakey^{+ D}

Tuba

Errol Moore^{+ D}

Organ

Jonathan Christiansen^A

Timpani

Neil Price^A

Percussion

Neil Pickering^{+ D}
Ken Young^{+ W}

* = principal
~ = leader
+ = guest player

§ = medical student

A:Auckland; Au:Australia; Bl:Bay of Islands; B:Blenheim; C:Christchurch; D:Dunedin; H:Hamilton; HB:Hawkes Bay; I: Invercargill; M:Martinborough; N:Nelson; R:Rotorua; Ri: Riverton; T:Timaru; Ta:Taupo; W:Wellington; Wa:Wanaka

About the Orchestra

This is the eighth year that the New Zealand Doctors' Orchestra has met – our first concerts were in Nelson in 2012 and 2013, followed by New Plymouth in 2013 and 2014, Napier in 2016, Christchurch in 2017, and Napier again in 2018.

With the exception of a small number of guest players, members of the orchestra are doctors or medical students. All members maintain a strong part-time interest in music, with many having very impressive musical CVs.

Around a half of the doctors and students in the orchestra this year are graduates or current students of the University of Otago.

Each year we have donated all proceeds from ticket sales to local hospices. This year we are proud to donate all proceeds to the **Otago Community Hospice**.

Acknowledgements

We are honoured to be part of the **University of Otago's 150th anniversary celebrations** and very grateful to the university for a significant contribution to the costs of running this event.

We're also grateful for sponsorship from the University of Otago (Division of Humanities Performing Arts Fund and the Medical School), the University of Auckland (Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences) and MAS, which has been used to subsidise costs for our student players.

Thank-you to St Kilda Brass for the hire of musical instruments, and a huge thank-you to Paul Claman for his work as our stage manager.

