

Doctors provide sound treatment

MUSIC REVIEW

**New Zealand Doctors' Orchestra
TSB Theatre Royal, June 29
Review by Alan Purdy**

Seventy medicos from throughout New Zealand gathered in New Plymouth but they were not here to discuss the latest research findings. This was the third annual get-together of the New Zealand Doctors' Orchestra.

After only two days of intensive rehearsal under conductor Mark Hodgkinson, they gave an impressive concert on Sunday to an appreciative audience.

Some players no doubt find time alongside their demanding work to play in their hometown orchestras, but for many it was patently a rewarding experience to be rekindling their musical talents.

Written especially for the NZDO, violinist Louise Webster's *I Never Will* was a bold, if sombre opening to the programme. Inspired by a letter from a conscientious objector, it ably conveyed emotions – loneliness, loss, fears and forebodings. The players managed

jagged rhythms and angry dissonances with confidence, all framed by a lonesome flute.

Clarinetist Ryan Cha stepped up front for the first movement of Mozart's *Clarinet Concerto*. His smooth, dark honey-like tone was occasionally overwhelmed by the orchestra (twice the size of Mozart's), but the solo passages and orchestral tuttis were thrilling. It would have been good to hear the other two movements, but there is a limit to what can be achieved in a weekend!

Elgar's famous *Pomp and Circumstance March*, alias *Land of Hope and Glory* was given a rousing performance with bold brass, sumptuous strings and a piping piccolo. Keen applause brought an encore.

A consummate performance of Brahms' *Symphony No. 2* was the highlight of the concert. There were minuscule slips of tuning and timing, but the overall cohesion was amazing.

A broad palette of rich Brahmsian colour was most impressive, but for me the chorale-like opening to the third movement for woodwind with pizzicato cellos was magic.

Thank you NZDO. We hope you will return to New Plymouth next year.