

AYO

Auckland Youth Orchestra



2016 March/April Concert Series

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PERFORMANCES

Howick, All Saints Church, 31 March 7PM
Whangarei, Forum North, 2 April 7.30PM
Kerikeri, Turner Centre, 3 April 2.30PM
Auckland Town Hall, 10 April 2.30PM

PROGRAMME

Bedřich Smetana
The Moldau (Vltava)

Louis Spohr
Clarinet Concerto No. 1

INTERVAL (20 minutes)

Jean Sibelius
Symphony No. 2 in D Major, Op. 43

Antun Poljanich | Conductor
Kenny Keppel | Soloist

ANTUN POLJANICH
MUSIC DIRECTOR

Born in Croatia, Antun studied piano and theory at Dubrovnik School for Musical Education then studied conducting at the University of Ljubljana. Following post-graduate studies in Austria, he won a scholarship which took him to Leningrad for a three-year Master Course in Conducting at the Rimsky-Korsakov Conservatory. He then worked with the Leningrad State Symphony Orchestra, the Veneto Philharmonia, the Slovene and Croatian National Orchestras and other prominent orchestras in Russia and Europe. Antun is the orchestra's fourth Musical Director.



Photo: Cameron Jamieson

KENNY KEPPEL
SOLOIST

Kenny's musical journey began at a very young age, conducting in front of the TV to seemingly endless repeat home-viewings of Disney's Fantasia. In 2014, he completed his Bachelor's studies at the University of Auckland under the tutelage of James Fry. He was a New Zealand Symphony Orchestra Fellow, an Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra Scholar, and has since participated in masterclasses with notable artists including Jörg Widmann, Kari Kriikku, John Kruse, Andreas Sundén, Bjorn Nyman, Dimitri Ashkenazy and Michael Collins.

Kenny Keppel appears courtesy of the Australian National Academy of Music (ANAM), where he is taught by David Thomas – Principal Clarinet of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra.

Bedrich Smetana (1824-1884): Die Moldau (Vltava)

Revered today by the Czechs as the father of their national music, Smetana's battle for recognition from his contemporaries was often hard and bitter. Though born into a German speaking family he became involved as a young man in the struggle for Czech independence, briefly manning the barricades during the pro-democracy uprising of 1848. His early attempts to establish a career as a virtuoso pianist failed, and after a period running a music school, but meeting with no success with his compositions, he decided to try his luck in Gothenburg Sweden, writing to his parents "Prague did not wish to acknowledge me, so I left it." He met with immediate



professional and social recognition in Sweden, but felt that the people were musically unsophisticated, and Gothenburg a provincial backwater. In 1859, after the battle of Solferino, Austrian repression eased a little, and he decided to return to Prague. He applied for the post of conductor at the new Opera House but was rejected, the support given to him earlier by Liszt being held against him. He was regarded by the Czech conservative faction as a modernist, and a follower of German Wagnerianism.

In 1866 at the age of 42 Smetana met with his first success as a composer, when his opera 'The Brandenburgers' was presented at the Opera House, despite opposition from the theatre's conductor who refused to conduct the work himself. After immersing himself in Czech culture and an intensive study of the language, Smetana followed this with another opera 'The Bartered Bride' which in 1870 met with tremendous public acclaim. In it he distilled the essence of Bohemian music, with its national dances and song, together with an enchanting story of peasant life. It is a work which has delighted audiences to the present day.

As a result he was appointed the conductor of the Opera, which was the fulfilment of his long held ambition. Despite an attempt to oust him, led by the director of the Prague School of Singing, who raised a petition of 86 subscribers opposed to his appointment, he was reappointed as Artistic Director on an increased salary. Only four years later he was forced to relinquish the position after he became totally deaf. He threw himself into composition, hoping that the affliction would be temporary, and embarked on the series of six tone poems *Ma Vlast* (My Country) of which *Die Moldau* (Vltava) was the second. He also composed his famous autobiographical string quartet 'From my Life' while totally deaf. His personal life was shot through with tragedy. He and his first wife had four daughters, three of whom died in infancy from scarlet fever and tuberculosis, of which his wife also died. His second marriage was not happy, and after the onset of his deafness, and the subsequent drop in his income, their relationship deteriorated to the point where they contemplated divorce. At the age of sixty his mind gave way, and he ended his life in an asylum for the insane.

Die Moldau gives no hint of the personal crises from which he was suffering while he wrote it. In fact both *Die Moldau*, and the *Bartered Bride*, his two most popular compositions, are filled with an optimistic and positive spirit, which is a testament to the composer's courage and strength of character.

The work begins with a depiction of two mountain springs, which then combine to represent the flowing river. The wonderful melody which first appears at this point occurs several times throughout the piece. The river then passes a hunting party depicted by a horn melody, and then a village where a wedding is taking place, represented by a polka. A beautiful section follows during which water nymphs bathing in the moonlight are conjured up, and then a turbulent picture of the famous St John's rapids, before the triumphant entry of the Vltava into Prague. The river then seems to fade into the distance before the piece finishes with two abrupt chords.

Louis Spohr (1784-1859) Clarinet Concerto No 1 in C minor opus 26

1. Adagio-Allegro 2. Adagio 3. Rondo

In 1885, when W.S.Gilbert wrote the libretto for the Mikado he included an amusing song, sung by the Mikado himself, which relates a number of suitable punishments for various crimes. The punishment for a Music Hall singer was to attend a series of masses and fugues and “ops” by Bach, interwoven with Spohr and Beethoven. To rank Spohr as an equal to Bach and Beethoven seems quite extraordinary today, but that was the opinion of the time. He composed 10 symphonies, 11 operas, eighteen violin concertos (15 published), 4 clarinet



concertos, 4 oratorios, and much chamber music including 36 string quartets, and 105 songs and duets, amongst other things. His compositions received huge critical acclaim, and popular success. Today his music is almost unknown to the general public, except for the clarinet concertos, which are still occasionally performed.

His professional achievements were quite extraordinary, for as well as being a celebrated composer, he was, next to Paganini, the most famous violin virtuoso of his time, and an equally famous conductor. One of the first conductors to use a baton to improve ensemble in the orchestra, he also thought up the idea of introducing letters and numbers into the music, to facilitate the conduct of rehearsals. He was, in addition, an accomplished painter and wrote an entertaining and informative autobiography which gives a vivid picture of the musical world in which he was such a dominant figure. He was over six feet six in height, and must have towered above most of his contemporaries, and been an intimidating figure on the rostrum. As if this was not enough, he was also a brilliant teacher, having over 200 pupils during his career, and he also wrote a violin method which was the foundation of the German School of violin playing. He was truly blessed by the gods, for on top of all this extraordinary professional success he enjoyed almost continuous good health, living to the then ripe old age of 75, and had two happy marriages.

The Clarinet Concerto No 1 was composed in 1808 when Spohr was 24. It was commissioned by the Duke of Sonderhausen for the director of his resident wind band, Johann Hermstedt. The concerto contains many exceedingly difficult passages which seemed impossible to play at the time. Amazingly, Hermstedt, instead of asking Spohr to rewrite the work, found a means of perfecting the instrument, to enable him to overcome the enormous difficulties. The concerto was, as a result, of great importance in the development of the modern clarinet. Hermstedt played the concerto many times on his concert tours, and Spohr, somewhat immodestly claimed in his autobiography that it was the success of his concerto that established Hermstedt's reputation. Their relationship however lasted more than twenty years, founded on a deepening friendship, and Spohr wrote three more concertos for Hermstedt over that time, the last in 1828.

Jean Sibelius (1865-1957) Symphony No 2

1. Allegretto
2. Tempo andante, ma rubato
3. Vivacissimo-4. Allegro moderato.

Until 1809 Finland was part of Sweden. It then became absorbed into the Russian Empire as the autonomous Grand Duchy of Finland. However Sweden remained the dominant culture, and Swedish was the language spoken by the educated classes. Even today it remains one of Finland's official languages. Sibelius did not start to learn Finnish until he attended a preparatory school in 1874. He went on to attend the first Finnish-speaking secondary school in Finland where he was introduced to Finnish literature. The mythological epic the Kalevala, in particular, was to have a seminal influence on his subsequent creative work.



After abandoning his teenage ambition of becoming a violin virtuoso he went on to study law, but soon abandoned this and turned

to music, studying composition, first in Helsinki, then in Vienna. His first large scale orchestral work, the unpublished Kullarvo created a sensation at its first performance in Helsinki, and he was immediately recognised as a champion of Finnish Nationalism. He went on to consolidate this reputation with works such as the Karelia Suite, and Finlandia, and he was granted a pension from the state in 1898 to enable him to concentrate all his energies on composition. His first symphony, completed in 1899, won him international fame.

Shortly after the premier of the first symphony the Baron Axel Carpelan encouraged Sibelius to pay a visit to Italy, believing the culture and climate of that country would inspire him to even greater things. The Baron even raised money from his friends to finance the trip. Sibelius therefore started writing the second symphony in Rapalla, Italy, during a period of Russian political repression in Finland, when Czar Nicholas 11 was attempting to restrict the autonomous powers of the Grand Duchy. Perhaps as a result of this, the premiere of the symphony was a huge success, and it consolidated Sibelius's reputation as a national hero. It was even called the 'Symphony of Independence' by his admiring compatriots.

In the second symphony Sibelius found his own unique and individual voice. He developed a technique of building his symphonic structure from tiny motives, into passages of unforgettable melodic and harmonic impact. From a motif of only three notes the whole work seems to lead inevitably to a finale of overwhelming power and strength. In his own words "it is as if the Almighty had thrown down the pieces of a mosaic for heaven's floor and asked me to put them together." Of course, as the symphony made its way around the world it did not receive universal acclaim. Virgil Thomson, the American composer and critic notoriously described it as "vulgar, self-indulgent, and provincial beyond all description." It has however remained to this day the most popular and most recorded of all Sibelius's symphonies, and as he himself said: "No-one ever erected a statue to a critic."

ABOUT AYO

Founded in 1948, Auckland Youth Orchestra is the premier regional youth orchestra in New Zealand and was the first youth orchestra established in the Southern Hemisphere, designed to bridge the gap between school orchestras and adult professional groups.

We inspire young people to excel through their love of musical performance and provide them with a wide range of cultural experiences, thus shaping our leaders of tomorrow.

AYO is a healthy social experience for young people and makes an important contribution to the cultural life of Auckland and New Zealand. No other orchestral organisation or institution in New Zealand provides such a comprehensive programme to young musicians.

AYO draws its members from throughout the wider Auckland region, the majority of which are University or high school students. Many past members of the orchestra have gone on to become professional musicians. Over the orchestra's 68-year history, more than 2,600 young adults from diverse cultural and social backgrounds have passed through its ranks, having received expert training in orchestral playing.



THE ORCHESTRA

Governance

Dame Catherine Tizard ONZ GCMG GCVO DBE QSO DSTJ, Patron
Michael McLellan, President · Margaret Leman, Vice-President

Executive Committee

Alexander Cowdell, Chairman | Anne-Marie Forsyth, Secretary | Helen Lewis, Treasurer | Antun Poljanich, Music Director | Joseph Chen, Orchestra Manager | Mark Bingham, Player Representative

Violin I

‡ Jim Wu
Harris Leung
+ Gloria Tian
Henry Li
Tina Zhang
Pearl Hindley
Woojin Wang
Weihong Yi
Kenny Li
Simon Tie
Kauri May
Hae-Jean Byun
Ye Li
Shirley Shang
Jason Yeung
Sung-Min Jun

Violin II

Danny Kwok
+ Patrick Hayes
Natasha Ironside
Adrian Robb
Maeve Herd
Mana Waiariki
Stephen Leong
Richard Paull
Gemma Nash
Michelle Allbury
Catherine Allbury
Jerry Liu
Genevieve Tang

Viola

Pavlina Malikova
+ Jamie Oemcke
Joseph Chen
Zahira Champion
Eins Lee

Cello

Daniel Ng
+ Christine Zhou
Sharon Hung
Justin Ng
Tracy Xu

Double Bass

Robbie Brown
+ John Moon
Allyson Daval Santos

Flute

Anna Cooper
David Robertson

Oboe

Josh Webster
+ Noah Rudd
Elizabeth Lewis

Clarinet

James Daniell
+ Emily Liston
Megan Wilkie

Bassoon

Charlotte Naden
+ Hannah Twomey

Horn

Anita Austin
+ Sean Tang
Rebekah Gray
Evan Metcalfe

Trumpet

Nicholas Allan
+ Caleb Probine
Benjamin Webster

Trombone

Mark Bingham
+ Daniel Nihotte
David Paligora

Tuba

Lachlan Grant
+ Alexander King

Percussion

Laurence McFarlane
+ Paul Robertson
Annabel Yu
Jordan Ross

Legend

‡ Concertmaster
Principal
+ Assistant Principal

PLAY YOUR PART

Keep coming to our concerts! **Check** our website regularly: ayo.org.nz. **'Like'** us on **Facebook** - facebook.com/AYOrchestra. **Follow us:** sign up on our website to receive the Chairman's e-newsletter. **Subscribe:** contact the AYO Secretary at ayo@ayo.org.nz.

Join us: We are always keen to hear from talented young musicians who want to join AYO. Contact us now at auditions@ayo.org.nz

Sponsor us: Would you or your organisation like to sponsor AYO? We need help funding the orchestra's needs – everything from music hire, printing this programme or hiring a tour bus! Contact the AYO Secretary at ayo@ayo.org.nz

NEXT CONCERTS

2016 July Concert Series

Prokofiev – Lieutenant Kije

Ibert – Concertino da Camera

Mussorgsky – Pictures at an Exhibition

2PM Sunday 24th July – Auckland Town Hall

2016 October Concert Series

Ravel – Bolero

Chen Yi – Golden Flute

Tchaikovsky – Nutcracker

7.30PM Saturday 8th October – Auckland Town Hall

MANY THANKS TO OUR SUPPORTERS



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“Here plays the future”