

throughout. The slow saraband is a movement of haunting eloquence, with many of Britten's characteristic harmonic touches. The "Frolicsome Finale" is built from a simple but powerful upward-moving phrase, first played in unison and then developed in rather bold and imaginative ways.

(Notes by Roger Booth from several sources including Linda Mack, David Plylar, Richard Rodda, Steven Ledbetter, Rupert Merson, Jeff Eldridge, and Francis Lynch)

Emily Allen: Violin Soloist

Emily has enjoyed playing in Depot Chamber Orchestra concerts for several years now. She studied the violin at Canterbury University and then later in England with Kato Havas. She currently resides in Auckland and enjoys a freelance career on both violin and viola mainly in the Auckland, Waikato and Bay of Plenty regions. Emily also enjoys teaching violin, viola and piano.

Janet Robinson: Cello Soloist

Janet studied cello and piano at Trinity College of Music in London and then spent a year at the National Centre for Orchestral Studies, also in London. She taught cello and piano and did freelance playing in the south east of England until coming to New Zealand in 1991. Living in Wellington, she played with the Wellington Regional Orchestra and did some private teaching. Janet has lived in Auckland for 13 years and has played with most of the orchestras in Auckland and Hamilton including the DCO and Manukau Symphony Orchestra. During the day she works at the office of Charterlink, a charter boat company based at Bayswater Marina.

ORCHESTRA

- Violins I** Michael Hunter, Helen Crook, Lucy Burrows, Ashley Ayton, John Choi
- Violins II** Averil Griffin, David Kayrouz, Emily Allen, Susie Kasza, Roger Booth, Ben King
- Violas** Judith Gust, Robyn Strange, Pat Roderick, Lawrence Yang
- Celli** Janet Robinson, Maxine Cunliffe, Luke Choi, Graham Falla, Mary Greig-Clayton
- Bass** Andrew Kincaid
- Continuo** John Hume



Next Concert: Sunday 1st September, 2pm, Harmony Hall, Devonport

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<http://dco.net.nz/>*

Devonport Chamber Orchestra

Emily Allen - Violin
Janet Robinson - Cello



Vivaldi: Concerto in B-flat
Britten: Simple Symphony
Purcell: Abdelezar Suite

Sunday 7th July, 2pm
Harmony Hall, 4 Wynyard St
Admission \$10, Children under 12 free

Antonio Vivaldi (1678 - 1741)

Concerto for Violin, Cello and Strings in B-flat Major, RV 547

(Allegro moderato, Andante, Allegro molto)

Vivaldi learned the violin from his father, a Venetian barber who played in the orchestra of San Marco cathedral. He was ordained in 1703 and, thanks to his flaming red hair, became known as the Red Priest. However because of severe bronchial asthma he didn't have the stamina to say a complete mass, and so never took up ecclesiastical duties as a priest. Instead, he became a violin teacher and later, musical director at the Ospedale della Pietà, an orphanage for a thousand girls. Among his duties was to provide two concertos per month for concerts given each Sunday by the school orchestra in which, to the amazement of visitors, the students played all the instruments, rather than just the ones deemed suitable for ladies. The sensual attraction of the girls' performances likely contributed to the widespread fame of the concerts among gentlemen patrons.

Although half of Vivaldi's 700 instrumental works featured solo violin, he also provided concertos and sonatas for other instruments and about 50 for pairs of instruments in various combinations. His innovations in the concerto genre include: regular use of ritornello form in the fast outer movements (tutti theme alternating with solo episodes) and strong orchestral unison passages, sensitively passionate slow movements, and virtuoso passages for soloists. Today's Concerto demonstrates all of these characteristics. Also, as with his other concertos for multiple soloists, this one presents the violin and cello soloists as both colleagues and rivals for the spotlight. It opens with two juxtaposed ideas - a descending arpeggio and a swiftly ascending scale that leads back to the top of the next arpeggio. The second movement is a lovely interlude in F major, that showcases the soloists in a series of imitative gestures, while the final movement displays Vivaldi's playful side, with offbeat accents and alternating virtuosic displays between the two solo instruments.

Henry Purcell (1659 - 1695): Abdelazer Suite

(Overture, Rondeau, Air, Air, Minuet, Air, Jig, Hornpipe, Air)

The period following the Restoration of Charles II was one of the great eras of the English theatre, a golden age not only for actors and playwrights but also for musicians. The leading British composer of his day was Henry Purcell who wrote incidental music for over forty plays, as well as "proto-operas" such as Dido and Aeneas and The Faerie Queen, and numerous instrumental fantasias and choral works. During the last two years of his life, before his death from tuberculosis at age 36, Purcell was the busiest and most popular composer in England. During that time he wrote the incidental music for Abdelazer - The Moor's Revenge.

The author of Abdelazer, Mrs. Aphra Behn, is one of the most interesting characters of the period. Behn was one of the first writers, man or woman, to make her living from writing plays. She travelled in Central America, acted as a spy in Holland and spent time in a debtor's prison. She once described herself as 'designed for a nun', but by the end of days noted that her life had been 'dedicated to pleasure and poetry.' Abdelazer has been described as 'perhaps the bloodiest or all restoration

plays'. In it, Abdelazer, the Moor, wreaks his vengeance on imperialist Spain by virtue of his erotic power over the queen, whom he persuades to kill her husband and collude in the murder of her son. Purcell's music, is a foil rather than a complement to the gory nature of Abdelazar, and consists of a most attractive collection of nine short pieces including airs, hornpipes, jigs and minuets, the most famous being the Rondeau in D minor, which Benjamin Britten use in 1946 for his Variations and Fugue on a Theme of Purcell, also known as The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra.

Benjamin Britten (1913 - 1976): Simple Symphony

(Boisterous Bourrée, Playful Pizzicato, Sentimental Saraband, Frolicsome Finale)

Born on the name day of the patron saint of music, St. Cecilia, Benjamin Britten was a child prodigy whose precocity as a composer could only be compared with Mozart or Mendelssohn. He wrote his first piece at the age of five, and by the time he entered the Royal College of Music at sixteen, he had composed an astonishing 737 works in a wide variety of genres. At the time he wrote the Simple Symphony, Britten was 20 years old and facing the combination of a need to make a living and a mild case of writer's block. So, he wrote, "on the off chance of making some money - I am dishing up some very old stuff (written, some of it, over ten years ago) as a dear little school suite for strings."

Britten described the story of the Simple Symphony in the following excerpt from a notes to a 1956 recording by Decca Records: "Once upon a time there was a prep-school boy. He was called Britten minimus, his initials were E.B., his age was nine, and his locker number was seventeen. He was quite an ordinary little boy... But there was one curious thing about this boy: he wrote music. He wrote lots of it, reams and reams of it. I don't really know when he had time to do it. In those days, long ago, prep school boys didn't have much free time; the day started with early work at 7:30, and ended with prayers at 8p.m. - and the hours in between were fully organized. Still there were odd moments in bed, there were half holidays and Sundays too, and somehow these reams and reams got written ... all the opus numbers from 1 to 100 were filled (and catalogued) by the time Britten minimus was fourteen. Of course they aren't very good, these works; inspiration didn't always run very high, and the workmanship wasn't always academically sound...besides, for the sake of neatness, every piece had to end precisely at the bottom of the right-hand page, which doesn't always lead to a satisfactory conclusion. No, I'm afraid they aren't very great; but when Benjamin Britten, a proud young composer of twenty came along and looked in this cupboard, he found some of them not too uninteresting; and so, rescoring them for strings, changing bits here and there, and making them more fit for general consumption, he turned them into a Simple Symphony."

The alliteration in the title Simple Symphony continues in the movement titles "Boisterous Bourrée," "Playful Pizzicato," "Sentimental Saraband," and "Frolicsome Finale." The names lead us to expect a light-hearted work, and generally it is although there are surprising emotional depths in the 3rd movement. The first movement is a brisk contrapuntal allegro, built mainly from two contrasting motives, one spiky and the other more lyrical. The "Playful Pizzicato" which follows is effectively a scherzo and trio, marked as fast as possible and played pizzicato