

All of which reminds me of the value of having a bucket list - I was told in January by a medical specialist that I had a brain tumour (a minor distraction for 6 weeks during the frenetic 'Oliver!' rehearsals). Fortunately, this turned out to be completely incorrect! But it reminded me of one list item yet to be tackled - 'Play cello in Schubert String Quintet'. As I don't actually play the cello, there's some work to be done here.

Thus, I will end my unbroken DCO concert innings playing Beethoven 4, the concerto I started with when we were all a little younger. Then ride off into the sunset, on my daughter's poor neglected cello, in search of a robust cello tuition book (and possibly even a teacher along the way). What could possibly go wrong with such a plan?

ORCHESTRA

Conductor	Ashley Hopkins
Violins I	Edward Liu, Helen Lewis, Brecon Carter, Mary O'Brien, David Kayrouz, Averil Griffin, Gillian Baynes
Violins II	Alison Sorley, Heidi Bowmast, Roger Booth, Ben King, Susie Kasza, Jude Fox, Joseph Chen
Violas	Dora Tsao, Matthew Gough, Judith Gust, Pat Roderick, Daniel Pohola
Cellos	Dora Green, Graham Falla, Heather Armstrong, Mary Greig-Clayton, Charisse Kuo, Hee Young Kim
Basses	Andrew Kincaid, Robbie Brown
Flutes	Pene Brawn-Douglas, Priscilla Scanlan
Oboes	Carolyn Hyde, Matthew O'Ryan
Clarinets	Julia Cornfield, Claire Turner
Bassoons	Jacqui Hopkins, David Nation
Horns	Miriam Robinson, Christine Breeden
Trumpets	Neil Cording, Mollie Cornfield
Timpani	Laurence McFarlane

Acknowledgements and thanks to:

- Devonport Navy Band for the loan of timpani
- The Depot Artspace staff for their continuing support
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- The Vicar and parish of Holy Trinity Church who have made us welcome



Next Concert: 2pm Sunday, 30th August, Holy Trinity Church. For further information or to be on our mailing list, visit our website: <http://dco.net.nz/>

Devonport Chamber Orchestra

A promotional graphic for a concert. It features a black and white portrait of Ludwig van Beethoven on the left and Camille Saint-Saens on the right. In the background, a grand piano is visible. The names 'Patrick Cornfield' and 'Ashley Hopkins' are written in a cursive font at the top. At the bottom, the titles of the pieces are listed: 'Beethoven: Piano Concerto No. 4' and 'Saint-Saens: Piano Concerto No. 2'.

Sunday 5th July, 2pm
Holy Trinity, 20 Church St, Devonport
Admission \$20, Children under 12 free

Camille Saint-Saens (1875–1921): Piano Concerto No. 2 in G minor (Andante sostenuto, Allegro scherzando, Presto)

Saint-Saens was one of the most fascinating musicians of the 19th century. During the course of a long career (composing from age 4 to 86) he produced an impressive quantity of music in every genre and distinguished himself as a pianist, organist, and conductor. A man of considerable intellect, he also wrote plays and poetry, studied archeology, astronomy, and other sciences, and wrote treatises on philosophy and ancient music.

In the spring of 1868, conductor and pianist Anton Rubenstein asked Saint-Saens to arrange a concert at the Salle Pleyel in Paris, with Saint-Saens as piano soloist and Rubenstein conducting. When he learned that the hall was booked for three weeks, Saint-Saens proposed that he spend the time writing a new piano concerto that he could premiere, along with a performance of his 1st piano concerto and his Tarantelle. He composed the work in about two weeks, but there was barely enough time to rehearse, and the performance suffered from lack of polish. The audience was not very receptive, and pianist Zygmunt Stojowski famously joked that its musical styles were all over the place: *'it begins with Bach and ends with Offenbach'*. Franz Liszt however, recognized the originality and brilliance of the work, and indeed the concerto soon began pleasing both soloists and audiences, who admired its dash, flair, and musical showmanship.

The concerto is unconventional by placing the slow movement first rather than second. The first movement (Andante sostenuto) begins with a Bach-like improvisation leading to dramatic arpeggios typical of Saint-Saens. The main theme is based on a 'Tantum ergo' motet that Gabriel Fauré had shown to his teacher Saint-Saens, who is said to have exclaimed, *"Give this to me. I can make something of it!"* And so he did, pairing the melancholy tune with a second motif of his own. The movement closes with a huge cadenza for the soloist, and the return of the initial Bach-like motif. In contrast with the moody, weighty first movement, the second movement dances a tricky scherzo with impressive timpani work and clever oboe writing, filled with the invention of which Saint-Saens was always fond. The finale is a glittering Presto which outdoes the scherzo in terms of sheer drive. The orchestra is a full partner in this grand tarantella, bringing the work to an exhilarating conclusion.

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 - 1827): Piano Concerto No 4 in G major (Allegro moderato, Andante con moto, Rondo Vivace)

Beethoven wrote his 4th piano concerto at a time when he was also composing his violin concerto and 5th and 6th symphonies. He made his last appearance as a concerto soloist (because of his developing deafness) in the first public performance of this concerto in 1805 in Vienna, as part of a monumental programme that also premiered his 5th and 6th symphonies and Choral Fantasia along with his Mass in C major and the concert aria 'Ah! Perfido'.

The 4th concerto, though large and expansive, is in some ways his most reserved concerto. Each movement is scored differently, with only strings being used in the second movement, and trumpets and timpani not appearing until the final movement. In this work Beethoven also moved away from the standard concerto form of the time consisting of the so-called double exposition, in which the orchestra plays the dual role of introducing all the thematic material of the movement as well as building up tension and expectation for the entrance of the soloist. Instead, it opens with the soloist, briefly stating the opening of the main theme and motive rhythmically reminiscent of the opening motive of the 5th symphony. The orchestra then takes

up its traditional role but starts off by offering a response to the piano in the distant key of B major before elegantly moving back into G.

The short Andante second movement, an enigmatically baroque dialogue between soloist and stark strings, has engendered quite a lot of musicological controversy. The orchestra's demanding fortissimo, answered by the piano's gentle, almost pleading response has been associated with the legend of Orpheus taming the Furies or even his confrontation with the forces of death to recover his lost Eurydice. Just before the end of the movement is an almost anguished cry from the piano in the form of a heart-rending dissonance on the downbeat of the last bar, as Orpheus loses Eurydice when he breaks his vow and looks back at her. Then, via one of Beethoven's seemingly perverse modulations, from E minor to C major in the context of a G major concerto, the finale begins without a break. The finale is one of Beethoven's characteristically idiosyncratic rondos. It begins quietly, with a little fanfare figure in the strings that begins in the key of C major, before making its way around to G major. Only after it has been heard twice do the trumpets and drums, at long last, make their entrance in a frenetic explosion of sound. Not that this movement is in any way grand. It is lyrical and witty and full of subtle surprises and a fitting end to end such a sublime concerto.

At first, audiences did not take to the 4th concerto, preferring the easier 3rd or more dramatic 5th concertos, and it was neglected and rarely played until Mendelssohn revived it in 1836 and performed it frequently. It became a favourite of famed pianist Clara Schumann, who played it throughout Europe.

- Programme notes by Roger Booth from several sources including Howard Posner, Elizabeth and Joseph Kahn, Michael Steinberg, Barbara Heninger, Paul Schiavo, Max Derrickson, Richard Freed

Patrick 'Paddy' Cornfield writes ...

And so, we arrive at my 12th and final annual DCO concert. It was such a satisfaction to present last year's huge programme, so I could hardly resist the generous invitation for an encore this year. The truth is, my fingers are getting stiffer, and it is becoming harder to rise early on a cold, dark morning to practise scales, before going to work. As this is a mandatory activity for those wishing to tackle large romantic piano concertos on a concert Steinway, I feel I've been skating on thin ice for the first time in a decade.

As usual, there have been many distractions during the year. I was specifically told by my wife and elder daughter to plan 'something easy' for 2015. Apparently, I had been promised in bonded labour to the TGS Performing Arts department for 3 months, for the school show. Which turned into 4 months, as I helped myself to some choir accompanying, by way of a dessert. Being involved in 'Oliver!' during Ella's last year at school was delicious. (Developing RSI from editing the show's video on an old computer mouse less so). There have also been generous helpings of brass accompanying, for my younger daughter and associates.

Way back when I did my first DCO concert in 2004, one of the items on my new bucket list was *'Perform in public with my children'*. That has been well and truly crossed off now! Along with *'Play Rach 3'*, plus thankfully, the then omitted *'Sort out tax affairs after doing nothing but practise for Rach 3'*. Possibly one of the more unusual excuses submitted to the IRD for late returns.

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