

Soloists

Gwyneth Nelmes - Violin

Gwyneth, 16 years old, first started the violin at age 5. She became a student of Dimitri Atanassov (past Concertmaster of the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra) when she was 9 years old, and is currently still learning from him. Over the past several years, Gwyneth has been in many chamber groups and orchestras, and has recently joined the Auckland Youth Orchestra. She has also participated in several solo and chamber group competitions, and last year her octet, "The Appalachian Octet", won the National Statham Award in the New Zealand Chamber Music Competition. She has just received her ATCL for violin performance.

Stephanie Townend - Viola

Stephanie is currently in her first year at the University of Auckland, studying Biomedical Science, however she is still learning viola and enjoys performing regularly with a range of ensembles. She started learning violin at the age 7, then swapped to viola while in high school and has learnt from Robert Ashworth (Principal Viola of the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra) ever since. In 2014, after just 3 years on viola, she completed her grade 8 practical exam. Stephanie has been a member of the Auckland Youth Orchestra for two years and has taken part in a number of music competitions and summer schools. She is also a tutor for Sistema Aotearoa.

ORCHESTRA

Avison Soloists	Michael Hunter, Heidi Bowmast, Robyn Strange, Ursula Keay
Violins I	Michael Hunter, Alex Cowdell, Mary O'Brien, Fiona Murray, Edward Liu, Ashley Ayton, Gwyneth Nelmes
Violins II	Heidi Bowmast, Tsui-Wen Chen, Averil Griffin, David Kayrouz, Roger Booth, Tara Salthouse
Violas	Robyn Strange, Judith Gust, Pat Roderick, Neil Shepherd, Stephanie Townend
Cellos	Ursula Keay, Graham Falla, Luke Choi, John Early
Bass	Ted Malan
Harpsichord	Alison Talmage

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Next Concert **5pm** Sunday, 31st May, Holy Trinity Church, 20 Church St. For further information or to be on our mailing list, visit our website: <http://dco.net.nz/>

Devonport Chamber Orchestra

Stephanie Townend (viola) *Gwyneth Nelmes (violin)*

Charles Avison: Concerto Grosso in E min *Georg Telemann: Viola concerto in G maj*
Concerto Grosso in A maj *Violin Concerto in E maj*

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

Charles Avison (1709 – 1770)

The “New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians” has acknowledged Charles Avison as “*the most important English concerto composer of the 18th Century*”. Despite this, his works are still largely unknown and rarely performed.

Avison was born in Newcastle, England. In 1734 he spent one year in London to study composition with Francesco Geminiani then returned to his hometown where he lived for the rest of his life despite many offers of lucrative posts elsewhere. As a busy practicing musician he gave private violin, flute, and keyboard lessons, (charging half a guinea for 6 lessons) and was the organist at the Anglican cathedral. He organised lively subscription concert series throughout the Newcastle area. One musician in his orchestra was William Herschel, the astronomer (and composer) who discovered the planet Uranus.

He considered himself primarily a composer, but he was better known throughout Britain for his literary musical criticism. He acknowledged Handel as a genius but this did not prevent him from making negative comments in his essays when he felt Handel’s works were mediocre. Recently found among his papers were two songs in praise of “Bonny Prince Charlie” making him a Jacobite sympathiser - high treason in Georgian England!

The Corelli-style Concerto Grosso was very popular in 18th Century England. It offered opportunities for amateurs and professionals to take part in concerts together. Avison supplied this market with over 80 concertos, published in batches of 12 at a time. He made very effective use of the contrasting tonal colours of the 3-member *concertante* group and the orchestral *ripieno*.

The concertos performed today are from Opus 6, published in London and Edinburgh in 1758. He respected the Italian model and style but with a strong British accent and a definite awareness of the musical style that Haydn was developing in Esterhazy. These concertos are therefore also a bridge between the baroque and classical styles.

Georg Philipp Telemann (1681 – 1767)

Telemann was born in Magdeburg, Germany. In his autobiography he recalled that he had a few singing lessons and two weeks keyboard tuition at the age of ten. He was therefore effectively self-taught, having never had a formal lesson either as a performer or a composer. His solo mother made strenuous attempts to suppress his musical talents to the extent of confiscating his instruments and packing him off to a boarding school. However, he was fortunate that wherever he went, his abilities as a composer were noted and supported.

He arrived in Leipzig in 1701 to study law, but the city mayor was in the audience of a concert where one of his works was performed. That was the final tipping point towards his career as a composer. He was placed on the city payroll to compose music for St Thomas and St Nicholas churches. Twenty-two years later, J.S. Bach arrived in Leipzig to take up this role as a permanent position. Telemann was a close friend of Bach and became godfather to C.P.E. Bach. Telemann, like Handel, was also a keen botanist, and he kept up a regular correspondence with Handel throughout his adult life. His most important and final post was at the international port of Hamburg where he was a driving force for many of the latest trends in European music. To his contemporaries, Telemann was rated second to none, including Bach and Handel.

He was the most prolific composer of all time – an estimated 3,000 works in total. The editors of the Urtext Telemann Edition, begun in 1995, are still counting. This includes about 600 concertos, all expertly written for each solo instrument involved.

Avison: Concerto Grosso in E Minor Opus 6 No 8 (*Adagio-Allegro, Amorososo, Allegro*)

A dramatic *Adagio* introduction leads to a forceful three-part fugal *Allegro*. This contrasts with a pastoral *Amorososo*, reminiscent of Corelli’s Christmas concerto. The concerto concludes with a buoyant *Gavotte*.

Telemann: Viola Concerto in G Major (*Largo, Allegro, Andante, Presto*) Soloist: **Stephanie Townend**

The Viola concerto appears to have been composed around 1716. It is the earliest known viola concerto, and it follows that it is frequently performed by violists. It has been unfairly described as “easy”, but it requires nimble fingers to play all the passagework neatly, and effectively displays the viola’s full range and tonal qualities.

Telemann usually preferred the Corelli four-movement structure for his concertos. The opening movement is an expansive *Largo* with many dotted rhythms. The *Allegro* has a distinctive syncopated figure. The *Andante* is a slow mellow movement in the relative minor key. The player is given an opportunity for a cadenza. The final *Presto* is a fast and exciting conclusion.

Avison: Concerto Grosso in A Major Opus 6 No 10 (*Allegro Spiritoso, Andante Affettuoso, Allegro*)

The opening *Allegro Spiritoso* will be the most “non-baroque” movement you will hear today. It has endearing simplicity, keeping to basic harmonies and few modulations. The declamatory *Andante Affettuoso* in the relative F sharp minor key provides a gloomy contrast. However, the final *Allegro* is a lighthearted Minuet - or perhaps it could be an early *Rondo* with two trios and a coda, or even the beginnings of the sonata form.

Telemann: Violin Concerto in E Major (*Affettuoso, Allegro Assai, Cantabile, Allegro*) Soloist: **Gwyneth Nelmes**

There are 20 known violin concertos but this must only be a fraction of his output in this genre. Most of Telemann’s concertos were composed between 1710 and 1725.

Like all German composers of the time, he was fascinated with the Vivaldi model. But he remarked rather sourly in his autobiography about “*their many difficulties, awkward leaps, little melody and even less harmony*”. This concerto was probably written with a particular virtuoso in mind – Herr Pantaleon Hebenstreit.

The *Affettuoso* is in Telemann’s favourite dotted rhythm with a springy bass line. The impetuous *Allegro Assai* has plenty of filigree work for the solo violin.

A very ardent *Cantabile* with a lullaby-like quality is a clear example of why Telemann was so well regarded by his contemporaries. The final *Allegro* introduces the “Neapolitan” short-long, short-long Lombardic rhythm.

Programme notes compiled by Neil Shepherd from several sources, including Naxos, Argo, Phillips, and Urtext Edition Telemann.