

So with the hedge half-finished, 'retirement' was over. It was back to work on scales and arpeggios. It's just what I do, can do, expected to do, and must carry on doing, until the doing is no longer possible. So here we go again – concert number 13. Unlucky for some, but hopefully not me and the DCO. And I promise you – I will have an encore prepared this time around. Lesson learnt!

ORCHESTRA

Conductor	Peter Thomas
Violins I	Helen Crook, Brecon Carter, Mary O'Brien, Helen Lewis, Joe Pinto, Ashley Ayton, Emily Allen, Edward Liu, Alison Sorley, Sofie Wigram
Violins II	Michael Hunter, Heidi Bowmast, Tsui-Wen Chen, Averil Griffin, David Kayrouz, Susie Kasza, Ben King, Tara Salthouse
Violas	Dora Tsao, Matthew Gough, Judith Gust, Alison Talmage, Pat Roderick, Daniel Poloha
Cellos	Dora Green, Janet Robinson, Maxine Cunliffe, Kate Parker, Heather Armstrong, Joanna Pinto, Mary Greig-Clayton
Basses	Ted Malan, Samantha Cooke
Flutes	Pene Brawn-Douglas, Hannah Woo
Oboes	Eugénie Middleton, Carolyn Hyde
Clarinets	Julia Cornfield, Claire Turner
Bassoons	David Nation, Charlotte Naden
Horns	Miriam Robinson, Reymond Takashima, Anita Austin, Christine Breeden
Trumpets	Dominic Cornfield, Mollie Cornfield
Trombones	Steve Taylor, David Paligora, Bob Latimer
Timpani	Josiah Carr

Acknowledgements and thanks to:

- Devonport Navy Band for the loan of timpani
- Devonport Copy Shoppe for printing posters, programmes and music so professionally
- The Vicar and parish of Holy Trinity Church who have made us welcome



Next Concert: 5pm Sunday, 22nd May, Holy Trinity Church. For further information or to be on our mailing list, visit our website: <http://dco.net.nz/>

Devonport Chamber Orchestra



Pianist:
Patrick Cornfield

Conductor:
Peter Thomas

Mendelssohn: Ruy Blas Overture
Tchaikovsky: Piano Concerto No. 1

Sunday 17th April, 2pm
Holy Trinity, 20 Church St, Devonport
Admission \$20, Children under 12 free

Felix Mendelssohn (1809–1847): Overture to Ruy Blas

In 1839, the Leipzig Theatrical Pension Fund commissioned Mendelssohn to compose an overture and a song for a performance of Victor Hugo's play Ruy Blas, a socio-political commentary with elements of love, revenge, and death, set in 18th century Spain. Mendelssohn wrote the song but didn't bother writing the overture. The Theatrical Fund sent him a letter of appreciation, mentioning that they should have given a man with such a busy schedule more time to complete an overture. Mendelssohn was apparently quite annoyed by the implication that he wasn't up to it, and so dashed off the overture in a just three days, and, according to W. A. Chislett, *"succeeded admirably in depicting in music the mixture of chicanery, burning ambition and love, which are the principal ingredients of Hugo's drama"*. In writing the work, however, Mendelssohn paid little attention to the plot of the play, saying that he preferred to think of the piece not as the Overture to Ruy Blas but rather as the Overture to the Theatrical Pension Fund Benefit. Nevertheless, he created a fine example of the concert overture, with varied moods, a tight musical structure, complex melodic patterns, and imaginative sonorities. *"There is a sweep and spontaneity in the melodic flow, an urgency in the march of simple harmonies, a freshness and brilliance in the orchestration," wrote the conductor Edward Downes, "which have made this one of Mendelssohn's most popular works."*

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840 - 1893):

Piano Concerto No 1 in B-flat minor, Op 23

(Allegro non troppo e molto maestoso, Andantino semplice , Allegro con fuoco)

Tchaikovsky was neither the greatest nor the most innovative musician of his time, yet his contributions to music are still felt today, for it was his gift to write beautiful, evocative melodies that stay in our memories. Examples are the love theme of the Romeo and Juliet Overture, to the music of Swan Lake or his Pathétique Sixth Symphony, to the well-known opening of the Piano Concerto No. 1. Yet being a hypersensitive and insecure man whose life oscillated between peaks of elation and troughs of depression, Tchaikovsky was anxious to receive the approval of his teacher and friend, the great Russian pianist Nikolai Rubinstein for the concerto which he had written for him. On Christmas Eve 1894, Tchaikovsky played it for him but Rubinstein wasn't impressed, describing the concerto as unplayable and *"clumsy, badly written and vulgar, with only two or three pages worth preserving."* Rubinstein arrogantly offered to play the piece if Tchaikovsky rewrote it, but Tchaikovsky replied, "I won't change a single note," and instead rededicated the concerto to the pianist and conductor Hans von Bülow. von Bülow premiered the concerto in Boston and they throughout his American tour where it created a sensation and its popularity has never faded.

All the melodies of the concerto are now extremely well-known. Some members of the audience will remember that the theme of the first movement flourished in the early 1940s as a pop song, *"Tonight We Love."* Tchaikovsky had also borrowed two of the concerto's other melodies. The hopping theme that starts the Allegro is a song

traditionally sung by blind beggars in parts of Russia, while the scherzo-like interlude in the middle of the second movement is a song, *"Il faut s'amuser, danser et rire,"* from the repertory of Désirée Artôt, a superb Belgian soprano whom Tchaikovsky courted briefly.

- Programme notes by Roger Booth from several sources including Michael Steinberg, Jeff Counts, Barbara Heninger, Paul Serotsky, Richard E. Rodda

Patrick 'Paddy' Cornfield writes ...

My 13th annual DCO concert occurs during a time dominated by financial crises, aging populations, and failing pension schemes. Retirement ages around the globe are rising. Even pianists are not immune to this phenomenon. This is how a friend of mine suggested I begin these notes, after my ill-considered announcement of last year! I am starting to lose count of how many times I hear the phrase, "But I thought you'd retired?"

In my defence, it had been a very hard year musically, our lovely long-standing conductor, Ashley Hopkins, was moving to the South Island, and all good things must end sometime. If I don't stop now I never will, was the thinking. Time to pass the baton to someone younger. I've had a good innings and twelve is an excellent number to stop at.

So I will tell you "what could possibly go wrong with such a plan", as I wrote last year. Firstly, my lofty ambition to play the cello. The report on this project reads thus: one box of rosin - purchased; one cello tutor book – overdue library fine paid; one cello – still sitting in its case, rosin-free and untouched by horse-hair. Overall grade – E for Epic fail.

The next crack in the retirement plan appeared after playing (faked) timpani at last year's DCO Flute concert. How well the (young, glamorous...) soloist played! What an edgy encore she served up for dessert, and how appreciative were the large Holy Trinity audience. Only a fool would pass on this concert platform. Not to mention the chance to tinkle the ivories on a Steinway piano costing the same as the NZ house price average.

I also received a few touching communications about retiring (thank you), but the real turning point came during the Christmas break. Over the years, we in "The Music House" have been blessed with amazing neighbours, tolerant of our practice demands, and of our overgrown garden. One benefit of retirement would be more spare time to address this lamentable state of affairs.

Thus, I attacked the front 'hedge' – it was becoming impossible to find the mailbox. Progress was slow, but at least not stationary (unlike 'Project Rostropovich'). I was resting on the clippers, when the neighbours came by. They have an immaculate property. They also mow my berm, as did the previous neighbours - you see the scale of the problem. Chatting away, they commented in a disappointed tone – "We haven't heard you practising the piano recently". I wanted to weep. I'm not even sure if they enjoy classical music.

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