

## Warwick Robinson: Conductor

Warwick is the Head of Music at Westlake Boys High School, having moved into the role after working as a freelancing orchestral clarinetist, violist, composer and arranger. He holds a master's degree in clarinet performance from the University of Auckland and now divides his time between classroom teaching, conducting, composing and arts administration. He directs numerous instrumental ensembles within the Westlake community including the multi-award-winning Westlake Concert Band, and also maintains an active presence as a conductor of various community orchestras. Along with his wife Miriam, Warwick is the Event Manager for the annual KBB Music Festival, New Zealand's largest instrumental ensemble festival for bands and orchestras. He has two children, Jacob and Amelia.

## ORCHESTRA

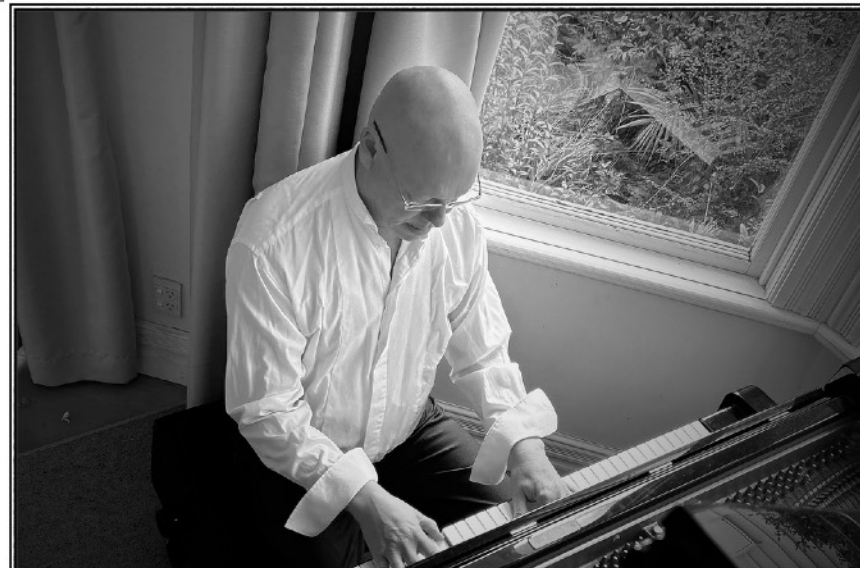
<b>Flutes</b>	Pene Brawn-Douglas, Leon Reynolds
<b>Oboes</b>	Eugénie Middleton, Vanessa Bruell
<b>Clarinets</b>	Julia Cornfield, Brendan Dalton
<b>Bassoons</b>	David Nation, Jasmine Pavey
<b>Horns</b>	Miriam Robinson, Christine Breeden, Anita Austin, Michael Grimwood
<b>Trumpets</b>	Adrian Hirst, Dominic Cornfield
<b>Trombones</b>	Matthew Russell, Bob Latimer, Steve Taylor
<b>Timpani</b>	Rachel Thomas
<b>Percussion</b>	Joshua Chong, Isaiah Chong
<b>Harp</b>	Patrick Cornfield
<b>Violins I</b>	Joseph Chen, Brecon Carter, Selena Sun, Michael Hunter, Nicola Couch, Alison Sorley, Sofia Wigram, Neil Shepherd
<b>Violins II</b>	Heidi Bowmast, Tsui-Wen Chen, David Kayrouz, Ellie Wyatt, Quin McClean, Arthur Ranford, Susie Kasza
<b>Violas</b>	Judith Gust, Sharyn Palmer, Henrietta Reid, Daniel Poloha, Pat Roderick, Stephanie Thomas
<b>Cellos</b>	Claire Postlethwaite, Emily Giles, Graham Falla, Andrea McCracken, Kate Parker, Iain Rea, Mary Greig-Clayton, Michelle Caldicott
<b>Basses</b>	Andrew Kincaid, Ted Malan

## Acknowledgements and thanks to:

The Vicar and parish of Holy Trinity Church who always make us welcome.

*Next Concert: 2:00pm Sunday, 19th November, Holy Trinity, Devonport. For further information or to be on our mailing list, visit our website: <https://dco.net.nz/>*

# Devonport Chamber Orchestra



**Piano: Patrick Cornfield**  
**Conductor: Warwick Robinson**  
**Rachmaninoff: Piano Concerto No. 2**  
**Khachaturian: Adagio from Spartacus**

**2pm, Sunday 3rd September, 2023**  
**Holy Trinity, 20 Church St, Devonport**  
**Adults: \$25, Seniors/Students \$20,**  
**Children under 12 free**

## Aram Khachaturian (1903-1978): Adagio from Spartacus

Khachaturian was born in Tbilisi, Georgia, the son of an Armenian bookbinder. Although he was a self-taught pianist and a tuba player in his school band, music was initially a side interest as he wanted to be a biologist. His musical abilities soon became evident however, and in 1926, he entered the Moscow Conservatory, studying cello and composition and becoming a rising star among composers of the region.

Successful premieres of several works, including his 2nd Symphony and piano concerto, established Khachaturian as one of the leading Soviet composers of his generation. However, in the late-1940s, he was subjected to a great deal of criticism during the vicious government-sponsored attacks on the Soviet Composers' Union, even though his music contained few of the objectionable elements found in the music of his more adventurous colleagues such as Shostakovich. Nevertheless, in 1950, following a humble apology for his artistic "errors", Khachaturian was invited to join the composition faculty of the Moscow Conservatory.

One of his most famous works is the Adagio from his 1954 ballet '*Spartacus and Phrygia*'. The idea for a ballet on the subject of the Spartacus-led slave uprising in ancient Rome was suggested to Khachaturian in 1938 by Nikolai Volkov but he did not start composing it until 1950 and took another four years to complete it. The Adagio appears in the second act when the slave women are set free and Spartacus and Phrygia celebrate. Many of you will recognise the Adagio as the theme tune for the long-running 1970s TV series, '*The Onedin Line*', while younger audience members might have heard it in the animated film '*Ice Age: The Meltdown*'.

## Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943): Piano Concerto No. 2 in C minor

(1. Moderato, 2. Adagio sostenuto, 3. Allegro scherzando)

Rachmaninoff was revered as one of the supreme pianists of his time, yet he had a highly unconventional career. After receiving the highest marks ever awarded by the Moscow Conservatory, Rachmaninoff soared to fame at age 19 with his Prelude in C-sharp minor, a remarkably haunting four-minute piece of chromatic yearning. However, in 1897 Rachmaninoff's 1st symphony was introduced in Saint Petersburg at a concert conducted by Alexander Glazunov. Glazunov was a good composer and an uncommonly decent man, but it appears that he was a terrible conductor, and the symphony's premiere was a disaster. The critic César Cui savaged it, saying it had come from a "*conservatory in hell*". Rachmaninoff was devastated and subsequently so disheartened, he couldn't bring himself even to look at a piece of blank composition paper for two years. As he wrote in his memoirs, "*A paralyzing apathy possessed me. I did nothing at all and found no pleasure in anything. Half my days were spent on a couch. I had given up in great despair.*"

Seeing him depressed and drinking too much, relatives convinced him to visit Dr. Nicolai Dahl, a specialist in the new field of 'neuropsychotherapy', with an interest in hypnosis. Dahl was also an amateur cellist and violist who performed in a string quartet. Between the doctor's gentle hypnotic suggestions ("*You will begin your concerto . . . you will work with great facility . . . the concerto will be excellent . . .*") and his pleasant conversations about music, Rachmaninoff found his depression lifting and began to write his second piano concerto. Whatever transpired during the sessions with Dr. Dahl, Rachmaninoff emerged from his doldrums with a gorgeous, vibrant work that spoke with a distinctive personality, and which he dedicated to Dr. Dahl.

The opening of this concerto announces its character with striking immediacy. Deep resonant piano chords evoke both the Russian church bells of Rachmaninoff's roots and his complex personality - the outer notes remain steadfast while the inner notes subtly change the harmony, as if to suggest the emotion surging within the composer's somber outward appearance. Following this majestic opening, the piano continues with a blizzard of notes that thickens the texture of an ensuing luxuriant string melody. Indeed, throughout the entire work, the piano rarely falls silent or relinquishes the spotlight to the orchestra, leaving no doubt that the composer was, at heart, a pianist.

*"Melody is music and the foundation of all music. I do not appreciate composers who abandon melody and harmony for an orgy of noises and dissonances,"* Rachmaninoff wrote. Fulfilling this belief, he stuffed the concerto with an abundance of emotional and unforgettable tunes. Audiences around the world were delighted, and during one of Rachmaninoff's tours in the USA, he commented that "*these Americans cannot get enough of it.*"

*Programme notes by Roger Booth from sources including Alex Burns, Paul Serotsky, April L. Racana, Willo Horsbrug, Marianne Williams Tobias, Michael Steinberg, Elizabeth Schwartz, Tim Munro, John Henken*

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## Patrick 'Paddy' Cornfield writes...

This is my 18th time as a soloist with the DCO. It should have been the 20th, but we've skipped another year – COVID! It's been over 2 years since I last performed, and I feel like an ageing boxer climbing back into the ring. Let's hope I don't get knocked out in the first round... I was inspired by splendid recent performances from 'emeritus' NZ pianists Michael Houston and Deirdre Irons. Watching them play using music, I spied an opportunity to buy myself a nice iPad! But I'd miss the thrill of playing without music, despite the risk. When I learn something new, the transition from reading music to playing from memory is like a young bird flying for the first time – there's no turning back.

This year, I had originally wanted to present Brahms 1, having played it a decade ago. That was the last time that my parents were in the audience... But I heard that St. Matthews Chamber Orchestra were doing it this year, and I try to avoid repetition for our players. So I decided to have a last crack at one of my harder concertos – 'Rach 2'. And while we're at it, let's put geopolitics aside and make it an all-Russian programme. I faked harp in the Mahler Adagio when we last played Rach 2 in 2011, and I'm just as excited to be doing so again, for the gorgeous Khachaturian piece.

I should probably start writing more conventional program notes. If you're not a DCO regular, you're probably wondering whether this is a soloist's biography, or an Xmas letter. Here's a little taster then – I've been an IT professional for over 30 years, and I graduated from the Royal College of Music in the late 1980s. It has been my great privilege to work through the many piano concertos I purchased as a teenager, for these concerts. I still have a few ambitious choices left, so I hope the fingers hold out a little longer...