

Mark Bennett: Conductor

Mark studied violin at University of Auckland and the Royal Academy of Music in London. He then worked for several years in the vibrant London freelance scene, travelling and performing extensively through Europe with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, BBC Symphony Orchestra and The Philharmonia.

Mark returned to Auckland where he took up a position with the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra during which time he was also active as a chamber musician, freelance orchestral leader, violin teacher and orchestra director. He has now taken the role of Teaching Fellow on Violin and Viola and Head of Strings at The School of Music, University of Auckland.

ORCHESTRA

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| Flutes | Pene Brawn-Douglas, Esther Hunter |
| Oboes | Kate Rendall, Elizabeth Lewis Daniell |
| Clarinets | Hannah Boocock, Gautam Pathumanithy |
| Bassoons | David Nation, Simon Smith |
| Horns | Miriam Robinson, Kirsten Sharman, Alice Gill, Isaac Kirkpatrick |
| Trumpets | Adrian Hirst, Michael Plunkett |
| Timpani | Paddy Cornfield |
| Violins I | Helen Crook, Nicola Couch, Alison Sorley, Selena Sun, Takashi Schwarz, Ellie Wyatt |
| Violins II | Heidi Bowmast, Averil Griffin, David Kayrouz, Dianne Sainsbury, Arthur Ranford, Kate Vennell, Susie Kasza |
| Violas | Judith Gust, Neil Shepherd, Pat Roderick, Stephanie Thomas, Anne-Marie Forsyth, Iona McDonald |
| Cellos | Claire Postlethwaite, Tilly Harvey, Kate Parker, Mary Greig-Clayton, John Early, Michelle Caldicott, Kripa Ravi |
| Basses | Ted Malan, Andrew Kincaid |

Acknowledgements and thanks to:

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

Next Concert: 2:00pm Sunday, 17th November, Holy Trinity, Devonport. For further information or to be on our mailing list, visit our website: <https://dco.net.nz/>

ASB Account: Devonport Chamber Orchestra 12-3015-0630092-00

Devonport Chamber Orchestra



2pm, Sunday 22nd September, 2024
Holy Trinity, 20 Church St, Devonport
Adults: \$20, Seniors/Students \$15,
Children under 12 free

Max Bruch (1838 - 1920) Violin Concerto No. 1 in G minor, Op.26

(1: "Vorspiel" Allegro moderato; 2: Adagio; 3: Allegro energico)

Today Bruch's fame rests largely on three works - first violin concerto, Scottish Fantasy (violin) and Kol Nidrei (cello). Although this might indicate that he was a string player, he was, in fact, a youthful prodigy not as an instrumental virtuoso but as a composer most known in his time for his vocal music. His love of the voice was instilled by his mother who was a professional singer and his first teacher. He began composing at the age of 11, and at 14 created a stir throughout Germany by winning a major prize for his first symphony. In his 20s, Bruch began teaching music in his native Cologne, and established a reputation as a solid, reliable composer. Later he held various posts as a choral and orchestral conductor in Cologne, Coblenz, Sondershausen, Berlin, Liverpool and Breslau, and also visited America to conduct concerts of his own compositions.

Like several other popular romantic violin concertos, Bruch's first concerto owed much to the great violinist, Joseph Joachim, but it had a prolonged gestation and a difficult birth. He began work on it when he was 26 and soon after, wrote to his former teacher Ferdinand Hiller: *"My violin concerto is progressing slowly - I do not feel sure of my feet on this terrain. Do you think that it is very audacious to write a violin concerto?"* After the concerto's first performance in 1866, Bruch was dissatisfied and withdrew it, then sent the manuscript to Joachim for his comments. Joachim replied with a detailed list of proposals for improving the work, some of which were included in the several revisions Bruch made later. The final version was championed by Joachim and the score's manuscript bears the dedication *"Joseph Joachim in Verehrung zugeeignet"*, though the word *"Verehrung"* (respect) was crossed out by Joachim and replaced with *"Freundschaft"* (friendship).

Celebrating his 75th birthday in June 1906, Joseph Joachim had this to say: *"The Germans possess four violin concertos. The greatest, the most uncompromising, is Beethoven's. That by Brahms vies with it in seriousness. The richest, the most alluring was written by Max Bruch. But the most inward, the heart's jewel, is Mendelssohn's."*

Although Bruch's concerto has the traditional three movements, it departs considerably from the classical form. The short first movement is named *Vorspiel* (prelude) and it serves as a kind of extended free-form introduction which builds to furious climax and then gives way to a lyrical violin cadenza. The Adagio, in which the soloist plays virtually throughout, presents a melody of great tenderness, with eloquent counterpoint, notably in the violas and first violins. The exciting Finale has a lively gypsy character, full of energy and double stops. The mood of exuberance never wanes and the concerto finishes with an exhilarating coda.

The concerto was quickly taken up by all the great violinists of the day and was played so often that it overshadowed everything else Bruch wrote. In the end, he could not bear to hear it. To cap it all, he had sold the work outright to the publisher Crazz and so made little money out of his biggest hit. Late in life he was frequently called upon to give advice to young virtuosos on the performance of his works. *"Which concerto are you planning to play?"* he would ask. *"The one in G minor"* was the invariable reply. The old man would groan, shake his head and say *"but why don't you play one of the other two, they're just as good"*.

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 - 1827) Symphony No. 2 in D major, Op. 36

(1: Adagio molto, Allegro con brio; 2: Larghetto; 3: Scherzo: Allegro; 4: Allegro molto)

Shortly after completing his first symphony in 1800, Beethoven began planning his second, but it was not completed until two years later. By 1802, Beethoven's problems with his hearing had become acute and, on the advice of his doctor, he spent six months in Heiligenstadt, a village outside Vienna, in the hope that the quiet life of the village and surrounding countryside would improve his hearing. Unfortunately, this enforced isolation plunged Beethoven into even greater despondency, depression and thoughts of suicide as he realised that his hearing might never improve. In October, 1802, unable to contain his anguish any longer, he wrote a letter to his brothers Carl and Johann, expressing his despair but resolving to live and compose: "... *Such*

incidents drove me almost to despair; a little more of that and I would have ended my life - it was only my art that held me back. It seemed to me impossible to leave the world until I had produced all that I felt was within me." Beethoven never sent the letter which remained undiscovered until after his death and is now known as the *"Heiligenstadt Testament"*.

The emotional abyss reflected in the letter might have paralysed another artist, or perhaps yielded bleak music full of grieving or fury. Yet the chief product of Beethoven's season at Heiligenstadt - his second symphony - is one of his sunniest works. It was premiered in Vienna in a mega-concert that also included premieres of his oratorio Christ on the Mount of Olives and the third piano concerto with Beethoven as soloist, as well as a performance of the first symphony. Response to the second symphony was mixed. One critic wrote that Beethoven's *"anxiety to achieve something novel and surprising was much too evident"* and that *"the whole thing is too long, and overly-artificial in places."* The Finale was called *"a repulsive monster, a wounded, tail-lashing serpent, dealing wild and furious blows as it stiffens into its death agony at the end."*

Despite the initial critics, this is not a lightweight work and displays much brilliance and novelty foretelling Beethoven's later symphonies. The massive Haydn-like slow introduction to the first movement, prophesying the openings of his 4th and 7th symphonies, transitions rapidly into an intensely vibrant and cheerful Allegro, as if Beethoven were determined to shake off his dark state of mind through bright, vibrant melodies. In the Larghetto, Beethoven treats the audience to a series of lyrical themes. The serenity and delicacy in this music captures the beauty of the Viennese countryside and Beethoven's abiding love of nature. The offbeat rhythms and surprising, humorous and fragmented melodies of the Scherzo and its accompanying Trio might have scandalised the Viennese audiences of Beethoven's time but today we recognise them as Beethoven's trademark and central qualities of his musical personality.

The last movement opens with a high whoop and a low gurgle - a bizarrely hiccupping theme that some scholars have theorised might be an onomatopoeic rendition of Beethoven's infamous digestive problems! Whatever its origin, it is certainly an example of the Beethoven's well-known coarse sense of humour and provides perfect fodder for the composer's consummate skill in constructing a rousing finale out of almost any little musical idea. The movement ends with a monster coda that comes creeping in on the heels of the unaccompanied violins but soon reveals the rowdiest intentions, the tail not so much wagging the dog as tickling it into yelping submission.

Programme notes compiled by Roger Booth from several sources including Dave Kopplin, Portobello Orchestra, Des Moines Symphony Orchestra, Feargus Hetherington, Paul Serotsky, Herbert Glass, Alex Varty, LA Philharmonic, William E. Runyan, Oregon Symphony, Martin Pearlman, Paul Schiavo

Hayden Chiu: Violin soloist

Hayden is a year 9 student from Auckland Grammar School, learning the violin from Mr. Stephen Larsen, and Professor Robin Wilson. Both teachers have had a profound influence on his development as a young violinist.

Hayden first performed at Carnegie Hall in New York as First prize winner of an international competition in 2019, under the guidance of his first teacher Dr. Elena Abramova. Hayden received a Distinction award for three consecutive years at APPA/Ara Lodge Music Competition, and began chamber and orchestral music training through PNJA, ASQSS, the King's School, and with Mr. Mark Bennett. Hayden's piano trio received highly commended and regional finalist awards in 2021 and 2023 NZCT chamber contest. Hayden enjoyed touring and performing with the NZSO National Youth Orchestra in 2022, and performed as Associate Concertmaster in 2023.

Hayden also performed as Manukau Symphony Orchestra youth scholar, and as Official Candidate of 2024 Piccolo Violino Magico international violin competition in Italy. He will perform as an emerging artist with NZSO in October, and as a semi-finalist in National String Competition in December.