

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 clarinettist, 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 ensembles 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

Flutes	Pene Brawn-Douglas, Kathleen Mistry, Edwin Yu (piccolo)
Oboes	Eugénie Middleton, Elizabeth Lewis Daniell
Clarinets	Julia Cornfield, Brendan Dalton
Bassoons	David Nation, Jasmine Pavey
Horns	Miriam Robinson, Christine Breeden, Henry Swanson, Nuku Atkinson-Hay
Trumpets	Adrian Hirst, Dominic Cornfield
Trombones	Matthew Russell, Allan Grant, Steve Taylor
Timpani	Wei Tian Teo
Violins I	Michael Hunter, Nicola Couch, Helen Lewis, Joe Pinto, Tenwei Liu, Ellie Wyatt, Jerry Lam, Kate Vennell
Violins II	Heidi Bowmast, Averil Griffin, David Kayrouz, Dianne Sainsbury, Arthur Ranford, Vanessa Sharplin, Susie Kasza
Violas	Judith Gust, Neil Shepherd, Stephanie Thomas, Iona McDonald, Charlotte van Asch, Anne-Marie Forsyth
Cellos	Claire Postlethwaite, Emily Giles, Graham Falla, Kate Parker, Michelle Caldicott, Hannah Jemmett
Basses	Andrew Kincaid, Michael Steer

Acknowledgements and thanks to:

The Vicar and parish of Holy Trinity Church who always make us welcome.
SepiaShots (<https://www.sepiashots.com/>) for photograph.

Next Concert: 2:00pm Sunday, 28th September, 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



Schubert: Unfinished Symphony (1st mvt)
Saint-Saens: Piano Concerto No. 5 'Egyptian'

2pm, Sunday 27th July, 2025
Holy Trinity, 20 Church St, Devonport
Adults: \$25, Seniors/Students \$20,
Children under 12 free

Franz Schubert (1797 - 1828): Symphony No. 8 in B minor D 759

(First Movement only: *Allegro moderato*)

Although Schubert's short life virtually coincided with that of Beethoven's, the contrast between the two of them is stark. Beethoven was renowned for his fiery temperament and his struggle to write profound music from relatively modest musical ideas. By contrast, Schubert lived quietly within a circle of close friends, while turning out an immeasurable wealth of melodies, apparently with little effort. He mostly wrote with exceptional speed and fluidity, often finishing one work and immediately beginning another. In his short career he wrote nearly 1000 works, including 9 symphonies, 6 masses, 21 piano sonatas, 15 string quartets and a sublime string quintet, 7 singspiels, 9 operas, a melodrama, incidental music, overtures, chamber music, and more than 600 song settings.

In Schubert's first six symphonies, written between 1813 and 1818, he displayed an ease and mastery of all aspects of the symphonic form. However, a few years later, his approach to symphonies changed and he wrote several symphony fragments, including the 'unfinished' symphony, as if he'd lost confidence in his ability to meet the challenge of composing full symphonies. The question of why he wrote just two movements of the 'unfinished' is still a mystery. After all, he lived for another six years after he had begun the work and so certainly had time to finish it had he chosen to do so. Perhaps he became discouraged by Beethoven's magnificent symphonies - as he once exclaimed: *"Who can do anything after him?!"* An alternative view was expressed by the Schubert specialist, Brian Newbould, who suggested that the B minor symphony is not so much an unfinished symphony as a *"finished half-symphony."* It is the only one of the uncompleted symphonic fragments with two movements that are fully written out and orchestrated, needing no editing in order to be performed.

Although the 'unfinished' symphony was written in 1822, it did not come to light until the 1860s, when it was discovered in the study of Schubert's friend and fellow composer, Anselm Hüttenbrenner, and it wasn't performed until 1865, nearly 40 years after Schubert's death. Incredibly, Schubert never heard any of his symphonies played by professional orchestras, and none of them was published in his lifetime.

While Beethoven tended to construct his symphonic movements from extremely short melodic or rhythmic motifs, Schubert often started with fully-fledged melodies that unfold like songs. The first movement of the 'unfinished', which will be performed today, opens with a rather dark theme played by the oboe and clarinet in the unusual key of B minor - a key not often used for symphonies at the time. The second theme is a well-known tune played by the cellos, and there is a warmth and beauty in this section of the movement that reflects Schubert's talent for melody. But the song-like quality soon turns into drama when the second theme is suddenly interrupted by silence, and the subsequent dramatic turns throughout the movement allow Schubert expertly to explore light and dark, seriousness and playfulness in very appealing ways.

Camille Saint-Saëns (1835 - 1921): Piano Concerto No. 5 in F major, Op. 103

(1: *Allegro animato*, 2: *Andante*, 3: *Molto allegro*)

The music critic, Harold C. Schoenberg, described Saint-Saëns as the greatest of all music prodigies, outpacing even Mozart and Mendelssohn. Saint-Saëns began composing at age 3, and performed one of Beethoven's violin sonatas in a Paris salon at age 4. By age 10, in a legendary concert at the Salle Pleyel in Paris, he followed his performance of a movement from Beethoven's third piano concerto with an offer to play, as an encore, any of Beethoven's 32 piano sonatas from memory.

Saint-Saëns became a protégé of Franz Liszt, who declared him *"the world's greatest organist,"* and he was also greatly admired by Berlioz, who called him *"an absolutely shattering master pianist."* For many years Saint-Saëns was organist at the Madeleine church in Paris. He also conducted frequently, wrote articles for the press and published half a dozen books, wrote poetry

and plays, took a close interest in astronomy, archaeology, philosophy, and classical literature, spoke several different languages and traveled all over Europe giving concerts. His music is almost always a scintillating combination of tradition and novelty. Yet even though he valued innovation in composition, he seemed to have no illusions about his own gifts as a composer, famously saying that he was *"first among composers of the second rank"*. His piano writing bears the signature of a brilliant pianist, and it takes a player with special gifts to throw off the cascades of scales and arpeggios as though they are the easiest thing in the world, which of course for Saint-Saëns, they were.

Late in 1895, Saint-Saëns travelled to Egypt and spent some weeks in the Nile Valley before returning to Cairo to write what was to be his final piano concerto in just three weeks. He wrote it for the 50th anniversary concert of his childhood Parisian debut at the Salle Pleyel. The concerto was dedicated to Louis Diémer, a fine pianist who played it many times. Saint-Saëns himself performed it many times as well and continued to do so even past his 80th birthday.

There is nothing Egyptian about the concerto except in the second movement which contains the most exotic melodies in the piece, and features a Nubian love song that Saint-Saëns had heard on the Nile. He claimed that the piece depicts a sea voyage, and Paddy Cornfield's description below neatly captures that.

*Programme notes compiled by Roger Booth from several sources including
LA Chamber Orchestra, Peter Laki, William Runyan, Carey McDonald, Utah Symphony,
Hugh Macdonald, Sarah Urwin Jones and Redwood Symphony*

Patrick 'Paddy' Cornfield writes...

I was tempted to use Artificial Intelligence to write these program notes for my 20th DCO piano concert. Would they be better or worse? Would you even notice the difference? We live in interesting times... But as we age, it's beneficial to accept new challenges. Which is why I've decided to learn my first new concerto in 8 years. It's been a delight to tackle this unusual work. Hopefully, I'll still be saying that after the concert...

My response to the Saint-Saëns 5th piano concerto is basically this – it's a holiday postcard, written as music. He sets off (1st movement) aboard a dreamy sailing ship. The sails billow and the weather is glorious. He contemplates his life during a becalmed moonlit first night. But soon, the wind rises and the sky darkens... The ship is tossed around in a huge storm! Eventually, the weather calms down and repairs are made. Daylight breaks, and the sun comes out. Good progress is made and he has another quiet night at sea. He arrives Egypt next day and enjoys a comfortable night's sleep at his hotel.

He is abruptly woken next morning (2nd Movement) by the Adhan – the Islamic call to prayer; that plus many other unfamiliar city sounds. He ventures forth to explore his exotic surroundings – Camille is not in Paris anymore! He takes a side trip to Giza, where he stares in awe at The Sphinx. Next up is a relaxing boat trip down the Nile. The temperature is balmy, the scenery stunning, and progress is unruffled. Insects chirp at dusk. For some reason, he gets a little paranoid in the darkness. Never mind - the Sphinx is there to calm him down. He gets back to the big city for his last night in Egypt.

He leaves Egypt (3rd movement) on a steamship. It's clanky and noisy compared to the graceful sailboat he arrived on. But the steamship is powerful, and it doesn't rely on the weather. Which is fortunate, because what do you know – there's another big storm! Thunder roars (in the piano), lightening flashes, but the ship's engines just power on through. The weather improves and they make land in record time. The captain even applies full steam ahead (insane piano octaves) for a victory lap around Marseille harbour! Quite a trip then.