

Esther Wu: Conductor

Esther began her music studies at the age of six after hearing, sobbing, and concurrently interpretive dancing to Beethoven's Pathétique Sonata. She has since graduated as a Senior Scholar in the Faculty of Creative Arts and Industries with her Bachelor of Music degree at the University of Auckland in 2021, where she studied conducting with Dr Karen Grylls and piano with Dr Rae de Lisle. She won the 2021 University of Auckland School of Music Concerto Competition and enjoys teaching the piano and music theory.

Esther is now in her fifth year of medical school at the University of Auckland and has dreams of one day being in charge of the music playlist in the operating theatre. She is incredibly grateful to all her amazing teachers throughout her musical and academic journey as she continually strives to become a well-rounded, skilled, and compassionate musician-doctor.

ORCHESTRA

Oboes	Eugénie Middleton, Amy Cooper
Horns	Miriam Robinson, Christine Breeden
Violins I	Selena Sun, Michael Hunter, Joe Pinto, Alison Sorley, Tenwei Liu, Takashi Schwarz, Ellie Wyatt
Violins II	Heidi Bowmast, Kate Vennell, Jerry Lam, David Kayrouz, Dianne Sainsbury, Arthur Ranford
Violas	Judith Gust, Neil Shepherd, Stephanie Thomas, Michael Vidulich, Daniel Poloha, Iona McDonald, Alison Talmage
Cellos	Claire Postlethwaite, John Early, Graham Falla, Kate Parker, Andrea McCracken, Mary Greig-Clayton, Kripa Ravi
Basses	Ted Malan, Andrew Kincaid

Acknowledgements and thanks to:

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

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<https://dco.net.nz/>

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

Devonport Chamber Orchestra

J.C. Bach: Symphony Op. 6 No. 6 in G min.
Mozart: Sinfonia Concertante in E-flat
Conductor: Esther Wu



Violin:
Emily Bouwhuis

Viola:
Cameron Stanley

2pm, Sunday 2nd November, 2025
Holy Trinity, 20 Church St, Devonport
Adults: \$20, Seniors/Students \$15,
Children under 12 free

Johann Christian Bach (1735-1782) Symphony Op. 6 No. 6 in G minor

(*Allegro, Andante piu tosto Adagio, Allegro molto*)

Johann Christian Bach was the youngest son of Johann Sebastian Bach and, like many of JS Bach's children, followed his father into a life of music. After living for a time in Berlin with his half-brother CPE Bach, 21 years his senior, Johann Christian studied in Italy before moving to London initially to write operas for the King's theatre and to be music master to Queen Charlotte. He stayed for most of his life in London and was often referred to as the 'English' or 'London' Bach. In London Johann met his compatriot Karl Friedrich Abel and the two composers set up the famous Bach-Abel concert series at Carlisle House in Soho Square. These concerts featured symphonies, concertos and chamber works by both composers and also much Italian, French and German music new to English audiences. Eight year-old Mozart was on tour with his father in England at that time and likely attended some of these concerts. He certainly met Johann, played keyboard music with him and became influenced by his musical style. On hearing of JC Bach's death in 1782, Mozart wrote "*What a loss to the musical world!*" in line with the notion that it was JC Bach, much more than Haydn, who was the most important influence on the young Mozart's style and ideas.

The 6 symphonies of JC Bach's Opus 6 were first performed at the Soho concerts. No. 6 is the only one in a minor key and is considered one of his greatest works. Tom Service described it as "*arguably the darkest and most dramatic he composed*". The three short movements are packed with contrast and tension. The first movement is wildly energetic, full of jagged unisons, wide leaps and rapid repetitions. The dramatic and slow central movement is considered the symphony's emotional centrepiece, showcasing Bach's melodic genius and surprising chromatic colourings. The symphony concludes with a lively and rollicking finale, providing a cheerful and energetic end to the work.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791): Sinfonia Concertante in E-flat, K 364

(*Allegro maestoso, Andante, Presto*)

The "*sinfonia concertante*" was a musical form that briefly became popular in the late 18th century when concerts began moving out of private salons and into public concert halls. It has a symphonic structure but includes elements of the concerto, and was intended to let the audience hear the orchestra as a group as well as several soloists alone and in ensemble. Although Mozart began writing five different pieces in this mode in 1778, he only completed one - the work we hear today. Alfred Einstein called it Mozart's "*crowning achievement in the field of the violin concerto*," superior to his five earlier violin concertos.

Mozart most likely intended to play the viola part himself, as the viola was his preferred instrument in string ensembles. Although the key of the piece is E-flat, Mozart wrote out the viola part in D with instructions that the instrument be tuned a half-step high, so it could be played in what musicologist Michael Steinberg has called a more "*brilliant and sonorous key*" for the viola, yet sounding in E-flat. Most modern violists simply transpose the part to E-flat. This emphasis on sonority is the hallmark of the piece. Charles Rosen, in *The Classical Style*, wrote: "*The sonority of the Sinfonia Concertante ... is unique. The very first chord - the divided violas playing double-stops as high as the first and second violins, the oboes and violins in their lowest register, the horns doubling cellos and oboes - gives the characteristic sound, which is like the sonority of the viola translated into the language of the full orchestra. This first chord alone is a milestone in Mozart's career: for the first time he had created a sonority at once completely individual and logically related to the nature of the work.*"

In the majestic opening of the first movement, Mozart introduces six themes and then, true to the spirit of the concertante style, reveals as many more new melodies, mostly stated by the soloists in the exposition and development sections. A notable feature of this movement, that Mozart may have heard during his time in Mannheim is the use of long dramatic crescendos, often referred to as "*Mannheim rockets*", popularised by the Mannheim composer Johann Stamitz. Through much of the early part of the first movement, the dialogues between the soloists are introduced first by the violin. Later, during the recapitulation section, their roles are reversed, with the viola playing the material previously given first to the violin.

The great C minor *andante* second movement, with its drooping phrases and poignant chromatic harmonies, bears comparison with any of the finest slow movements in Mozart's later concertos. Perhaps his mother's death while he was writing it lies behind the eloquent sense of grief, almost despair, that pervades the whole movement and is epitomised by the semi-quaver phrases which throb persistently in the violas throughout the opening section. The nucleus of the movement, perhaps of the whole work, is the final cadenza which ends in an extremely poignant chromatic climax before the orchestra quietly brings the movement to a close.

As if as a release from the tensions of the second movement, the finale sets off at a boisterous pace and sense of freedom. The movement is a rondo with two episodes, in which Mozart remains true to the concertante principle by giving the soloists several melodies which they keep almost entirely to themselves. Instead of a joint cadenza, as in the first two movements, each of the solo instruments soars to the very top of its compass (the violin to top E flat, the highest note Mozart ever wrote for the instrument) before the orchestra brings this great and forward-looking masterpiece to an end. Certainly Mozart never wrote a more lyrical work.

Programme notes compiled by Roger Booth from several sources including Andrew Filmer, James M. Keller, Eric Kujawsky and Richard E. Rodda, Tom Service, Ian Page, Martin Pearlman

Emily Bouwhuis (violin soloist) and Cameron Stanley (viola soloist)

Emily learned the violin with Brecon Carter from 7 years of age, and then with Mary O'Brien from age 14 onwards. She studied a BMus in violin performance under Elizabeth Holowell (and conjoint BSc in physiology) at the University of Auckland. In 2012, she won the Royal Overseas League/Pettman Scholarship with the Rothko Quartet, taking Emily on a concert tour of the UK and Europe. She stayed on in London, and was awarded a position in the Southbank Sinfonia in 2014. Following several years of a colourful music career in London, Emily now resides in Perth, where she works as a general surgery registrar, and is completing a full-time masters degree in health leadership and management. She continues to maintain a freelance violin career, and is a frequent performer with Opus WA, Perth Symphony Orchestra, and Varley Strings.

Cameron lives in Wanaka and plays both the violin and viola. He currently plays in the Dunedin Symphony Orchestra and has previously played in the Hawkes Bay Orchestra as well as performing locally in solo concerts, orchestras, and chamber groups. Cameron grew up in Auckland and started playing the violin at age 6, and from age 11 learned with Mary O'Brien. During his time in Auckland, he played in many different orchestras and chamber groups, and he is a former Concertmaster of the Auckland Youth Orchestra.

Emily and Cameron have played together in orchestras - including the Devonport Chamber Orchestra (DCO) - and chamber groups for over 20 years. They gave a memorable performance of a concerto for 2 violas by Antonin Wranitzky with DCO in 2018 and both learned from Mary O'Brien who was also a longstanding member of the DCO.