

PROGRAMME



TAURANGA MUSICA
2012
concert series

ALTO

Recently appointed to Principal Viola of the NZSO, **Julia Joyce** (née McCarthy) completed a Bachelor of Music with First Class Honours at Victoria University in 2004. She was the Concertmaster of the NZSO National Youth Orchestra in 2004, and in 2005, and performed a 10 concert tour of New Zealand with pianist John Chen for Chamber Music New Zealand, returning in 2007 to perform a further 17 recitals nationwide. Julia completed a Masters Degree in Violin/Viola Performance with Distinction at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in 2007. At the Guildhall, Julia's quartet were the winners of the Guildhall String Quartet Competition in 2006, which led to work with the Takács Quartet and a televised masterclass, and concerts in France and Italy. Julia was the Viola finalist in the 2009 Guildhall Wigmore Hall recital competition.

Mezzo soprano **Kristin Darragh** is one of New Zealand's most exciting, upcoming operatic talents. She has a voice of distinction and power, of a rare and true mezzo quality. As an Emerging Artist with the NBR New Zealand Opera, she made her debut to critical acclaim at the age of 23, as *Fyodor* in Boris Godunov. Since then she has regularly returned to New Zealand Opera's stage, most recently as *Amastre* in Handel's Xerxes. Kristin is currently performing *Maddalena* in New Zealand Opera's production of Verdi's Rigoletto. Having recently accepted a position at Theater Lüneburg in Germany, she will make her European debut in September, as *Olga* in Eugene Onegin, and in her first season in Lüneburg, will also be heard as *Suzuki* in Madame Butterfly, *Hansel* in Hansel & Gretel and *Orlofsky* in Die Fledermaus.

Kirsten Simpson won the Young Performer of the Year Award in 1998 and studying with Diedre Irons, graduated from the University of Canterbury with a MMus. At the Royal College of Music she received two distinctions and graduated with Postgraduate Diploma in Solo and Ensemble performance and an Advanced Postgraduate Diploma in Piano Accompaniment. Kirsten has received a number of grants from the Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation – the first in 2005 which enabled her to attend the Solti Accademia di Bel Canto in Italy. This also marked the first co-operative grant, the Kiri Te Kanawa Foundation joining with the Dame Malvina Major Foundation to jointly provide funding to enable Kirsten to complete the final term of her four-year course at the Royal College of Music. She is currently the Classical Accompanist for Brass and Wind at the New Zealand School of Music in Wellington.



In association with
Chamber Music New Zealand proudly presents

ALTO



WHERE:	TAURANGA PARK AUDITORIUM
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IN ASSOCIATION WITH:



Zigeunerlieder (Gypsy Songs) Opus 103

Johannes Brahms (1833 – 1897)

- I He Zigeuner
- II Hochgetürmte
- III Wisst ihr wann mein Kindchen
- IV Lieber Gott
- V Brauner Bursche
- VI Röslein dreie
- VII Kommt dir manchmal
- VIII Rote Abend

Brahms's music often divulged a Gypsy influence, and it is thus hardly surprising that he also adapted Hungarian folk music at different times in his career. His first major effort here was the *21 Hungarian Dances* (1852-69). *Zigeunerlieder* (Gypsy Songs) came from the other end of his career (1887) and consists of 11 untitled songs scored for vocal quartet and piano on texts by Hugo Conrat. Shortly after completing them, Brahms arranged eight for single voice and piano, selecting Nos 1 through 7 and 11. It must be remembered that while these songs adapt certain folk elements, the music is largely Brahms's own, the melodies – not to mention the harmonies – having typical Brahmsian features.

Three Songs for Viola, Mezzo and Piano (1906)

Frank Bridge (1879 – 1941)

Frank Bridge has for a long time been most frequently remembered as Britten's teacher, but from about two decades after his death there has been increased attention paid to his music.

Bridge's career falls into two periods, divided by the First World War. His earlier works are characterised by warm romantic sentiments allied with elements of the English pastoral school. In the 1920s he turned towards a more expressionist style under the influence of European modernists such as Berg, as evident from his String Quartet No 4 and Oration for cello and orchestra.

Märchenbilder for Viola and Piano Opus 113

Robert Schumann (1810 – 1856)

- I Nicht schnell
- II Lebhaft
- III Rasch
- IV Langsam, mit melancholischem Ausdruck

The years 1842 to 1843 witnessed an outpouring of instrumental works by Schumann including three string quartets and the piano quintet. After a gap he resumed activity in 1847 with two piano trios. Several years later came a series of miscellaneous pieces for solo instruments and piano. In 1850 Schumann moved to Düsseldorf to take up the post of city musical director. It is possible that contact with a number of proficient orchestral musicians in Düsseldorf stimulated his interest in some of the less usual solo instruments. If so, it was a trend that had already begun in 1849. As well as *Märchenbilder* (Fairy Tales) for viola and piano, works for clarinet, oboe, horn and cello appeared at around the same time.

Quatres poèmes pour voix, alto et piano Opus 5

Charles Martin Loeffler (1861 – 1935)

- II Dansons la gigue (Paul Verlaine)
- III Le son du cor s'afflige vers les bois (Paul Verlaine)

At the age of thirteen Loeffler decided on his career path as a concert violinist, and he went on to study with Joseph Joachim in Berlin and Joseph Massart in Paris. Emigrating to the United States in 1881, he became 2nd concertmaster of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. A popular soloist, he gave the US premieres of works by Bruch, Saint-Saëns and Lalo. As a composer he was considered avant-garde early in his career. Extremely self-critical, he repeatedly revised his compositions and often withheld them from publication.

Feldeinsamkeit (The Loneliness of the Fields) Opus 86 No 2 (transcribed for viola)

Brahms

Unlike many of his contemporaries, Brahms favoured simple and regular structures in his song-writing, and texts that were straightforward and sentimental rather than deeply poetic. His interest in writing Lieder spanned his entire life, with his earliest written before he was 20, and his last – the Four Serious Songs – written just before he died.

Feldeinsamkeit is from a set of six Lieder for low voice. The text by Hermann Allmers is a typical Romantic poem about nature.

Wie Melodien Zieht es Mir Opus 105 No 1 (transcribed for viola)

Brahms

Written in 1886, this gentle song is a setting of a poem by Klaus Groth. The poem discusses the beauty of thoughts.

Chansons: Youkali and Nanna's Lied

Kurt Weill (1900 – 1950)

Kurt Weill was born in Desau, Germany in 1900, studied composition with Engelbert Humperdink (of "Hansel and Gretel" fame) and Ferruccio Busoni, and by the age of 22, the Berlin Philharmonic had premiered two of his compositions. Weill's lyricists were the greatest poets, novelists and playwrights of Europe and America.

Weill's favourite singer, for whom he wrote many of his most famous songs, was his wife, Lotte Lenya (who plays a fiendish terrorist in the James Bond film "From Russia with Love"). Lenya lovingly preserved Weill's music for modern audiences. In the last years of her life she passed the torch to the Greek-Canadian-American soprano Theresa Stratas, whom she told "nobody can sing Weill's music better than you do" and offered the singer the set of previously unpublished songs to perform. *Youkali and Nanna's Lied* were on this album which *The New York Times* called a "landmark" recording that "blended theatrical spunk with classical vocalism."

The unity of the creative impulses behind his songs derives from an approach that Weill himself best summed up in an unpublished letter from 1949, a year before his death: "I have learned to make my music speak directly to the audience, to find the most immediate, the most direct way to say what I want to say, and to say it as simply as possible. That's why I think that, in the theater at least, melody is such an important element, because it speaks directly to the heart – and what good is music if it cannot move people."

Zwei Gesänge Opus 91

Brahms

- I Gestillte Sehnsucht (Stilled Desire)
- II Geistliches Wiegenlied (Sacred Lullaby)

Brahms wrote these two songs for his close friends Amalie and Joseph Joachim at the time of their separation. Joseph, a frequent collaborator of Brahms and dedicatee of his Violin Concerto, believed that his wife was having an affair. Brahms tried to persuade Joseph that she was innocent of any wrongdoing, but Joseph felt that he was taking her side and subsequently cooled his friendship with the composer. Brahms, who had written an earlier version of *Geistliches Wiegenlied* for the birth of the couple's first child, felt that the new version paired with another song might lead to reconciliation (unfortunately, it didn't).

Programme notes by Kristin Darragh, Anna Sedcole and from Chamber Music New Zealand files.

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The Leonari Trio

Sunday 19 August, Mills Reef, 7.00pm

John Chen - piano

Saturday 1 September, Baycourt, 7.00pm

Love's Nature

Saturday 8 September, Tauranga Park Auditorium, 3.00pm