



ORCHESTRAS CENTRAL presents

Star-Crossed Lovers: Force of Destiny

'May the force/fourth be with you'

two

TRUST WAIKATO
Symphony Orchestra



Sunday 4 May 2025, 2.30PM

Concert Chamber
Gallagher Academy of Performing Arts, Hamilton

Star Crossed Lovers: Force of Destiny

Nau Mai, Welcome

from **Catherine Gibson**

Chief Executive, Orchestras Central

Star-crossed Lovers: Force of Destiny is a programme full of romance and unrequited love, a well-known fairytale, and both earthly and intergalactic battles.

Brilliant musician, Simon Brew will be 'wearing two hats', both as conductor and as saxophone soloist, and we have our first ever audio described performance for blind and low vision patrons.

We love it when our own players step forward and Concertmaster, Tony Hong-Che Wu's exquisite violin playing is sure to enchant in the Beethoven Romance. As part of our strategic relationship with the University of Waikato we are delighted to feature the joint winner of the 2024 University of Waikato Concerto Competition, trumpeter Sitiveni Seti Hale Palei in Bizet's *Chanson du Toreador*.

Our New Zealand work is sure to please! It is an honour to present the 2024 Arts Foundation NZ Te Tumu Toi Laureate, Claire Cowan's Orchestral Suite from *Hansel and Gretel* originally commissioned by the Royal New Zealand Ballet and now also in the orchestral format heard today.

I do hope you enjoy the concert and look forward to seeing you at our other events this year, as listed on our website:

www.orchestras.org.nz.

THE MUSIC

SERGEI PROKOFIEV

Montagues and Capulets,
No 13 Dance of the Knights
from *Romeo and Juliet*

GEORGES BIZET

Chanson du Toreador
from *Carmen Suite no.2*

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

Romance for Violin and Orchestra
No. 2 in F major, Op. 50

GUISEPPE VERDI

Overture
to *La forza del destino* /
The Force of Destiny

— intermission —

ALEXANDER GLAZUNOV

Concerto for alto saxophone and string
orchestra in E flat major, Op. 109

CLAIRE COWAN

Hansel and Gretel Suite selection

JOHN WILLIAMS

Yoda's Theme and Imperial March
from *Star Wars Suite*

SERGEI PROKOFIEV *Montagues and Capulets, No 13* *Dance of the Knights from Romeo and Juliet (1935)*

In 1935, the Kirov Theatre tasked Prokofiev to compose music for *Romeo and Juliet*. The ballet caused controversy because Shakespeare's beloved tragedy had been given a happy ending! The Soviet Union postponed the project indefinitely, so Prokofiev instead offered it to the Bolshoi Ballet in Moscow... but that also didn't end well either, after the dancers said the music was impossible for dancing! Prokofiev continued to work on the score and the ballet finally reached the stage in 1938. *Montagues and Capulets*, specifically the *Dance of the Knights* portion, is well-known and often played as a standalone work capturing a sense of energy and movement.

Duration: about 5 minutes

GEORGES BIZET *Chanson du Toreador from Carmen Suite No.2 (1887)*

Carmen was Bizet's final opera. It was delayed for fear that its themes of betrayal and murder would offend. In spite of its debut performance being poorly received, the opera has gone on to be staged regularly all over the world. *Carmen* is based on a story by French contemporary author, Prosper Merimee who was inspired by a true story of a Spanish murder case in 1830. *Carmen* may be an opera in French, but it is nonetheless strongly inspired by Spanish dance and tradition especially *Carmen's Seguidilla*, Don José's *Flower aria* and Escamillo's famous *Toreador's Song* as performed today

Duration: about 5 minutes

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN *Romance for Violin and Orchestra No. 2* *in F Major, Op. 50 (1798)*

By the late 1790s Beethoven had been in Vienna about six years and was enjoying a growing reputation both as a virtuoso pianist and as a composer. While he had written some piano concertos for his own use, he had confined his compositional activities to more modest works - piano sonatas and chamber music including the famous *Pathétique* sonata. He also was hard at work on his first string quartets, the op. 18 set. The monumental symphonies and concertos lay ahead. Beethoven's second Romance for violin and orchestra was written in 1798 but not published until 1805. Like the first, this romance was dedicated to the violin virtuoso, Ignaz Schuppanzigh. The musical lines share a cantabile (smooth singing) quality we associate with romance.

Duration: about 9 minutes

GIUSEPPE VERDI *Overture* *to La Forza Del Destino | The Force of Destiny (1869)*

Giuseppe Verdi was a leading Italian operatic composer of the romantic period. From the Opera *La Forza Del Destino* first performed in St Petersburg in 1862, the overture was added into the 1869 revised version. Based on a Spanish drama, its popularity stems from the powerful emotions imbued in the music from the very first imposing notes in the brass. There is a case to be made that the three chords are a rare example of a musical symbol in Verdi, in this instance, depicting the inevitable power of "fate," - hence the title of the opera.

Duration: about 8 minutes



ALEXANDER GLAZUNOV **Concerto for alto saxophone (1934)** and string orchestra in E-flat major, Op. 109

The music of Alexander Glazunov belongs to the late Russian Romantic period and shows the influences of 19th-century composers including Borodin, Rimsky-Korsakov and Tchaikovsky. Although the saxophone was invented in the early 1840s, it is not a normal part of the classical symphony orchestra. Glazunov became fascinated by the instrument's distinctive timbre and composed his Concerto for Alto Saxophone and String Orchestra in 1934, at the urging of the Sigurd Raschèr, a famous German saxophonist.

The concerto is written in a single continuous movement, with long melodic lines that make full use of the saxophone's singing tone. Towards the end of the piece, a lively folk dance-like section provides contrasting rhythms.

Duration: about 15 minutes

CLAIRE COWAN **Hansel and Gretel Suite selection, Op.40 (2019)**

Dinner - Entering the Forest - The Bird Children Ghost Children - The Sandman - Entering the Gingerbread House - The Banquet - The Transforming Witch - Witch's Baking Charleston - Mother and Father Pas de Deux-Snoring Witch - The Witch Awakes - Killing the Witch - Celebrations

When The Royal New Zealand Ballet commissioned composer Claire Cowan to write the score for *Hansel and Gretel* in 2019, she became the first woman in NZ to compose a full-length ballet, and one of only a handful of women worldwide to do so. Her brilliant score won the hearts of nearly 30,000 ballet fans, that expanded to close to 150,000 households during Covid lockdown. The NZSO heard Claire's score and sponsored a recording with Cowan raising the rest of the funds. The ballet's setting of the 1920's brings early jazz elements into the score, with a heavy sprinkling of Broadway sass. Today's performance begins with Hansel and Gretel just before they enter the forest and all that then ensues.

www.clairemusic.com

Duration: about 15 minutes

JOHN WILLIAMS **Yoda's Theme and Imperial March** *from Star Wars Suite (1979)*

Yoda's Theme and *The Imperial March* were first introduced in Star Wars Episode V *The Empire Strikes Back* released in 1980. Both themes are classic examples of a 'leitmotiv' that is - a recurrent theme associated with characters or events in a drama.

Yoda's Theme symbolizes the wisdom, guidance, and power of the Jedi Master, Yoda. It evokes a sense of nobility, hope, and the Force. The theme's gentle and uplifting nature reflects Yoda's character, while its moments of strength highlight his unwavering belief and guidance. In *The Empire Strikes Back*, *The Imperial March* is the theme music that represents the authoritarian Galactic Empire particularly Darth Vader, and his adherence to the dark side. What more is there to say - today's the day!

Duration: about 7 minutes

OUR ARTISTS



Simon Brew Conductor & Saxophone Soloist

Simon Brew is a conductor, classical saxophonist, and the current General Manager of the Cambridge Town Hall. His diverse and accomplished career includes performances as principal saxophonist with the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, Rotterdam Philharmonic, Netherlands National Orchestra, and the Netherlands Blazers Ensemble at the BBC Proms. He previously served as Conductor and Director of Music for the Royal New Zealand Air Force, leading numerous international tours and conducting performances with Dame Malvina Major. Simon has also performed alongside Rufus Wainwright and Kermit the Frog, and he tours regularly for Chamber Music New Zealand.



His accolades include first prize in the prestigious Grachtenfestival Conservatorium Competition in Amsterdam (2010), the Artez Kunstnacht Competition, and recognition as Best Saxophonist Under 30 at the International Festival of Single Reeds in Melbourne (2005). He holds a Master of Music from the ArtEZ Conservatorium in the Netherlands.

Simon is currently the conductor of Orchestras Central's Youth Orchestra Waikato.

TONY HONG-CHE WU Violin Soloist & Concertmaster

Tony Hong-Che Wu holds a Master of Fine Arts in Orchestral Conducting from the National Taiwan Normal University. He has conducted numerous orchestras in Taipei and led the Taipei Municipal Da-An Junior High School String Orchestra to outstanding success, winning first prize at the Taiwan National Music Competition for ten consecutive years. Under his direction, the ensemble also won the Summa Cum Laude International Youth Music Festival and performed at Vienna's prestigious Goldener Saal in 2011.



As a violinist, Tony has served as concertmaster of both the Taipei County Symphony Orchestra and the Taipei Century Symphony Orchestra.

Now based in Hamilton, Tony teaches strings and conducts the orchestra at Hillcrest Normal School. He also conducts the Sinfonia at the Waikato Community School of Music and is both conductor and violinist with the Formosa Chamber Orchestra.

SITIVENI PALEI Trumpet soloist

"Being a soloist feels like a dream come true. It's what I love most – performing solo, playing with various ensembles, and sharing the magical sound of the trumpet with the world."

Sitiveni Seti Hale Palei is a second-year student at the University of Waikato, where he is pursuing a Bachelor of Music in Performance. Originally from Tonga – affectionately known as the Friendly Islands – Sitiveni began learning the trumpet at the age of nine, taught by his older brother. This marked the beginning of his passion for music.

He continued developing his skills at Tupou College, where he played in a range of ensembles including brass band, jazz band, and orchestra. Before relocating to New Zealand last year to further his studies, Sitiveni dedicated much of his time in Tonga to honing his craft and performing with various musical groups.

In 2024, Sitiveni was named joint winner of the University of Waikato Concerto Competition. Each year, Orchestras Central offers performance opportunities to the winners as part of its strategic partnership with the university.



AUDIO DESCRIPTION AOTEAROA

AUDIO DESCRIBER

Kevin Keys

"Putting blind and visually impaired people in the picture" is how Nicola Owen describes what they do at *Audio Description Aotearoa*. We would like to thank Nicola and her team for working with us to bring the touch tour and audio description to today's performance. We hope this becomes an annual feature as we work to make our events more inclusive for all people.

Audio description supported by:
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TRUST WAIKATO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA



Proudly supported by



Trust Waikato Symphony Orchestra (TWSO) offers playing opportunities for amateur players, music students and instrumental music teachers of all ages from around the Waikato region. In addition to concerts like this one today, TWSO also performs the iconic Sunset Symphony at the Hamilton Gardens in February each year.

We always welcome new players! If you are interested in joining the orchestra, please email support@orchestras.org.nz



TRUST WAIKATO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

VIOLIN I

Tony Hong-Che Wu+, *Justine Hua*
Caitlyn Collins, Debbie Cotter
Katie Fourie, Kim New

VIOLIN II

Ted Yu*, Lisa Zhang, Cheree Gray
Fiona Green, Amy Jones
Meemee Phipps, Peter Stokes, Lucas Tio

VIOLA

Nisha Fernandez-Ritchie*, Haemin Park
Aroon Parshotam, Steve Zhang, Sophia
Acheson#

CELLO

Catherine Milson*, Mark Harris
Rosie Manley, *Amos Robinson*
Jennifer Rogers, Brigid O'Meeghan#

DOUBLE BASS

Mike Steer*#, Will Flanery

FLUTE & PICCOLO

Jacqui Mc Pherson*, (Piccolo) Malcolm
Carmichael (Piccolo), Ashleigh Smith

OBOE & COR ANGLAIS

Anne Mendrun, Peter Plunkett (Cor Anglais)
Jordan Wise (Cor Anglais)

Key:

+ concertmaster

* section leader

guest player

Youth Orchestra Waikato players shown in italics

CLARINET & BASS CLARINET

Renee Kenyon*, *Jess Foster*

ALTO SAXOPHONE

Nathan Koretz

BASSOON

Monica Dunn*#, Sue Lynn Leong#

FRENCH HORN

Sergio Marshall*, Martin Stevenson
Josh Bartram, Hugh Goodman

TRUMPET

Mike Kenyon*, Kimberly Ransom
Sitiveni Seti Hale Palei#

TROMBONE & BASS TROMBONE

Roberta Hickman*, Robert Lummus
Lynn Jamieson (Bass Trombone)

TUBA

Steve Webb

TIMPANI

Danny Collins, Kimberly Ransom

PERCUSSION

Danny Collins* Anna Johnston
Raphael Wu, Ariel Wu

KEYBOARD

Grace Palfreyman

ABOUT ORCHESTRAS CENTRAL Ngā Tira Puoro te Pokapū

We are driven by an unshakeable belief in the transformative potential of orchestras

As the orchestral hub for the Waikato, we connect communities across the region through accessible and inspiring orchestral experiences for people of all ages and backgrounds. We present a dynamic programme of over 35 events each year, providing the professional management of our whānau of orchestras – **Trust Waikato Symphony Orchestra, Youth Orchestra Waikato, Rusty Player Orchestra** and the professional **OCT Ensemble**. Each orchestra presents a vibrant array of concerts, community engagement mahi, skills development workshops and interdisciplinary collaborations with some of Aotearoa New Zealand's leading artists.

Whether you're just starting out in music, returning after time away, an established professional or a passionate music advocate – there's a place for you here at Orchestras Central. There's something for everyone, with opportunities for school tamariki and whānau, enthusiastic amateurs, professional artists and music appreciators of all kinds to get involved. We are proudly for and of the Waikato.

JOIN US! Visit our website www.orchestras.org.nz or get in touch at support@orchestras.org.nz to find out more

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To discuss ways you can support Orchestras Central Trust, please get in touch with **Catherine Gibson**, Chief Executive for a friendly and confidential chat, ceo@orchestras.org.nz



ORCHESTRAS CENTRAL
Ngā Tira Pūoro o te Pokapū