



BAY OF PLENTY
SYMPHONIA

*Romance
&
Virtuosity*

**Michael Joel - Conductor
Lara Hall - Violin Soloist**

**Sunday 3 May 2026, 3pm
Holy Trinity Church
Tauranga**

**Many thanks to all our generous supporters
who made this concert possible.**



**The Mount Music School is opening soon,
teaching piano, ukulele, bass guitar and voice.**

Programme Design: Neale Blaymires **Stage Manager:** Simon Eminson
Special thanks to Otumoetai College for letting us use their facilities for rehearsals

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PROGRAMME

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 – 1827)

Coriolan Overture, Op. 62

Henri Vieuxtemps (1820 – 1881)

Soloist: Lara Hall

Violin Concerto No. 5 in A minor, Op. 37

1. *Allegro non troppo – Moderato*

2. *Adagio*

3. *Allegro con fuoco*

– *Interval* –

Antonín Dvořák (1841 – 1904)

Soloist: Lara Hall

Romance for Violin and Orchestra, Op. 11

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 – 1827)

Symphony No. 2 in D major, Op. 36

1. *Adagio molto – Allegro con brio*

2. *Larghetto*

3. *Scherzo. Allegro – Trio*

3. *Allegro molto*

PROGRAMME NOTES

Beethoven – *Coriolan Overture, Op. 62* (1807)

The *Coriolan Overture* is one of Beethoven's most psychologically gripping orchestral works, inspired by the story of the Roman general Coriolanus. A proud and formidable military leader, Coriolanus ultimately faces a devastating internal conflict between his unyielding ambition and his capacity for compassion.

From its stark opening chords, the overture plunges us into a world of tension and defiance. The main theme, urgent and angular, represents Coriolanus himself—unyielding, driven, and consumed by pride. In contrast, a more lyrical and pleading second theme is often interpreted as the voice of his mother, who implores him to spare Rome from destruction. Beethoven masterfully develops these opposing ideas, creating a dramatic musical narrative that unfolds without the need for words.

Unlike many overtures of the time, which were designed simply to introduce a theatrical work, the *Coriolan Overture* stands as a complete psychological drama in its own right. Its structure is concise yet powerful, culminating not in triumph, but in collapse. The music gradually loses its force, ending in a subdued and unresolved manner that reflects Coriolanus's tragic fate.

This overture exemplifies Beethoven's ability to translate human conflict into musical form. It is a work of intensity and economy, where every gesture feels essential. For listeners, it offers a compelling emotional journey—one that moves from defiance to vulnerability, and ultimately to resignation.

Vieuxtemps – *Violin Concerto No. 5 in A minor, Op. 37* (1861)

Henri Vieuxtemps, one of the great virtuoso violinists of the 19th century, strikes a remarkable balance between technical brilliance and lyrical expression in his *Fifth Violin Concerto*. Dedicated to his student Hubert Léonard, the concerto reflects both Vieuxtemps's deep understanding of the violin and his desire to move beyond mere showmanship.

Unlike the traditional three-movement concerto structure, this work unfolds in a continuous arc, blending sections seamlessly into one another. It opens with a noble and expansive introduction, immediately establishing a sense of grandeur. The solo violin enters not with fireworks, but with a song-like melody, setting the tone for a work that prioritizes musical substance over display.

That said, the concerto does not lack virtuosity. The soloist is called upon to navigate dazzling runs, double stops, and intricate passagework. However, these technical challenges are always in service of the music's expressive goals. Vieuxtemps avoids empty bravura, instead integrating the solo line closely with the orchestra, creating a rich and collaborative texture.

The central section offers moments of introspection and tenderness, before giving way to a short, spirited finale. Here, the violinist's agility and flair come to the fore, culminating in a brilliant and satisfying conclusion.

Dvořák – Romance for Violin and Orchestra in F minor, Op. 11 (1877)

Antonín Dvořák's *Romance for Violin and Orchestra* is a work of intimate beauty and lyrical charm. Originally derived from the slow movement of an early string quartet, it was later reworked in 1877 into its present form for violin and orchestra. The result is a piece that feels both deeply personal and warmly expressive.

Marked *Andante con moto*, the *Romance* unfolds with a gentle, flowing melody introduced by the solo violin. There is a sense of quiet nostalgia throughout the work, as if the music is reflecting on a distant memory. Dvořák's gift for melody is on full display here, with phrases that sing effortlessly.

The orchestral accompaniment is delicate and supportive, allowing the violin to remain at the forefront. Rather than engaging in dramatic contrasts, the piece maintains a consistent mood, exploring subtle variations in colour and texture. This restraint gives the *Romance* its distinctive character—it is less about dramatic narrative and more about sustained emotional atmosphere. The violin line, while not overtly virtuosic, requires great sensitivity and control to convey its expressive nuances.

Beethoven – Symphony No. 2 in D major, Op. 36 (1802)

Composed between 1801 and 1802, Beethoven's *Second Symphony* stands at a fascinating cross-roads in his creative life. During this period, he was grappling with the onset of his hearing loss—a crisis that he famously confronted in the *Heiligenstadt Testament*. Yet, despite this personal tragedy, the symphony itself is filled with energy, wit, and optimism.

The opening movement begins with a grand and expansive introduction, setting the stage for a lively *Allegro con brio*. Beethoven plays with expectations, stretching classical forms while maintaining a sense of balance and clarity. The music is full of surprises, from sudden dynamic shifts to playful rhythmic ideas.

The second movement, *Larghetto*, offers a serene and lyrical contrast. Its graceful melodies unfold with a sense of ease, showcasing Beethoven's ability to create beauty through simplicity. This is music that breathes, inviting the listener into a more reflective space.

The *Scherzo* is fleet-footed – toying with the audience's expectations with its quicksilver changes of dynamic. Its lively humour is contrasted by the more relaxed Trio section where the woodwind beguile with their beautiful melodic lines.

The final movement bursts forth with exuberance. Its playful themes and rapid figurations give it an almost mischievous character. Some early listeners found it eccentric, even shocking, but today it is celebrated for its vitality and originality.

The *Second Symphony* may not have the heroic scale of Beethoven's later works, but it reveals a composer on the brink of transformation. It is a work of confidence and imagination, bridging the Classical and Romantic worlds with unmistakable personality.

Lara Hall – Soloist



Dr Lara Hall has taught violin and viola at the University of Waikato since her return from the US in 2006, at which point she also began her position as concertmaster of Opus Orchestra and, with pianist Katherine Austin and cellist James Tennant, formed the New Zealand Chamber Soloists.

Lara has released CDs as a chamber musician, concerto soloist and solo violinist on the Atoll and Naxos labels. She is the only musician to have performed variously on violin, baroque violin and viola in Chamber Music New Zealand's main series – concerts that showcase international artists.

Lara's high-school violin teacher was the Tauranga violin teacher Val Thorburn. After obtaining a BMus at the University of Auckland, study included a Doctorate at the University of Michigan (one of the top four universities in the USA) and a summer in the Dorothy Delay Studio (acknowledged as the top violin teacher in the world at the time).

Michael Joel – Conductor and Music Director



New Zealand-born conductor Michael Joel studied at Otago University with Professors Jack Spiers and Peter Adams. Having completed his honours degree, he continued his studies with conductors Heinz Wallberg, Miguel Harth-Bedoya, Jac van Steen, and at the Dartington International Summer School.

Equally at home in the orchestra, choral and operatic repertoire, Michael has conducted extensively throughout New Zealand and the United Kingdom. He has worked at The Royal Opera House, assisting Antonio Pappano, Alexander Joel, Dan Ettinger, Plácido Domingo, Oleg Caetani and Mark Minkowski.

He has conducted many of the established orchestras and companies in New Zealand – Christchurch Symphony Orchestra, Dunedin Symphony Orchestra, Opera Otago, the City of Dunedin Choir, NZSO National Youth Orchestra and, prior to relocating to London, principals and members of the NZSO and NZ String Quartet in a critically acclaimed performance of Mahler's 4th Symphony.

Michael is currently also Music Director of St Matthews Chamber Orchestra and has worked on the music staff of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden as duty conductor on productions of *Tosca*, *La Bohème*, *La Traviata* and *Carmen*.

Rebecka Beetz – Concertmaster



Rebecka took up the violin in her native Germany at age 6 and played in many local and regional symphony orchestras from age 11 where she discovered her love for orchestral playing. After completing a linguistic degree in Leipzig, she moved to New Zealand with her husband in 2006 and joined the Bay of Plenty Symphonia in 2009. She has been the orchestra's concertmaster since 2012. Rebecka is the General Manager of Opus Orchestra, where she also performs regularly as a player. She enjoys informal chamber music get-togethers with

others and has been lucky to be receiving lessons from APO Concertmaster Andrew Beer since 2021.

THE ORCHESTRA

Violin 1

Rebecka Beetz
Michie Nishiyama
Rosana Houthuesen
Alyson Hendren
Gloria White
Jazmine Read
Rachel Moxham
Catriona Gordon
Sarah Hart

Violin 2

Mandi Bromwich
Brigid Eady
Jolie Hurdley
Monique Corney
Joy Shepherd
Jill Fleming
Glenys Wheatley
Robert Shelton

Viola

Sylvia Neild
Annette Milson
Virginia McGowan
Margaret Skippen
Bronya Dean
Alison Armstrong
Katrin Wilson

Cello

Trish McNutt
Therese Ahlers
Amelia Ward
Susan Enticott
Marisha Duijzers
Gina Nored
Ros Oliver
Double bass
Lucy Coyle
Rosemary Severinsen

Flute

Pauline Logger
Debbie Prince

Oboe

Kate Rendall
Chris Martin

Clarinet

Miranda Churchill
Anthea Fiolitakis

Bassoon

Yasumi Kobayashi
Karla Putt

French Horn

Jane Carson
Gary Valentine

Trumpet

Peter Logger
Vincent Brzozowski

Timpani

James Pinchin



We hope you have enjoyed today's performance!

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Upcoming events for 2026

Concert 2: *Young@Heart 3*

Saturday 20 June, 3.30pm at Otumoetai College Hall

Conductor Kelly Hayward

We join forces with Youth Philharmonic Tauranga in a concert of glorious symphonic music inspired by the drama and beauty of opera – space opera, rock opera, and grand opera.

Concert 3: *Strings & Winds*

Saturday 15 August at St Lukes in Rotorua

Sunday 16 August at St Peter's in Tauranga

Two concert performances in local churches featuring smaller ensembles made up of Symphonia players, with strings led by Lara Hall.

Concert 4

Sunday 15 November, 3pm, at Baycourt, Tauranga

Conductor Michael Joel

Soloists Anna & Dominic Lee in the Brahms double concerto for violin, cello and orchestra.

www.bopsymphonia.org.nz